

List of 'unsung' wildlife affected by climate change released

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The Wildlife Conservation Society today released a list of animals facing new impacts by climate change, some in strange and unexpected ways.

In a new report titled "[Species Feeling the Heat: Connecting Deforestation and Climate Change](#)," the Wildlife Conservation Society profiles more than a dozen animal species and groups that are facing threats due to climate change impacts including: changing land and sea temperatures; shifting rain patterns; exposure to new pathogens and disease; and increased threats of predation.

The Wildlife Conservation Society is issuing this report as the world gathers in Copenhagen to address climate change issues and as the United Nations launches in 2010 the International Year of Biodiversity, a UN-led effort to raise awareness to reduce the constant loss of [biological diversity](#) worldwide. The Convention on Biodiversity, which emerged from the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, recently admitted that none of its 2010 biodiversity targets have been met, underscoring the dire situation wildlife around the world face from burgeoning threats such as climate change.

The report also highlights the huge role of deforestation in climate change. Nearly 20 percent of [greenhouse gas emissions](#) are the result of deforestation, more than the output of all the world's trucks, trains, cars, planes, and ships combined, so protecting the remaining swaths of the world's forests can help put the breaks on climate change.

"The image of a forlorn looking [polar bear](#) on a tiny ice floe has become the public's image of climate change in nature, but the impact reaches species in nearly every habitat in the world's wild places," said Dr. Steven E. Sanderson, President and CEO of the Wildlife Conservation Society. "In fact, our own researchers are observing direct impacts on a wide range of species across the world."

The report contains a cross-section of [animal species](#) around the globe, including:

- Bicknell's thrush, a [bird species](#) that breeds and nests in the higher elevations on mountains in northeastern North America. Slight increases in temperature threaten this bird's breeding habitat.
- Flamingos, a group including several species that are threatened by climate change impacts that affect the availability and quality of wetland habitat in the Caribbean, South America, Asia, and Africa.
- Irrawaddy dolphin, a coastal species that relies on the flow of fresh water from estuaries in Bangladesh and elsewhere in Southeast Asia. Changes in freshwater flow and salinity may have an impact on the species long-term survival.
- Musk ox, a species that exists in the harsh environment of the Arctic Tundra. This Pleistocene faces a higher predation risk by grizzly bears, as more bears may move northward into the musk oxen's tundra home.
- Hawksbill turtle, an ocean-going reptile with temperature dependent biology. Specifically, higher temperatures result in

more female hatchlings, a factor that could impact the species' long-term survival by skewing sex ratios.

"Aside from all of the current political disagreements on meteorological data, we can say with certainty that climate change is threatening our planet with significant losses to wildlife and wild places," added Sanderson.

Source: [Wildlife Conservation Society](#) ([news](#) : [web](#))

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