

# Climate change halves Peru glacier: official

February 23 2011

---



An undated photo released by ANDINA in 2010 shows technicians on the Huaytapallana snowcap in the central Andes in Junin, Peru. A glacier on Peru's Huaytapallana Mountain shed half its surface ice in just 23 years, officials said Wednesday, reinforcing concerns of climate change's growing threat to fresh water resources.

A glacier on Peru's Huaytapallana Mountain shed half its surface ice in just 23 years, officials said Wednesday, reinforcing concerns of climate change's growing threat to fresh water resources.

"Recent scientific studies indicate that between June 1983 and August 2006, the glacier has lost 50 percent of its surface ice," Erasmo Meza, manager of natural resources and the environment in the central Andean region of Junin, told the official Andina news agency.

He said the five square kilometers (1.9 square miles) of ice shrinkage on Huaytapallana, whose steep, jagged glacier and breathtaking lakes are popular tourist draws, was caused by global warming and presents

growing problems in agriculture, health, fresh water resources and disaster mitigation.

To prevent further deterioration on the 5,557-meter (18,230-foot) mountain, the regional government of Junin is developing a project to declare Huaytapallana a natural conservation area -- a move Meza said could help prevent damage from a mining company doing a feasibility study in the area.

Glacier studies are often carried out in the Andes, the so-called "Roof of the Americas" region comprising more than 100 peaks above 5,000 meters (16,500 feet).

But the Huaytapallana studies show a sharper rate of glacial melt than other major findings.

A 2009 World Bank-published report said that in the last 35 years, Peru's glaciers have shrunk by 22 percent, leading to a 12 percent loss in the amount of fresh water reaching the coast -- home to most of the country's citizens.

It also warned that Andean [glaciers](#) and the peaks' permanent snow caps could disappear in 20 years if no measures are taken to tackle [climate change](#), echoing the findings of Peruvian agencies.

One of the most threatened is Pastoruri, a 5,200-meter (17,060-foot) peak in Huascarán National Park in northern [Peru](#) that is home to Huascarán Mountain, Peru's highest point at 6,768 meters (22,200 feet).

(c) 2011 AFP

Citation: Climate change halves Peru glacier: official (2011, February 23) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-02-climate-halves-peru-glacier.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.