

Ozone depletion is a major climate driver in the southern hemisphere

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When people hear about the dangers of the ozone hole, they often think of sunburns and associated health risks, but new research shows that ozone depletion changes atmospheric and oceanic circulation with potentially devastating effects on weather in the Southern Hemisphere weather.

These could include increased incidence of extreme events, resulting in costly floods, drought, wildfires, and serious environmental damage. The ecosystem impacts documented so far include changes to growth rates of South American and New Zealand trees, decreased growth of Antarctic mosses, and changing biodiversity in Antarctic lakes.

"The ozone hole changes Southern Hemisphere summer rainfall and wind patterns, and we need to consider what that means for natural ecosystems, food security and human health" said Dr. Sharon Robinson, lead author of the *Global Change Biology* article.

More information: Robinson, S. A. and Erickson, D. J. (2014), Not just about sunburn - the ozone hole's profound effect on climate has significant implications for Southern Hemisphere ecosystems. *Global Change Biology*. [DOI: 10.1111/gcb.12739](https://doi.org/10.1111/gcb.12739)

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