

Climate Change Position Statement

Our mission is to engage people worldwide in scientific field research and education to promote the understanding and action necessary for a sustainable environment. Earthwatch recognizes and follows the scientific and peer-reviewed assessment reports by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC].

As part of our commitment to a sustainable environment, we promote research and education around the science, impacts, and responses to climate change. We address the climate change problem by focusing on four main areas:

1. Climate Change Research Priority Area

Climate change is a major thematic area of Earthwatch Institute research¹. The research initiatives under the climate change theme focus on monitoring and evaluating the consequences of climate change, and how we can adapt and manage ecosystems to safeguard livelihoods and achieve effective mitigation. The research initiatives focus on:

- I. **Understanding climate change impacts and controlling non-climate change stresses.**
Climate change is an additional and significant stress to environmental systems, of which many are threatened by habitat destruction, invasive non-native species or disease, encroachment, pollution and over-exploitation of resources. An understanding of all these stressors, which may act synergistically, is critical to managing ecosystems in a changing world.
- II. **Implementing adaptive management and monitoring.**
Managing and researching climate change impacts is often more suitable in localized areas than on a global scale. Where climate change impacts are evident, active intervention may be appropriate for the improvement of resilience in critical ecosystems. It will become even more important to work at a landscape scale, for example, to build in buffer zones, corridors and stepping stones to aid species migration.
- III. **Building in mitigation.** Ultimately, adaptation is futile without mitigation. However, in undertaking adaptive management it is also possible to safeguard natural mitigation services such as the sequestration of CO₂ by forests and organic soils. Appropriate management in this context will include habitat regeneration and avoidance of exploitation.

2. Influencing Institutions

Earthwatch engages with various regional and international-level institutions, including government agencies, charitable and non-governmental organizations, and the private sector. We work to engage, communicate, and support environmental responsibility with these partners and affiliates. Addressing climate change is a major component of environmental responsibility, particularly in individual behavior, corporate investment and conduct, and government policy.

Earthwatch requests corporate affiliates and members to demonstrate improved environmental performance over time. We promote immediate action to address the climate change problem through forums and by encouraging Earthwatch stakeholders, such as our suppliers, to act in a responsible manner.

¹ The Earthwatch Priority Research Areas are: Climate Change, Ecosystem Services, Oceans, and Cultural Heritage.

3. Education & Engagement

Earthwatch aims to inspire the commitment and develop the capacity of individuals and organizations to change by increasing environmental awareness and understanding, through knowledge transfer and the development of new skills. Our educational programs and engagement models play an important role in communicating the issues related to climate change. These programs also provide a variety of examples and methods for creating responsible behavior to address the climate challenge.

Earthwatch draws upon its community base of scientists and educators to bring climate change research (see Climate Change Research Priority Area) to the public and the private sector via firsthand field experience, e-learning tools, reference reports or guidelines, publications, lectures, events, conferences, and media coverage.

Earthwatch communicates and disseminates scientific research findings through peer-reviewed journals, articles, consultations, and funded publications. Dissemination of results is also accomplished through community-based workshops, local to national conferences, and the web.

4. Our Carbon Footprint

Earthwatch facilitates an active carbon management strategy. Reducing overall CO₂ emissions to a minimum from travel, energy consumption, paper use, and our supply chain is part of a sustainability audit, to be completed in step with our carbon neutral goals.

Earthwatch has participated in a carbon offsetting scheme for its air travel emissions since 2004 and is currently developing a comprehensive international carbon management strategy that will inform how each office will offset, the methods by which this is achieved, and timeframes involved.

Earthwatch aims to go "beyond the basics" with any carbon neutral program undertaken. This involves not only ensuring the appropriate amount of carbon sequestration needed to offset the organization's emissions, but also ensuring that long-term sustainable development and ecosystems benefits are secured. This may include various offsetting mechanisms such as sequestration projects managed in-house or through partnership, emissions transfer or displacement, ecosystem regeneration, or credit retirement projects.



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