



Frogs and Climate Change

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Frogs have been disappearing at alarming rates in recent decades. While habitat destruction is the major cause of frog extinctions in lowland areas, climate change poses a serious threat to frogs in mountainous regions. Frogs need moist climates to reproduce, and this makes them extremely sensitive to changes in climate. Unlike reptiles or birds, which have hard-shelled eggs, frogs have jelly-like, unshelled eggs that cannot survive dry conditions. In upland areas of the tropics, many frogs live in cloud forests and lay their eggs in the moist leaf-litter. As the eggs are laid away from water bodies, the embryos bypass the aquatic tadpole stage and hatch directly into tiny froglets. These 'direct-developing' species are under serious threat from global warming, which acts to raise the cloud levels. As the clouds rise, the frogs at the newly-exposed lower elevations lose their habitat (and their lives) as the soil dries. Some frog species live in only a single mountain range, or even on a single mountain, so when problems arise the entire species can easily go extinct.

Climate change is also affecting frog populations outside the tropics. Pond-breeding species are dependent on water bodies that do not dry up before their tadpoles can metamorphose. In Yellowstone National Park, USA, the world's oldest protected area, droughts have been increasing over the last 50 years, and 25% of the ponds that existed in the early 1990s no longer fill with water. It is not surprising that three of the four species are now declining in numbers. If climate change is already affecting Yellowstone's wildlife, it is safe to assume that it is having an even more significant effect elsewhere in the world, where habitat destruction, pollution and other environmental problems are likely to compound matters.

While it is important that our world leaders take action to prevent further climate change, we as individuals are just as responsible for taking action in our own lives. Here are three simple ways you can reduce your carbon footprint and help save the frogs...and yourself!

Don't purchase bottled water

Plan ahead and fill your re-usable bottle. Not only is plastic produced from oil, but it takes fuel to get the bottle of water from the source to the store at which you buy it.

Eat less meat

Cows live in pastures, and rainforests worldwide are being destroyed to make way for these pastures. Without the rainforests to trap carbon, we don't stand much of a chance of fighting global warming. But that's not all: cows, pigs, sheep and goats are responsible for a significant amount of the world's methane emissions - and methane is at least 20 times more potent a greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide!

Take shorter showers

There is a high chance your hot water is being heated by electricity generated at a coal-fired power plant.

Please visit <http://savethefrogs.com/climate> to learn more about frogs and climate change, and find more ways to reduce your carbon footprint.

