

Into the depths: Climate Change Part 4

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Staff Article

Dear Reader,

It saddens me to say, this is the end of our fifteen week long journey together. I have greatly enjoyed the chance to tell my gruesome tale of climate injustice. I hope, after covering the four mainstream continents affected by climate change, that I was able to teach something that you may not have known. I am grateful to you for taking the time to read these journeys, and for doing all you can for our climate.

With gratitude,

The writer

Mexico:

The sweltering heat fills my lungs, and my feet are planted firmly in the sand. The locals of Cancuún are incredibly gracious, and offer me plenty of gifts upon my arrival. I have been to Mexico one previous time and - I remember someone telling me not to worry about rainstorms. It isn't until now that I realize why. Mexico has increasing temperatures that are causing high levels of evaporation (Liverman).

One study conducted in the region analyzed what the result of these changes will look like in 100 years. The researchers found that overall temperature increases are to be expected, although the northern portion of the country can be expected to

increase more (Cuervo-Robayo). It was also noted that the amount of rain is expected to increase (Cuervo-Robayo).

When a storm rolled in, it was gone just as quickly. The intense amount of rain that fell, was gone from the ground just as quickly. Cancún has palm trees, and on every rock I can spot at least three iguanas. I also notice upon waking that every single morning, the same men are on the beach scooping large piles of seaweed, cleaning up the beach. After reading a bit deeper, I have determined it is due to a process called eutrophication. Because of the increase in ocean temperatures, the ocean vegetation is growing at an increased rate (Laurent). This is just another great change due to the changing climate.

In the next step of my journey, I will be traveling to a climate that varies greatly from Mexico's this one. I am incredibly sad saying goodbye to these people, but I know that furthering this research will help them in the end.

Canada:

In the land known for its cold, snowy winters, there are several issues related to climate change occurring here. I stand in the remarkable boreal forest among the trees, the small towns interspersed within them are filled with people. These people are incredibly happy here, however, in a study. But, in one study I found conducted in the *Journal of Toxicology and Environmental Health*, climate change is making the people here very sick (Charron). Due to increased temperature and precipitation, *E. Coli* infections are running rampant through the population due to changes in the water

(Charron). This is present from ground water that people are consuming due to overgrowth of bacteria (Charron).

Although I do not find that I love the cold, I cherish it, because I know it is not forever. Also, looking around at this leafy forest, I am curious about the future of the trees here. An article in the *International Journal of Wildland Fire* states that the changing climate will have great impacts on the forest fire activity in this country. It will completely alter the overall structure of these forests, and fire occurrences will increase at a rate of 25 % by 2030 (Wotton).

There is one piece left to this climate change puzzle, and it requires me to travel to one of the most politicized places for climate change.

United States:

It feels great to be home, but unfortunately, there is still a great deal of work left to do. In the U.S., climate change has become a rather political issue. Because of this, there is a great deal of opposition to new climate initiatives. In a letter to Congress, the state of the climate was laid out in great detail. This article mentions there will be great changes in ecosystems, farming, and oceans (Environmental).

There is a method used in research to determine the likelihood and severity of climate crisis. These indices are the Climate extremes index, and the U.S. Greenhouse factor (Karl). It was also noted that the government does not utilize this data to its fullest extent (Karl).

These greenhouse gasses are expected to increase dramatically. The effect of this is increased ocean and mean global air temperatures (Scavia). CO₂ levels are also expected to rise due to greenhouse gas emission. Shockingly enough, deforestation in the Amazon is perpetuating this problem (Medvigy). This shows that in all the places I have visited on this journey, they are all in a way connected. Each place affects the next.

Sadly enough to say, my home is in great danger, and we are the root of our own problem. I walk in my front door, drop my bags on the floor, and immediately pull out a book that was read to me as a child. It's about all the animals and plants that are changing. I realize this was the beginning of my fight to solve this problem. Even though I haven't solved anything yet, I know, I will continue this fight. I hope that this journey will inspire others to read more, look more, and maybe even care more.

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