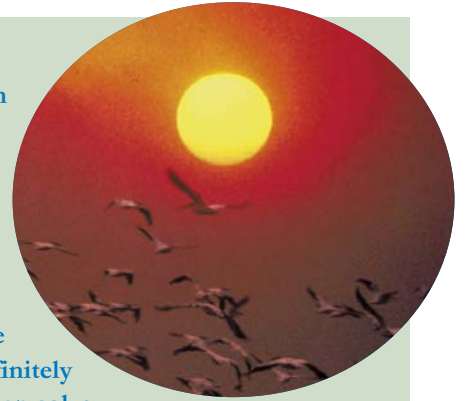




**CHANGE THE FORECAST FOR WILDLIFE**  
SOLUTIONS TO GLOBAL WARMING

## Global Warming and the VIRGIN ISLANDS

**G**lobal warming is not just heating the Earth's average air temperature; it also is warming waters globally—a phenomenon already causing problems for the U.S. Virgin Islands. As waters warm, they expand, causing sea level to rise along coastlines. Moreover, increasing temperatures are hurting the health of ocean ecosystems, spreading disease and causing massive coral bleaching in places such as Virgin Islands National Park. Scientists say the change in water temperature could also play a major role in the intensity of hurricanes in the coming decades. Being that it is on the front lines of all of these problems, the U.S. Virgin Islands could definitely be in hot water from global warming by the end of the century. We can solve global warming and revitalize our economy by rebuilding America with clean energy.



### Global warming effects on Virgin Islands wildlife

**A**lready faced with challenges from human development and other environmental concerns, the diverse species of the U.S. Virgin Islands could have an even harder time surviving as global warming continues. Rising temperatures and sea level will likely alter the makeup of entire ecosystems, forcing wildlife to shift their ranges or adapt.



- The coral reefs of the Virgin Islands provide food, shelter and breeding grounds for thousands of marine species. Today, as much as 90 percent of corals in the region are dead or dying due to a host of factors, including global warming. An increase in average sea temperatures over the past 30 years has caused widespread coral bleaching, where corals lose the colorful algae in their tissues they need to survive.
- Already, heavy logging and development have seriously diminished native wildlife habitat within the U.S. Virgin Islands. Erosion, flooding and invasive species, made worse by global warming, could push some of the most endangered species to the brink of extinction.

### Global Warming Pollution

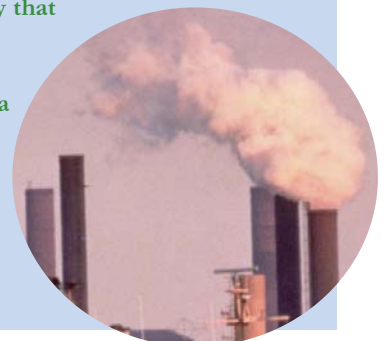
Burning coal, gas and oil produces carbon dioxide, which is a greenhouse gas that warms the planet as it builds up in the atmosphere. Some of the carbon dioxide released today remains in the atmosphere after even 100 years, trapping more and more heat.

Since the mid-1800s, emissions of carbon dioxide have skyrocketed, causing global temperatures to rise by about 1° Fahrenheit in the last century. Earth has not experienced such a rapid change in temperature in thousands of years.

### A Global Solution

The U.S. must lead the world by passing global warming legislation at home and working with other nations at the Copenhagen climate summit at the end of 2009 to sign a new climate treaty that

keeps further warming below 2° Fahrenheit. With a global solution, we can avoid the worst impacts of global warming.



## What's at stake for Virgin Islanders?

The changes from global warming threaten not only to degrade the natural ecosystems of the U.S. Virgin Islands but also the health and economy of its people.

- The water resources of the U.S. Virgin Islands are already strained, as 65 percent of the territory's drinking water comes from desalination plants, making it the most expensive publicly supplied water in the United States. Drier conditions projected with global warming would increase these water needs and the costs associated with them.
- More than 11 million Americans participate in snorkeling and scuba-diving activities, with many traveling to the U.S. Virgin Islands, home to some of the most beautiful reefs in the world. As coral quality declines with bleaching and storm damage, it could mean fewer tourist dollars for the islands.
- Evidence suggests that hurricanes have already increased in intensity and will continue to do so because of global warming. Moreover, rising sea levels will leave beachfront development along the Virgin Islands' coastline more vulnerable to storm surges and erosion.

**“Global warming poses an overriding challenge to our responsibility to protect wildlife for our children’s future. We must advance balanced solutions that work for people, wildlife and the economy to overcome this challenge.”—**

**Larry Schweiger**  
*President, CEO*  
*National Wildlife Federation*

### GLOBAL WARMING NATIONAL POLICY SOLUTION:

A federal legislative solution can drive American ingenuity, create millions of green jobs, and restore America's global leadership on global warming. Legislation should:

- \* Include ambitious targets to reduce America's global warming pollution as swiftly and deeply as possible. Scientists say that developed countries as a whole need to reduce their global warming pollution by at least 80% from 1990 levels by 2050 to avoid the worst impacts of global warming.
- \* Move America toward a 100% clean electricity future by maximizing energy efficiency, modernizing the electric power grid, expanding power generation from renewable energy resources, and investing in clean transportation infrastructure.
- \* Invest in natural resources. Forests, coasts, wetlands, clean air and clean water are already being impacted by global warming. Funding is needed to safeguard the natural resources that are critical to wildlife populations and human health.
- \* Lead a worldwide effort to finance clean energy technology, forest conservation, and adaptation to unavoidable impacts of global warming.

For more information, visit: [www.nwf.org/globalwarming](http://www.nwf.org/globalwarming).



John Thornton (NREL)

## Virgin Islands' solutions to global warming

The U.S. Virgin Islands have enormous renewable energy potential, particularly from solar power. Several programs have been developed to expand the use of solar and other clean energy sources on the islands, helping to reduce carbon pollution from dirtier fossil fuels.

- The Virgin Islands Energy Office was created to monitor and champion energy efficiency and renewable energy opportunities throughout the islands.
- Florida Power & Light and St. Thomas University have partnered on a cooperative fuel cell and solar project in the U.S. Virgin Islands.
- Tampa Electric Company has developed a biogas unit at one of the islands' landfills, to convert landfill gas into energy.

Following some simple guidelines, you can cut your global warming pollution, become more energy efficient and give something back to nature.

- **Plant shade trees:** The Department of Energy says planting three trees strategically around your home can reduce your annual heating and cooling costs by an average of 40 percent.
- **Convert to compact fluorescent bulbs:** If every household in America replaced its next burned out light bulb with a compact fluorescent, we would prevent more than 13 billion pounds of carbon dioxide from being emitted.
- **Use a low-emission boat motor:** Boat engines such as a low emission, four-stroke motor pollute only one-sixth the amount of older two-stroke engines.
- **Become a Green Tag subscriber:** Many states now offer options for homeowners to buy electricity from clean, renewable sources such as wind, solar and biomass that produce little or no global warming pollution. Green energy can also be purchased through the National Wildlife Federation by visiting [www.nwf.org/energy](http://www.nwf.org/energy).

For more information, contact:  
**Geralyn Hoey**  
404-876-8733 x 224  
[HoeyG@nwf.org](mailto:HoeyG@nwf.org)

