

Genetics

Human impact on the environment or anthropogenic impact on the environment includes changes to biophysical environments and ecosystems, biodiversity, and natural resources caused directly or indirectly by humans, including global warming, environmental degradation (such as ocean acidification, mass extinction and biodiversity loss, ecological crisis, and ecological collapse. Modifying the environment to fit the needs of society is causing severe effects, which become worse as the problem of human overpopulation continues. Some human activities that cause damage (either directly or indirectly) to the environment on a global scale include human reproduction, overconsumption, overexploitation, pollution, and deforestation, to name but a few. Some of the problems, including global warming and biodiversity loss pose an existential risk to the human race, and human overpopulation causes those problems.

The term anthropogenic designates an effect or object resulting from human activity. The term was first used in the technical sense by Russian geologist Alexey Pavlov, and it was first used in English by British ecologist Arthur Tansley in reference to human influences on climax plant communities. The atmospheric scientist Paul Crutzen introduced the term "Anthropocene" in the mid-1970s. The term is sometimes used in the context of pollution emissions that are produced from human activity since the start of the Agricultural Revolution but also applies broadly to all major human impacts on the environment. Many of the actions taken by humans that contribute to a heated environment stem from the burning of fossil fuel from a variety of sources, such as: electricity, cars, planes, space heating, manufacturing, or the destruction of forests.

David Attenborough described the level of human population on the planet as a multiplier of all other environmental problems. In 2013, he described humanity as "a plague on the Earth" that needs to be controlled by limiting population growth.

Some deep ecologists, such as the radical thinker and polemicist Pentti Linkola, see human overpopulation as a threat to the entire biosphere. In 2017, over 15,000 scientists around the world issued a second warning to humanity which asserted that rapid human population growth is the "primary driver behind many ecological and even societal threats.