

# irreplaceable

Wildlife in a Warming World

Read about our awe-inspiring species. Peer into the world of these plants and animals and learn their fascinating stories. Discover what makes them truly irreplaceable.

## Global Warming is Affecting Wildlife Today

Scientists now predict that temperatures will increase between 2.5 and 10.4 degrees Fahrenheit over the next century, faster than any warming for thousands of years. Many people are familiar with the plight of the polar bear, struggling as the sea ice it depends on melts away. But climate change threats reach well beyond the Arctic: habitats and ecosystems are being fundamentally altered all around us, threatening species even in our own backyards.

## Northwest Wildlife At Risk



### Pacific Salmon: In hot water

Pacific salmon have been the lifeblood of generations of fishermen and are an integral part of communities up and down the coast. Adapted for cold water, salmon cannot survive prolonged exposure to stream temperatures above 70 degrees Fahrenheit. In fact, the "red" or sockeye salmon (left) are already extinct over much of their range largely because of warmer water in spawning and rearing streams. They may be pushed entirely out of their native Pacific range if stream or ocean temperatures continue to rise. In addition,

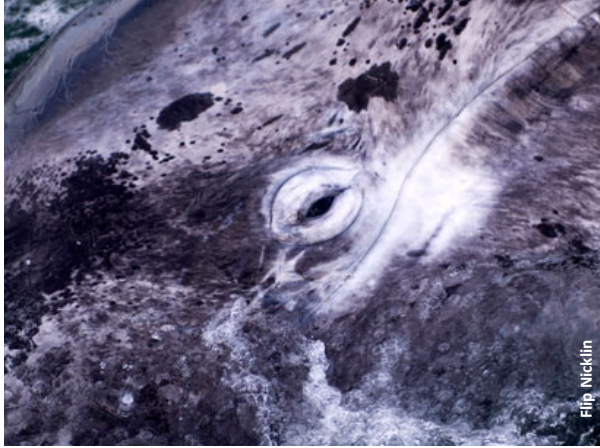
decreased glacial snowpack and snowmelt due to global warming means less stream flow, adding yet another obstacle for many salmon species already struggling to return to their birth streams to spawn.

### American Pikas: Running out of room at the top

A high-pitched whistle from a rocky pile signals you are looking at a house belonging to the American pika. Nicknamed the "rock rabbit," the tiny pika is the size of a tennis ball with babies the size of walnuts. Covered year-round in heavy fur, pikas are highly susceptible to overheating, and when temperatures climb above 75 degrees Fahrenheit, they can die in less than an hour. Pikas live at high elevations, though lately rising temperatures have been chasing them upslope to cooler climates. However, mountains have tops, and these resourceful rock rabbits may soon run out of habitat.



Visit [www.irreplaceablewild.org](http://www.irreplaceablewild.org) to learn more



## Gray Whales: Hungry in a changing ocean

Often longer than a school bus and weighing 30 to 40 tons, gray whales move in large pods visible from the California coast as they travel more than 12,000 miles from Mexico to Alaska and back. Unique among its fellow baleen whales, the gray whale feeds along the ocean floor, using the side of its mouth to suck up all the krill and sediment in its path. But rises in sea temperature have degraded the gray whale's Arctic feeding grounds, so that a food supply formerly estimated to support 90,000 whales can no longer feed even the estimated 22,000 remaining.

## Mountain Goats: Struggling as their habitat vanishes

One must ascend great heights to find mountain goats in their subalpine meadow habitat. More properly known as goat-antelopes, the mountain goat nimbly scales heights impossible for most people and other animals, aided by its ability to jump up to twelve feet and by special gripping hooves. If current warming trends continue, these mountain dwellers will be forced to ascend to even greater heights. Also, less snow and earlier snowmelt are allowing more trees to colonize the meadows on which mountain goats depend. As the tree line encroaches on their meadows, the goats are crowded into smaller areas with less forage available for goat kids.



## What's the answer?

While this information is sobering, there is still time to act. Some answers we already know: we need to reduce the impacts of pollution, invasive species, and habitat destruction, restore migration corridors and protect key habitat areas, and, of course, stop global warming! Other solutions will take more research, time, money, and dedication to develop and implement. But together, we know we can get there.

**You can help:** Visit us online at [www.irreplaceablewild.org](http://www.irreplaceablewild.org) to:

- Sign our Call to Care: urge our leaders to help animals and plants struggling in a warming world;
- Check out more ways to get involved, like writing to your local paper, or taking part in a unique photo petition to Congress;
- View our online gallery of wildlife photography, send ecards to your friends to get them involved, download screensavers and banners, and learn more about at-risk species in your region;
- Learn about simple things you can do to help stop global warming and protect wildlife, like saving energy in your home, driving efficiently, reducing waste, creating backyard habitat, and more!

For more information, contact: Earth Ministry, Kaitlin Torgerson ([kaitlin@earthministry.org](mailto:kaitlin@earthministry.org)) 206-632-2426  
Endangered Species Coalition, Ryan Manion ([rmanion@stopextinction.org](mailto:rmanion@stopextinction.org)) 503-221-7922 x13