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EARTHTALK FOR YOUNG READERS

Week of 10/3/2004

From Stacy Clark, Youth Editor of E/The Environmental Magazine

Dear EarthTalk, Young Readers: What part of the Earth is affected by the greenhouse effect?

-Jack T., Dallas, Texas

Jack, the entire planet is most likely affected by what we've come to know as the greenhouse effect. Even though only about one percent of Earth's atmosphere contains naturally occurring greenhouse gases, automobile exhaust and electrical power plant emissions (created by non-renewable sources of energy, such as coal, oil and natural gas) introduce huge amounts of man-made greenhouse gases into the atmosphere each year. It is these man-made sources of greenhouse gases that most scientists believe cause a problem for the environment.

The problem is that greenhouse gases (there are seven all together) trap and hold heat from the sun close to Earth's surface, much like the panes of glass in a greenhouse that prevent the sun's heat from escaping. And just like the inside of a greenhouse gets hotter and hotter, Earth's temperatures have been getting hotter too.

The higher than normal temperatures now recorded around the planet are harming many temperature-sensitive plant and animal species. Many, in fact, now face extinction because they are not equipped to adapt to the accelerated rate of temperature change that the planet has experienced over the past 50 to 80 years. Rising temperatures are also linked to other environmental problems, such as droughts and lower crop yields.

Reducing the levels of man-made greenhouse gas emissions is possible. Here are a few suggestions for you and your family and friends:

- Walking or biking instead of driving in a car reduces greenhouse gas emissions.
- Turning off the lights when leaving a room lowers the demand for electricity, which lowers the levels of greenhouse gases released from electrical power plants.



◆ Ask an Environmental Question

◆ Editors, bring EarthTalk Young Readers to your newspaper or website!

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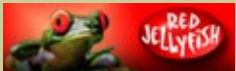
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*Something is fishy
 Mercury is a toxic contaminant that is showing up in dangerously high concentrations in the fish we eat, yet the FDA isn't protecting us!? **Take action!**

GO Add the Action Box to your site!

- Reusing or recycling things instead of throwing them away means that the levels of greenhouse gases released from all types of manufacturing facilities decrease as well.
- Altogether, these kinds of choices will help to slow down the greenhouse effect.

GOT AN ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTION? Send it to: EARTH TALK for YOUNG READERS, c/o E/The Environmental Magazine, P.O. Box 5098, Westport, CT 06881; submit your question at: www.emagazine.com; or e-mail us at: stacy@emagazine.com.

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