

Five Tourist Destinations That Global Warming Could Destroy

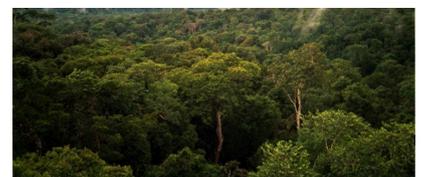
Global warming could have a devastating impact on some popular vacation spots, according to Bob Henson, a writer at the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, Colorado, and author of "The Rough Guide to Climate Change."



In an interview with CNN, Henson listed five geographic locations that may be substantially altered over the next few decades as a result of climate change. The Great Barrier Reef, the city of New Orleans, Rocky Mountain National Park, the Alpine Glaciers and the Amazon Rainforest are all in danger of undergoing dramatic transformation.

"It's a feast for the eyes in terms of color, texture variations -- it's just amazing to see," Henson said of the Great Barrier Reef. "It's wonderful to be enveloped in the warm water and look down just a few feet below at this amazing spread of ocean life." However warming temperatures can cause bleaching in coral reefs, which drains them of their vibrant colors. According to Henson, bleaching is already taking place in the Great Barrier Reef.

New Orleans and other coastal cities are reportedly endangered by rising sea levels. Henson warned that "in the next several hundred years, life there may be difficult, and the cities may become impractical unless we can build large structures to keep the waters at bay."



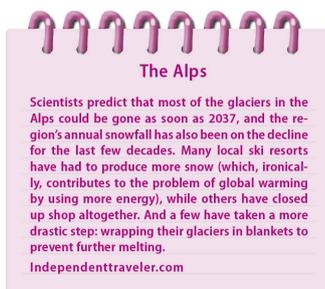
In the Rocky Mountain National Park, herds of pine beetles are destroying trees and devouring much of the park's natural beauty. Icy winter temperatures have traditionally killed off the beetles and kept their populations under control, but warming temperatures are keeping them alive and creating an infestation. According to a spokeswoman for the park, this infestation "has reached epidemic proportions as a result of climate issues."

The Alpine Glaciers are also faring poorly. According to CNN, "A climate expert in Austria recently told

National Geographic that the Alps' famed glaciers will disappear entirely between 2030 and 2050." Signs of thinning in the Alps are already visible, as their low elevation makes them very susceptible to melting.



The Amazon Rainforest has been in danger for years as a result of deforestation, but Henson predicts that climate change will only make matters worse. "The fear is that there will be kind of a feedback where trees are cut down, and it gets warmer and drier" in the forest until it can't grow back, Henson said.



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