



Climate Witness: Olav Mathis Eira, Norway

For centuries, the Sami people have been herding reindeer in an area spanning Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. Extreme weather resulting from climate change is now putting this lifestyle at risk

What the IPCC says

- In several northern hemisphere mountain systems, **treelines have markedly shifted to higher elevations during the 20th century** such as in the Scandes
- Species **ranges of alpine plants also have extended to higher altitudes** in the Norwegian Scandes

Source: IPCC 4th Assessment Report, working group II [1.3.5.2 & 1.3.5.2]



Olav Mathis Eira's family has been herding reindeer in northern Norway since the 1400s.

“One of [my sons] will hopefully keep the family tradition of reindeer herding. But it is no longer a good life. It is an insecure future.”

What this WWF Climate Witness is experiencing right now

- **“The number of storms and the amount of precipitation is increasing.** The snow gets icy from the rain so that the reindeer cannot get through down to the food, the lichens, which they depend on to survive in the winter.”
- **“The tree line climbs higher year by year.** I believe the forests increase more year by year, and the forest down here gets thicker and thicker.”
- **“Since the start of the 1990’s, reindeer owners have pretty much agreed that what we see now is completely unnatural. There are no long periods of frost anymore.** This also makes the big migration of the reindeers in spring more difficult. The number of losses during this period are increasing.”

To limit the impacts of climate change highlighted by the IPCC's 4th Assessment Report...

- Industrialized countries must cut their emissions by at least 30% by 2020;
- Big developing economies should agree to join hands with rich countries to develop their own climate solutions; and
- Deforestation must be stopped, by making forest protection a business proposition.

WWF works with governments and communities around the world to develop region-specific adaptation strategies to address climate change impacts — such as those impacts being observed by our Climate Witnesses here and now.

For more information: Chief Scientist, WWF International Climate Change Programme, Email: Lara.Hansen@wwfus.org

Find out more

Testimonial:

panda.org/climatewitness/eira

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