



Climate Witness: Neil Smith, United Kingdom

Harsh, cold winters used to be the hallmark of the Highlands, a rugged mountainous area of northern Scotland. Not anymore says one ice climber

What the IPCC says

- Analysis of available long-term river flow records shows that since 1989 more than half of Scotland's largest rivers (notably those draining from the west) have recorded their highest flows. Of 16 rivers surveyed, with a median record of 39 years, 8 had their maximum flow during 1989-1997 - a period of high North Atlantic Oscillation index values consistent with storm tracks bringing high levels of precipitation to north Britain.

Source: IPCC 4th Assessment Report, working group II [1.3.8.1]



Neil Smith lives in the western highlands of Scotland, and has a passion for ice climbing.

“Over the past 27 years I have observed a dramatic change in the ice conditions throughout the Scottish highlands.”

What this WWF Climate Witness is experiencing right now

- “Since the mid-1990s the lower mountains have yielded very little ice climbing. It may snow, and then freeze, but exceptionally mild weather would arrive and strip the mountain bare again.”
- “I certainly remember the abundant frost and it would arrive much earlier than recent winters. **Milder winters are driving snow elevations higher and producing more rain.**”

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.

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Find out more

Testimonial:

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