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| Human Impact Gallery

| How Humans Affect Animal Migrations Around the World



PHOTOGRAPH BY SMAILIK12

Skyscrapers

Skyscrapers are a defining feature of many of the world's most populous cities, and allow more humans to live in a smaller area of land. However, the higher humans build into the sky, the more they interrupt the migration patterns of birds. Millions of birds die each year from colliding with these towering glass structures.



PHOTOGRAPH BY TONY CAMPBELL

Highways

Collisions between automobiles and migrating wildlife are a common occurrence on modern highways, and can be deadly for animals, and, in some cases, for human drivers as well. Large animals like moose can be especially dangerous for travellers—even females, which are considerably smaller than males, can weigh over 270 kilograms (595 pounds).



PHOTOGRAPH BY RUSTY DODSON

Walls, Fences, and Barriers

Border walls, electric fences, and other human-made types of barriers are a potentially deadly hazard to migrating wildlife. Pronghorn migrate over 321 kilometers (200 miles) every year from Canada to Montana. Used to open plains with no tall obstacles in their way, pronghorn often attempt to cross barbed wire fences by crawling under the wire, and can injure or entangle themselves in the process.



PHOTOGRAPH BY EDEN ZANG

Ocean Shipping Routes

Since the planet's surface is 70 percent water, it might seem like there would be plenty of places for marine life to hide from humans, but even the oceans aren't safe from negative human impact. Ships can hit and injure marine life as they migrate across the ocean, pollute the water, and can create a noisy underwater environment where marine life is constantly under stress.

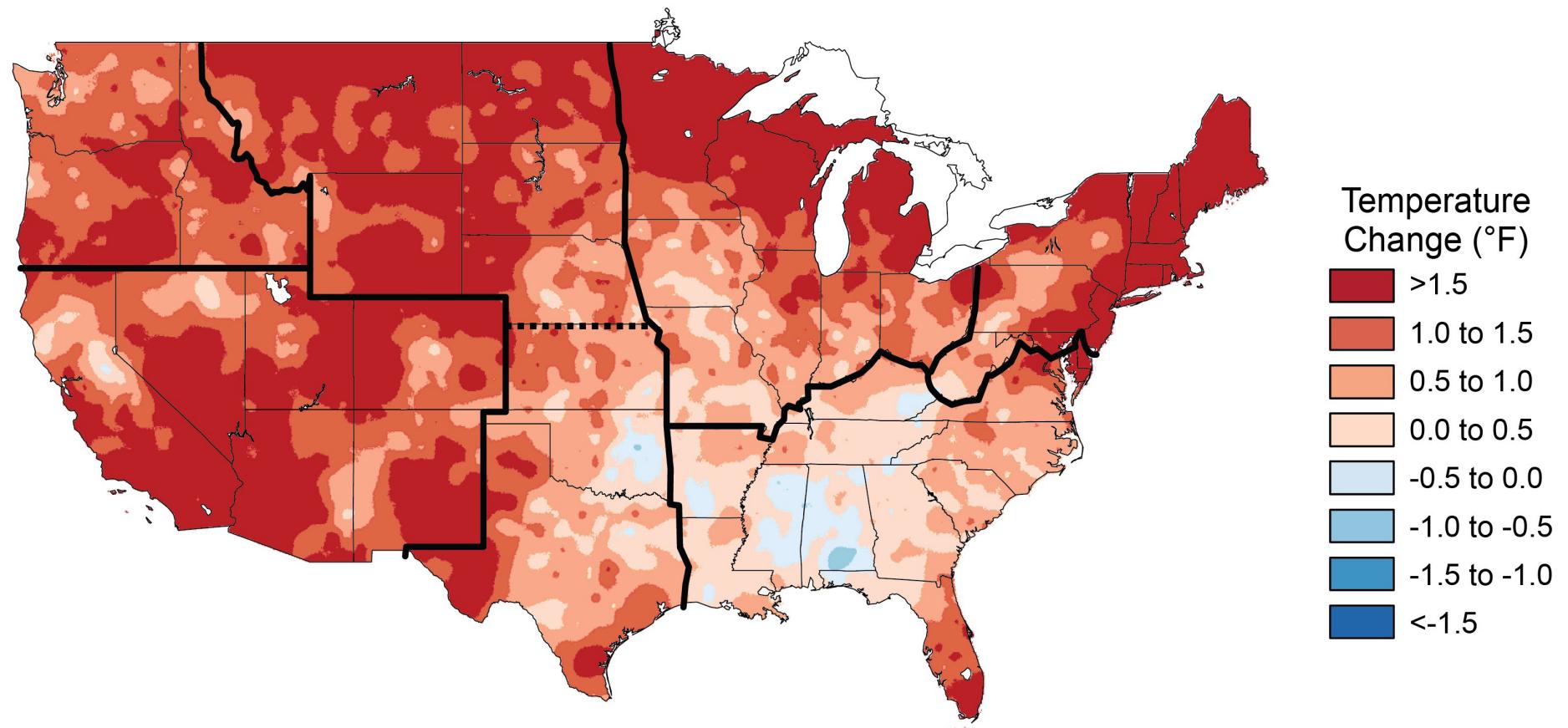


PHOTOGRAPH BY VOLKMAR K. WENTZEL

Construction and Mining

Human construction and mining projects can severely alter the environment and destroy the natural habitats of local wildlife. Some mines, like this iron ore open mine in Eswatini, can grow larger and larger over the years, destroying more habitat as humans mine for more ore.

Observed U.S. Temperature Change



Climate Change

Human-caused climate change, largely driven by the disproportionate amount of carbon released into the atmosphere by human activity, has caused average temperatures to rise in the United States and around the world. In many regions, higher temperatures, flooding, or drought are endangering wildlife populations that are quickly becoming incompatible with their warmer homes.



PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES P. BLAIR

Bright City Lights

City lights can be seen from space, and while they may put on a dazzling show for humans, they can be disorienting and dangerous for animals. Some animals, like many types of birds and sea turtles, determine their migration seasons by sensing the length of daylight. Light pollution from cities can confuse these animals and compel them to migrate at the wrong time of year, endangering them and preventing their populations from growing.



PHOTOGRAPH BY KESIPUN

Wind Turbines

Although wind energy production is considered environmentally friendly because it creates fewer carbon emissions than burning fossil fuels, it still comes with its own hazards. Wind turbines can pose a hazard to birds and other flying creatures like bats. Birds and bats can collide with blades, or experience what is called barotrauma, a potentially deadly event when the animal's flight pattern is disrupted by the extreme air pressure fluctuations caused by the turbine's blades.