

# The environmental issue from hell

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



I happen to believe that global warming is a serious issue that needs immediate multi-national attention, but you would never understand why from Mckibben's article. Toward the beginning of the text, he does say, " Severe storms already have grown more frequent and more damaging." But after that, he goes off the rails. He purports to give two examples of the kind of environmental damage done by Global warm. But the first of these, the flooding in Bangladesh in 1998, was not that unusual from a historical perspective and was not caused by global warming. He says it happened because of rising sea levels in the Bay of Bengal, but this is fantasy. Water levels simply have not risen (yet) to anything a sufficient level to have that effect. If those floods had any environmental cause, it was the exploitation of local groundwater around Dhaka resulting in ground subsidence and deforestation in the Himalayas. <sup>1</sup> Then he talks about the catastrophic loss of species in the 20th century (which will probably continue in the 21st century). He cites the example of the polar bear, whose habitat is being destroyed by global warming. Unfortunately, almost all of the species loss has been due to deforestation and other causes of habitat loss, not to global warming. These different environmental problems cannot be linked together in the over-simplified way he implies.

While the message of Mckibben's article might be valid, his method is likely to repel any reader who is not already a member of the choir. He also obscures his point by concentrating on falsified science, rather than real science. Besides the red herrings of the Bangladesh floods and the polar bear, he concentrates on the SUV problem, which speaks more to class warfare than global warming, since emissions from vehicles are trivial

compared to those from power plants. 2 Mckibben completely ignores more reasonable appeals such as one to the economic self-interest of the middle class which might be more persuasive because, in part, less polarizing.