
Marine Migrations Veer into Uncharted Waters

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By Lael Gilbert

Some of the world's largest mammals undertake the longest migrations on earth. Climate change is scrambling these routes, forcing migrating species to veer off course. Ecologist Trisha Atwood, an associate professor in Watershed Sciences, joined more than 70 scientists to discuss the global impacts of climate change on migratory species at a workshop convened by the United Nations Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals.

Almost no migratory species is untouched by climate change, Atwood reported. From whales and dolphins, to arctic shorebirds and elephants, all are affected by rising temperatures, extreme weather and shifting ecosystems, which disrupt migratory routes and reshape habitats. Animals travel across vast areas of land and ocean without regard for political borders, the researchers emphasized, and solutions need to be just as wide-reaching and flexible.

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