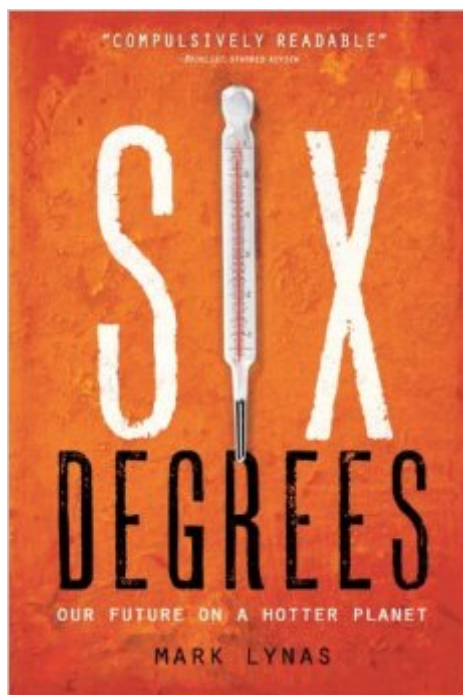


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Six Degrees: Our Future On A Hotter Planet



Synopsis

Possibly the most graphic treatment of global warming that has yet been published, *Six Degrees* is what readers of Al Gore's best-selling *An Inconvenient Truth* or Ross Gelbspan's *Boiling Point* will turn to next. Written by the acclaimed author of *High Tide*, this highly relevant and compelling book uses accessible journalistic prose to distill what environmental scientists portend about the consequences of human pollution for the next hundred years. In 2001, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released a landmark report projecting average global surface temperatures to rise between 1.4 degrees and 5.8 degrees Celsius (roughly 2 to 10 degrees Fahrenheit) by the end of this century. Based on this forecast, author Mark Lynas outlines what to expect from a warming world, degree by degree. At 1 degree Celsius, most coral reefs and many mountain glaciers will be lost. A 3-degree rise would spell the collapse of the rainforest, disappearance of Greenland's ice sheet, and the creation of deserts across the Midwestern United States and southern Africa. A 6-degree increase would eliminate most life on Earth, including much of humanity. Based on authoritative scientific articles, the latest computer models, and information about past warm events in Earth history, *Six Degrees* promises to be an eye-opening warning that humanity will ignore at its peril.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

By 2100 earth will warm between 1.4° and 5.8° C (2.52° to 10.44° F) according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Although this sounds like a sunny and pleasant upside to vacation weather forecasts, as "Six Degrees Our Future on a Hotter Planet" by

Mark Lynas soberly notes, the consequences range from the inconvenient to the inconceivable as massive rockslides reshape the Alps, atoll nations across the Pacific are inundated, species extinction accelerates, and entire ecosystems collapse. The web of life - humanity's safety net - will disappear, stranding us on an essentially alien planet. Denialism invites devastation on a scale last seen during the Permian-Triassic (P-Tr) extinction event, and business or politics as usual will impose surrogate suicide on our children and grandchildren. Degree by degree "Six Degrees" explains the mechanisms behind global warming and the direct consequences of our actions (or inactions). From sophisticated and increasingly refined computer models, to the latest geological and paleontological evidence, Lynas compellingly argues that anthropomorphic climate change is a new and unprecedented challenge verging on calamity, not a routine and recurrent phenomenon due to cyclical natural causes. From bleached and dying tropical coral reefs to polar bears that will melt into history along with the glaciers and ice flows they called home, the future is dire unless immediate, but achievable steps are taken. Some species may survive by migrating, but most will have nowhere to migrate to. Small changes result in sizeable impacts - a mere 3°C increase will turn the American Midwest, the world's breadbasket, and the Basin which supplies 20% of earth's fresh water, into arid wasteland.

Using a solid, conservative methodology, the author paints a frightening picture of the climatic changes that lie before us as Earth grows hotter from greenhouse-gas emissions. I was torn between assigning this book four stars or five. While there's nothing about this book I don't like, I didn't want to be influenced by my own conviction of the overriding importance of this topic for all of us, and have tried to grade the book purely on the basis of my reaction to it as a book. But the topic is urgent and important, and Mark Lynas has treated it effectively and with authority. His approach was to review all the published scientific literature he could find on climate modeling and paleoclimatology. His sources therefore consist exclusively of peer-reviewed scientific papers: no pop-science books, interviews, or mass-market magazine articles. He created a database of articles and organized them into categories according to the amount of warming they discussed: 1 degree Celsius, 2 degrees Celsius, and so on up to 6 degrees. The book builds up a picture of the heating Earth, each chapter notching the average temperature one degree higher. At 1 degree, for example, Lynas discusses the likely desertification of the American West. The great plains ranging east of the Rockies north to Saskatchewan are actually an ancient dune-field covered with a thin layer of soil held in place by plants. Climate models show its likely reversion to a more drought-stricken regime that has also existed in the ancient past. The result will be the death of the plants, and blowing away

of the topsoil--just as happened with the Dust Bowl in Oklahoma in the 1930s. This new Dust Bowl will be much larger and more enduring--and where will all the people go?

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