

## *Animals Versus a Changing Climate*

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We have all heard of the terrifying news that the icecaps are melting, or that the frequency of storms is occurring more rapidly than ever before. But I am sure a lot of us have wondered how animals are impacted by climate change. There are a couple of categories that wild animals are encountering. Rising temperatures lower, “many species survival rates due to changes” which consequently “lead to less food” along with “less successful reproduction, and interfering with the environment for native wildlife.” But what happens to animals who get left behind? “About 18 months ago, Catskill Animal Sanctuary in Saugerties, N.Y., rescued 42 neglected and ailing sheep.” These sheep were found with ailing diseases, such as anemia and other bacterial infections that could end up being life threatening if left untreated. In order for the sheep to regain their strength they would need to be kept in a dry and tidy environment. However, “new caretakers faced a rapidly developing problem: soggy pastures and flooding barn stalls”. Weather conditions were fluctuating to a maximum extent, and that had led to increased rainfalls and flooded all the sheep stalls! Thanks to this predicament, the sanctuary was forced to find a completely new home, and this sadly seems to be a repeated occurrence for many other sanctuaries around the world. At the sanctuary the flooding had developed “soil erosion and a loss of trees on the sanctuary’s property”. In New York alone, “annual precipitation jumped 10 to 20 percent over the past century”, as claimed by the state report. In California, there are other problems as well. “Sweet Farm, an animal sanctuary that also grows produce and supports climate-related technology, moved 140 animals from Silicon Valley in California to New York’s Finger Lakes region in 2022 after a close call with a wildfire”. However, another study claims that “The owner’s quote of “extreme rainfall” can not be verified – they are in Tioga County, which has been drier than normal since 2021.” It turns out that ““*Basically that property is in a bowl,*” said Jake Wedemeyer, the executive director of the *Ulster County Soil and Water Conservation District, a government agency that advises farmers on agricultural practices.*” The owner hadn’t made a very wise decision on where the sanctuary was located, and completely forgot to ask about the composition of the soil. It was clearly seen that “The whole area between the foothills of the Catskill Mountains and the Hudson River in this part of the Hudson Valley *has so much clay* that it is famous for the number of historic brick kilns which used the abundant clay to manufacture bricks which were loaded on barges and floated down the Hudson to build NY City.” It seems to be that the lesson here is to be more concerned with what land you choose to buy and not climate change. There isn’t any need to discount wild animals being forced out of their natural habitats due to changes though, and there are plenty other animals that would be very grateful for some help. Every single animal deserves a safe place to live, but due to our planet’s changing climate it might be more difficult to meet that goal. But this isn’t a lost cause, you can always show support to your animal friends by donating to your local animal shelter, or

wildlife facilities. Everyone has bills to pay, and taking care of a whole bunch of stressed out animals isn't for the faint of heart. Many shelters also offer the opportunity to foster, and are always willing to take in some new friends that could help!

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