

"There is a very real risk of extinction," says Samantha Vine of the green turtle.

Too hot for turtles

Like the canary in a coalmine, the plight of the green turtle is a telling sign of the extent of global warming. Samantha Vine, WWF Australia's marine turtles coordinator, spoke to WHO.

How is climate change affecting the turtles?

Green turtles come ashore to lay their eggs on special nesting beaches. The sex of the turtle hatchlings is determined by the temperature at which the eggs are incubated—a warmer nest creates more female hatchlings. If temperatures rise too much—a result of climate change—there is a risk that all turtles will hatch as females, eventually leading to their extinction.

Are they in declining numbers now?

Recent reports show a 48 per cent to 67 per cent decline in the number of mature female green turtles nesting annually over the past three generations. We need to protect their habitat and also give them the chance to migrate safely into cooler regions as the world heats up. www.wwf.org.au

CATE CARES
Actress Cate Blanchett launched a website campaign on Aug. 27 that allows Australians to share how they are helping to stop global warming. The website "is a wonderful opportunity for all Australians to engage on this issue," said Cate. www.whoonearthcares.com

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You can start saving the planet today, says author Angela Crocombe

If everyone in the world lived the lifestyle of the average Australian," says Angela Crocombe, "we'd need the equivalent of 3.7 planets to sustain life." So concerned was the environmentalist about how people were fuelling global warming, the 36-year-old Victorian put pen to recycled paper. Her book *A Lighter Foot Print* (Scribe, \$24.95) serves as a manual on how to limit your impact on the planet. She spoke to Alicia Neil.

How does Australia's ecological footprint compare with other countries?

The WWF Living Planet report ranks us as having the fifth highest ecological footprint in the world, and we've been ranked higher in other studies. Australians are contributing up to 25 tonnes of greenhouse gasses each per year.

So what do we need to do?

We each have a carbon footprint, which refers to how much greenhouse gas each of us is responsible for. However, there are things, like flying, which can be minimised by purchasing carbon offsets from various companies that invest in renewable energy sources, like

tree planting. But carbon offsetting shouldn't be viewed as the cure. What we need to do is reduce our footprint as much as we can, and then offset what we can't reduce.

Is offsetting expensive?

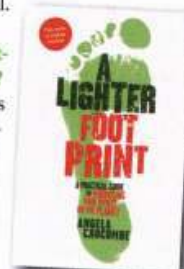
It actually saves you money. It's not about buying this perfectly sustainable home or hybrid car. It's more about conserving resources, being aware of what we purchase and the amount that goes to waste.

With one \$40 payment per year, Greenfleet will neutralise the average emissions from the average Australian car.

What else can we do?

Switch your electricity to Green Power. At work, switch off your computer—leaving it on stand-by for one year generates as many emissions as a return road-trip from Sydney to Perth. Ditch the plastic bags. Use public transport wherever possible. Or look at offsetting your car's emissions. We're getting to a point of no return, so action is becoming very urgent. We can't afford to wait.

www.lighterfootprint.com.au



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: WWF AUSTRALIA; GETTY IMAGES; INQUIRER NEWS