

Summary of Chapter 1

- It is almost completely certain that mankind is causing the relatively rapid climate change we see today and the world is getting warmer as a result.
- Worldwide, extreme weather events occur more often. They are becoming more severe and cause increasing amounts of damage in terms of infrastructure and human deaths.
- Sea level is estimated to rise by up to 1 metre by the end of this century. The IPCC has noted that many small island states are at risk of disappearing beneath the waves. Rising sea level is putting millions of people in coastal cities at risk and will eventually cause affected populations to move to higher ground.
- Climate change is predicted to be the biggest threat to global health in the 21st century.
- It is likely that some species will be unable to move fast enough to keep up with expected changes in climate or that their preferred habitats are too fragmented for them to successfully migrate to adjacent, more favourable locations. They will become extinct, at least locally.
- Although practically all climate scientists agree that the current rapid climate change is man-made the general public does not always feel sufficiently well informed to be able to agree.
- People's attitude to climate change, and their willingness to act to mitigate it, are largely dependent on their political affiliation.
- Research suggests that the world has less than 20 years to get to net zero carbon emissions consistent with a 66 per cent chance of warming staying below 2°C.
- The Paris Agreement of December 2015 is an encouraging sign but the measures agreed are quite insufficient to reach the target of less than 2°C, let alone 1.5°C, global warming.
- It may already be too late to avoiding breaching 1.5°C warming at some point but it is possible to envisage a scenario whereby the world has warmed by 2°C in 2050 but then returns to 1.5°C by the end of the century.
- Encouraging steps are being taken at a local level by politicians in some countries.