

## **The Global Ecological Significance of Coastal Cities**

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Conventional environmental wisdom ignores cities as positive and important ecological entities, tending to view them as harmful rather than significant resources for innovative solutions to global environmental problems. The dominant focus of solutions is away from the constructed environments of cities, towards a return to rural or wilderness constructs. Urban problems become rural resource issues. The implication is clear – cities are part of the problem, not part of the solution. Yet cities figure prominently in any adaptive or strategic planning we might undertake. They are dominant forms in coastal and estuarine environments where near-term effects of global climate change will occur, and because of their central role in the world's economies their disruption by a changing climate has broad implications. More than one-half the world's population now resides in cities and the proportion is growing daily. The disruption and dislocation of this population by dramatic climate alterations is not without ecological consequence on a scale equal to climate change itself.