

ECO ANXIETY REPORT THE NETHERLANDS

2023

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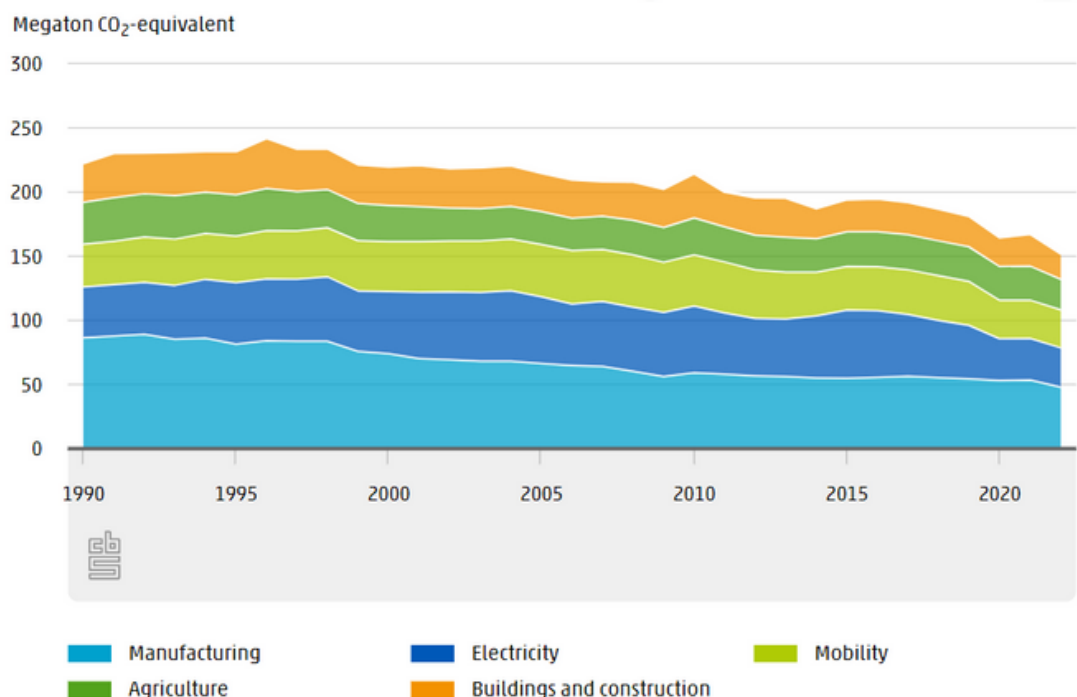
Climate change impacts in the Netherlands

The Netherlands is a low-lying country situated in the delta of rivers Rhine, IJssel and Meuse, with around 24% of the land below sea level. The highest point is 321 meters above sea level, at the border with Belgium and Germany, and the lowest point is 7 meters below sea level. The surface area of the land, plus inland and coastal waters, amounts to 41,543 km². Throughout the country, mean winter temperatures are about 3°C and mean summer temperatures are around 17°C. Coastal regions have more hours of sunshine than inland regions and a relatively small annual and diurnal temperature range. (World Bank, 2023)

Greenhouse gas emissions

In 2022, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions were 9 percent lower than in 2021. This was mainly due to lower natural gas consumption in manufacturing, the built environment and agriculture. Statistics Netherlands (CBS) and the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM)/Emissions Register report this on the basis of an initial estimate of GHG emissions for 2022, in accordance with the IPCC guidelines. Last year, GHG emissions were more than 30 percent below the 1990 level for the first time. The Dutch climate law sets a target of 55 percent reduction by 2030.

GHG emissions in accordance with the IPCC guidelines



Statistics Netherlands (CBS). (2023, November). Greenhouse Gas Emissions 9 Percent Lower in 2022. CBS News.

Climate change impacts in the Netherlands

Extreme weather events

In the low-lying expanses of the Netherlands, a nation intricately entwined with its relationship to water, the past decade has unfolded as a story of adaptation and resilience in the wake of escalating extreme weather events spurred by climate change. From unprecedented floods to changing precipitation patterns, the Dutch landscape has become a canvas on which the impacts of a warming planet are vividly painted.

One of the most poignant chapters in the Netherlands' recent climate saga occurred in 2012 when the country faced severe flooding along the Maas River. Prolonged periods of heavy rainfall, combined with saturated soils, led to swollen rivers, breaching dikes, and inundating vast areas. Towns and agricultural lands, typically fortified against the encroaching waters, found themselves grappling with the unexpected deluge, underscoring the heightened risks posed by climate change-induced extreme rainfall.

The heavy rainfall of July 2021 also affected the Netherlands, primarily in the provinces of Limburg and Noord-Brabant. Apart from local precipitation, the Netherlands were also severely impacted by the heavy rainfall in Belgium, Luxembourg and Germany, which flowed downstream through rivers to the Netherlands. The rivers Geul and Gulp flooded, leading to damages in the counties of Heerlen, Kerkrade, Landgraaf, Gulpen, Meersen and Valkenburg. Valkenburg became the epicentre of the floods and the city centre flooded on 14 and 15 July 2021. The Maas (Meuse) River's water level reached a record high but did not flood due to active water management. If the Maas River had flooded, damages would have increased exponentially.

Another extreme weather event took place during the summer of 2023 when Millions of people across the Netherlands have been warned to stay indoors as a rare summer storm hit the Dutch coast, killing at least two people and severely disrupting air and rail travel. The country's national meteorology institute has issued its highest "code red" storm warning to residents of the Noord-Holland province, which includes Amsterdam.

Survey results

LOCATION



Urban Area



Rural Area



EDUCATION

Elementary School Degree  0%

High School's Degree  9%

Bachelor's Degree  36%

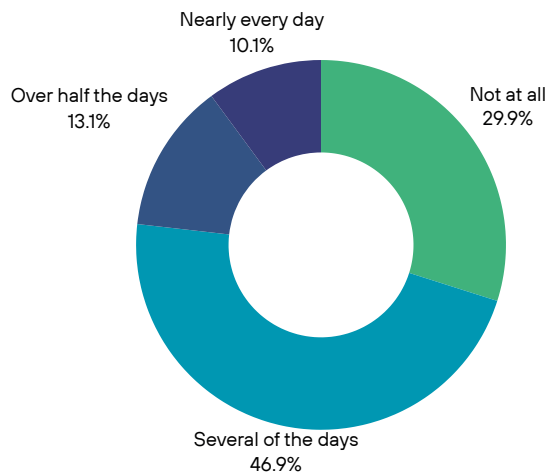
Master's Degree or higher  55%

Survey results: The Hogg Scale

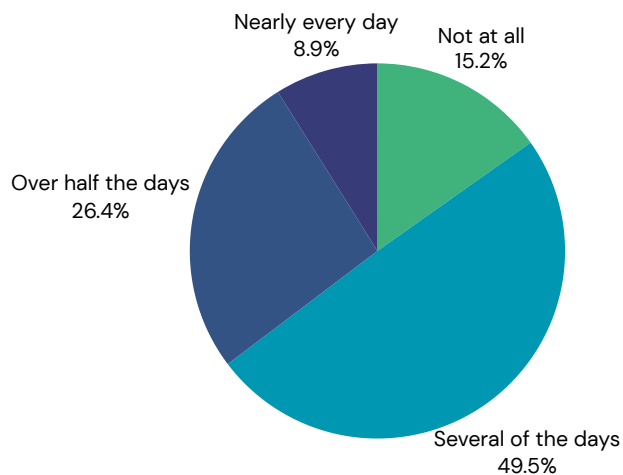
“Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by the following problems, when thinking about climate change and other global environmental conditions (e.g., global warming, ecological degradation, resource depletion, species extinction, ozone hole, pollution of the oceans, deforestation)?

Response scale: 0 = not at all, 1 = several of the days, 2 = over half the days, 3 = nearly every day.

Feeling nervous, anxious or on edge



Not being able to stop or control worrying

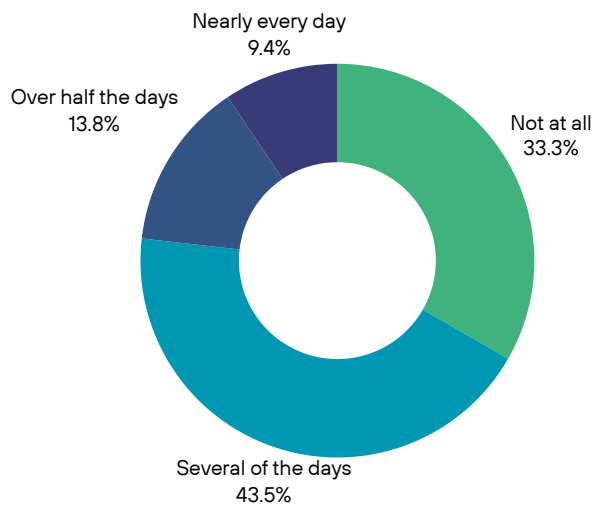


Survey results: The Hogg Scale

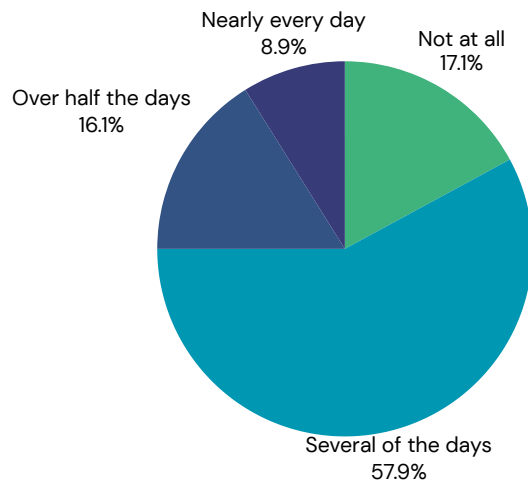
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Worrying too much



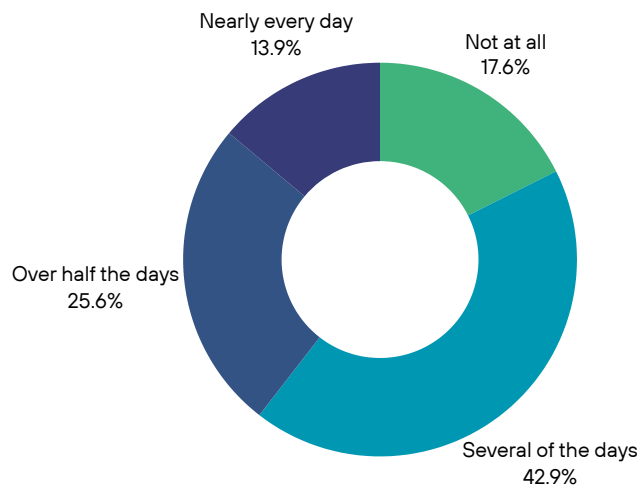
Feeling afraid



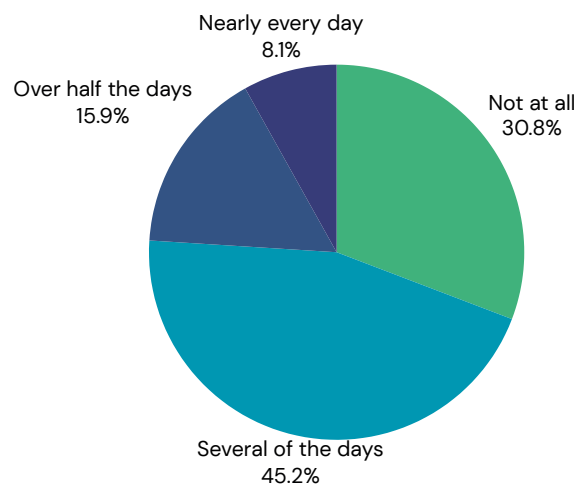
Survey results: The Hogg Scale

“Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by the following problems, when thinking about climate change and other global environmental conditions (e.g., global warming, ecological degradation, resource depletion, species extinction, ozone hole, pollution of the oceans, deforestation)?

Unable to stop thinking about future climate change and other global environmental problems



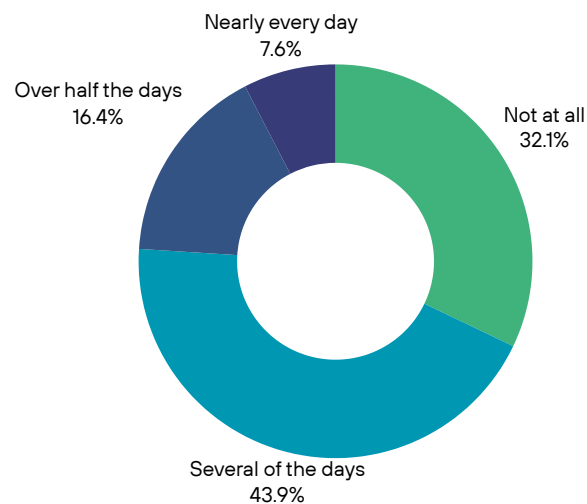
Unable to stop thinking about past events related to climate change



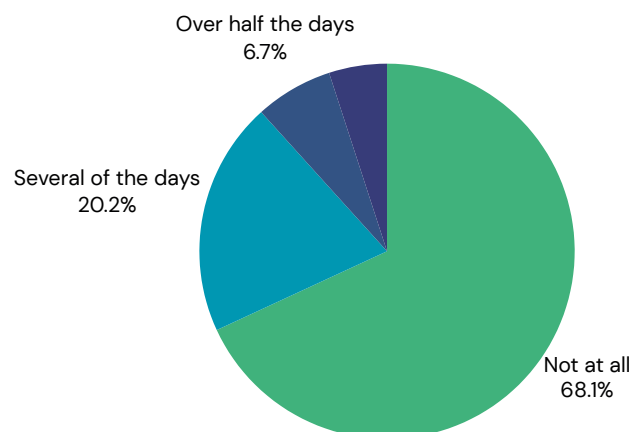
Survey results: The Hogg Scale

“Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by the following problems, when thinking about climate change and other global environmental conditions (e.g., global warming, ecological degradation, resource depletion, species extinction, ozone hole, pollution of the oceans, deforestation)?

Unable to stop thinking about losses to the environment



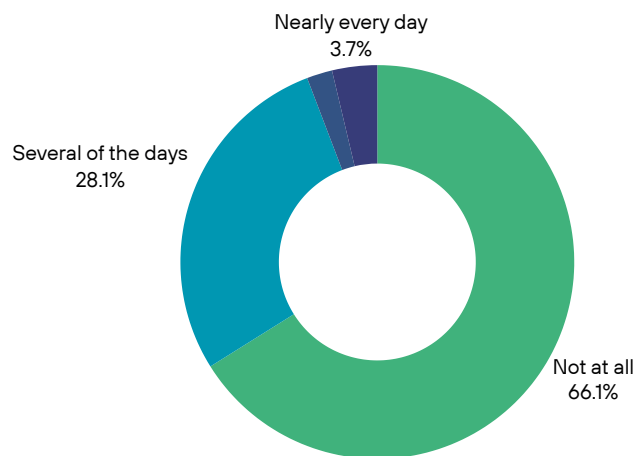
Difficulty sleeping



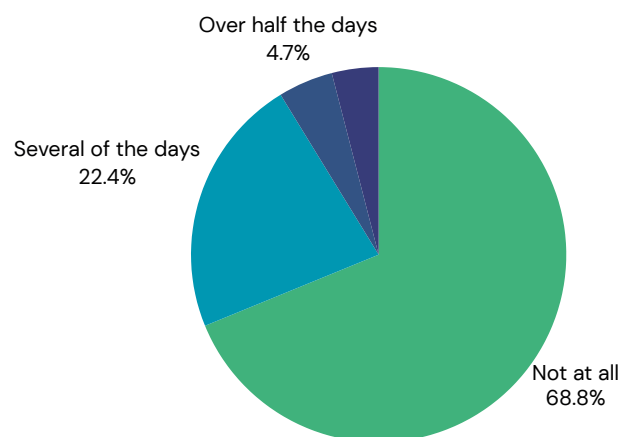
Survey results: The Hogg Scale

“Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by the following problems, when thinking about climate change and other global environmental conditions (e.g., global warming, ecological degradation, resource depletion, species extinction, ozone hole, pollution of the oceans, deforestation)?

Difficulty enjoying social situations with family and friends



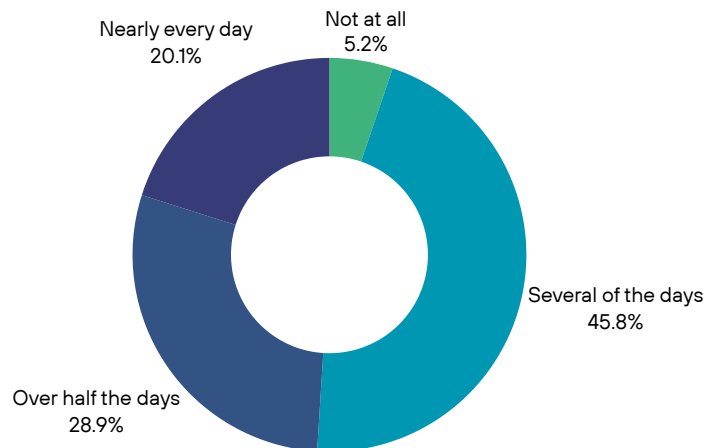
Difficulty working and/or studying



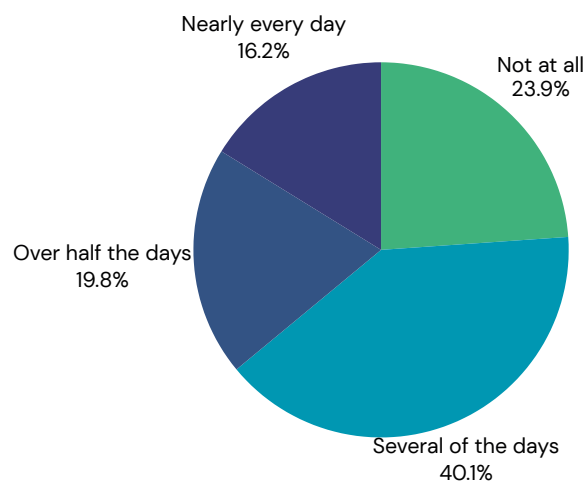
Survey results: The Hogg Scale

“Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by the following problems, when thinking about climate change and other global environmental conditions (e.g., global warming, ecological degradation, resource depletion, species extinction, ozone hole, pollution of the oceans, deforestation)?

Feeling anxious about the impact of your personal behaviours on the earth



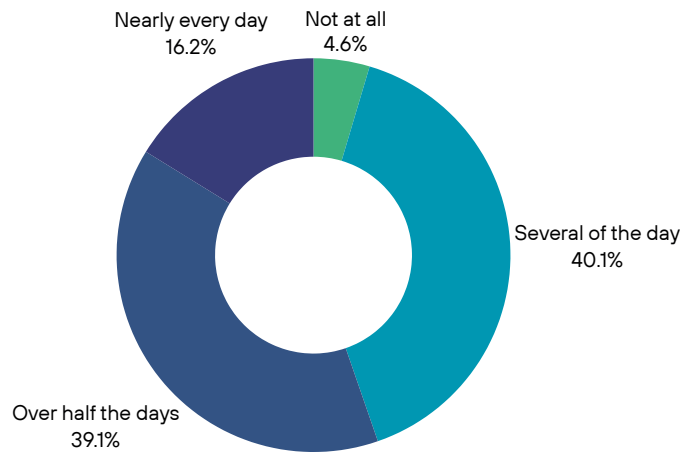
Feeling anxious about your personal responsibility to help address environmental problems



Survey results: The Hogg Scale and Beliefs about climate change

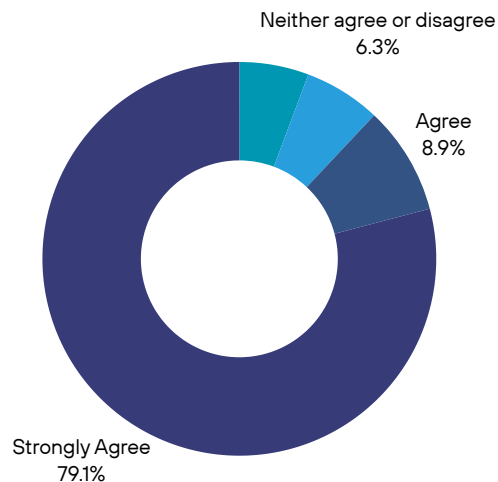
“Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by the following problems, when thinking about climate change and other global environmental conditions (e.g., global warming, ecological degradation, resource depletion, species extinction, ozone hole, pollution of the oceans, deforestation)?”

Feeling anxious that your personal behaviours will do little to help fix the problem



Beliefs about Climate Change

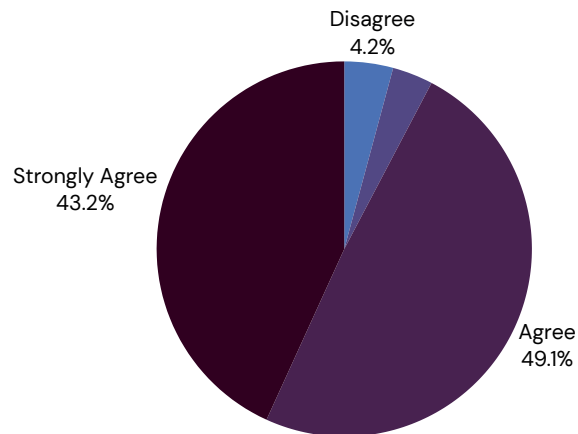
Climate change is real



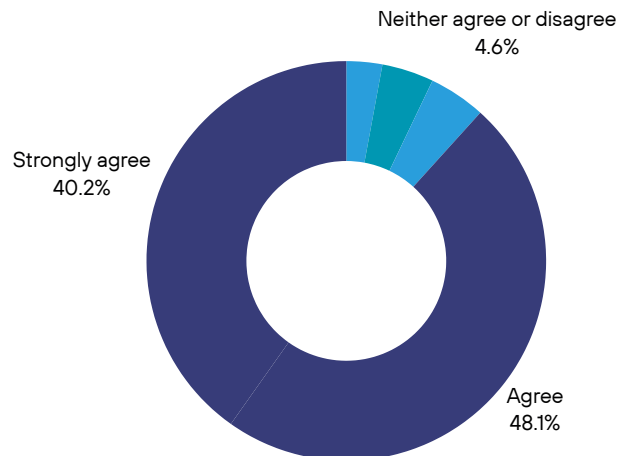
Survey results: Beliefs about climate change

Beliefs about Climate Change

Climate change is caused by humans

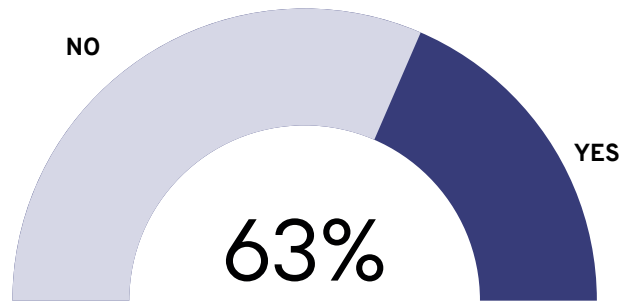


Climate change is reversible



Survey results: Beliefs about climate change

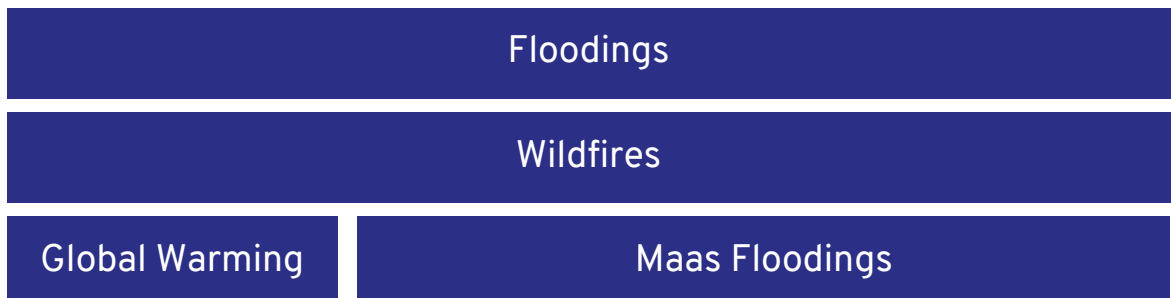
Do you have direct experience of environmental crisis?



I am experiencing climate crisis indirectly via the media or public discourse



Which climate disaster made you feel nervous (in your country or globally), if any



Key Conclusions

Our research reveals a notable prevalence of eco-anxiety among the Dutch population, reporting varying degrees of eco-anxiety.

In terms of the interplay between eco-anxiety and specific variables significant differences in eco-anxiety rates were observed across various demographics. Notably, the geographical location of participants was strongly linked with eco-anxiety. It is important that the 69% of the respondents are urban residents and they are exhibited higher levels of eco-anxiety compared to their rural counterparts. Additionally, while a slight connection with education was observed, we address that eco-anxiety can be experienced via media and public discourse, since the 90% has expressed that is experiencing eco-anxiety indirectly. This indicates that the media and information consumption play a substantial role in shaping eco-anxiety levels since participants who reported frequent exposure to alarming environmental news or content experienced higher levels of eco-anxiety. Simultaneously, the study found a strong interplay between eco-anxiety and heightened concerns about environmental issues. Respondents who expressed high levels of eco-anxiety consistently cited factors and events such as wildfires, ice melting, and floodings as major sources of distress.

The findings of this research underscore the urgency for policymakers to address eco-anxiety as a public health concern. Developing sustainable environmental policies, educational campaigns, and psychological support services can help mitigate eco-anxiety and its associated mental health issues. This study provides a foundation for future research on eco-anxiety. However, further investigations into the long-term consequences of eco-anxiety, the effectiveness of interventions, and potential policy changes are essential for a comprehensive understanding of this emerging issue.

In conclusion, our research highlights the significant eco-anxiety rates in the Netherlands and the need for multidisciplinary efforts to address this concern. Addressing eco-anxiety is not only crucial for the mental well-being of individuals but also for the sustainable future.

Disclaimer:

This report provides an intention of the eco-anxiety rates in the country and cannot be generalised since the survey is not responded by a representative sample comparing to the country's population.

References

Statistics Netherlands (CBS). (2023, November). Greenhouse Gas Emissions 9 Percent Lower in 2022. CBS News. Retrieved from <https://www.cbs.nl/en-gb/news/2023/11/greenhouse-gas-emissions-9-percent-lower-in-2022>

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