

Billions depend on water from shrinking snowpacks

By Sindya N. Bhanoo, New York Times

Snowpacks are a vital source of water for humans, but they may shrink in some regions as the climate warms. A study estimates how changes in snowfall will affect water supplies.

Justin S. Mankin, an earth scientist at Columbia University, and his colleagues analyzed 421 drainage basins in the Northern Hemisphere that depend on rainfall and snowmelt, and then combined the data with several different climate models.

They found that 97 basins, currently serving 2 billion people, depend heavily on snowmelt. The scientists calculated that the likelihood the basins would receive less snow in the coming century was 67 percent.

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