

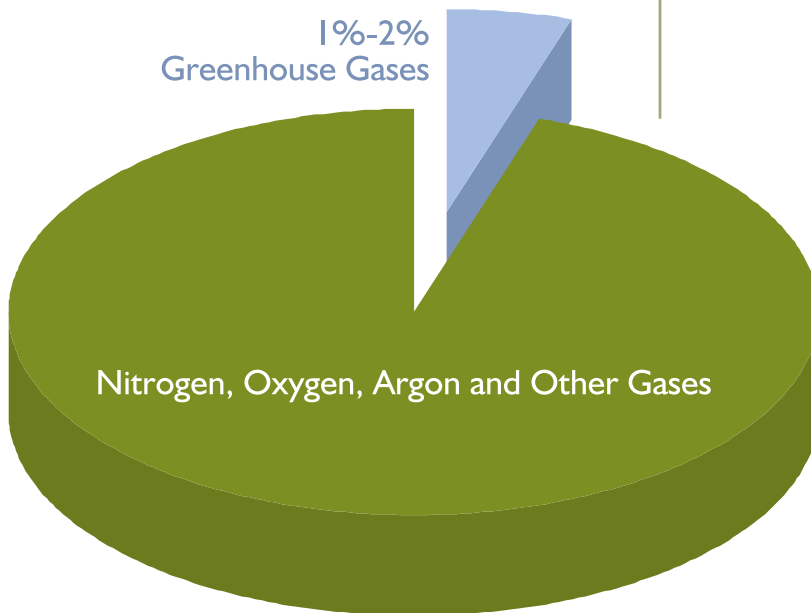
Part I: A Brief History of Global Warming



Greenhouse gases are a small part of the Earth's atmosphere. However, they are critical to making the planet habitable—keeping the Earth from being a freezing rock in space like Mars.

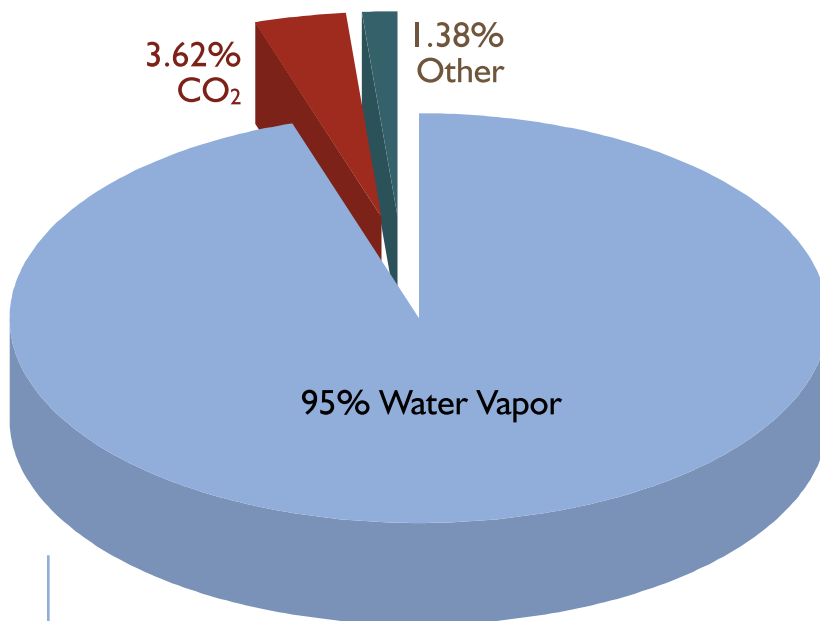
Human activities, primarily the burning of fossil fuels for energy and deforestation, have contributed to an increase in greenhouse gases and many scientists believe this has caused the present warming trend.

Greenhouse gases make up no more than 2 percent of the Earth's atmosphere.



○ **How Much of the Atmosphere Is Greenhouse Gases?**

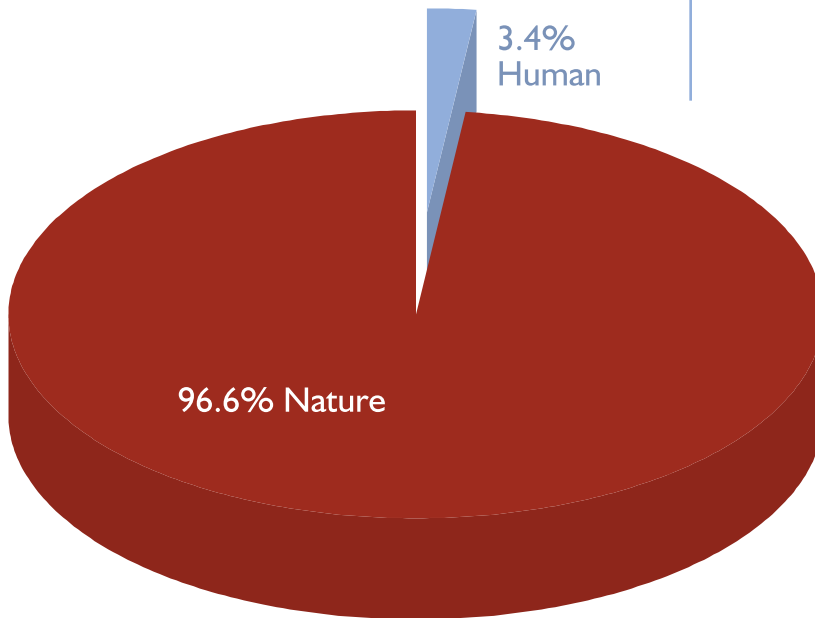
What Are the Greenhouse Gases in the Atmosphere?



CO₂ is a naturally occurring greenhouse gas. Humans and other animals emit CO₂ into the atmosphere when they exhale, and plants absorb it.

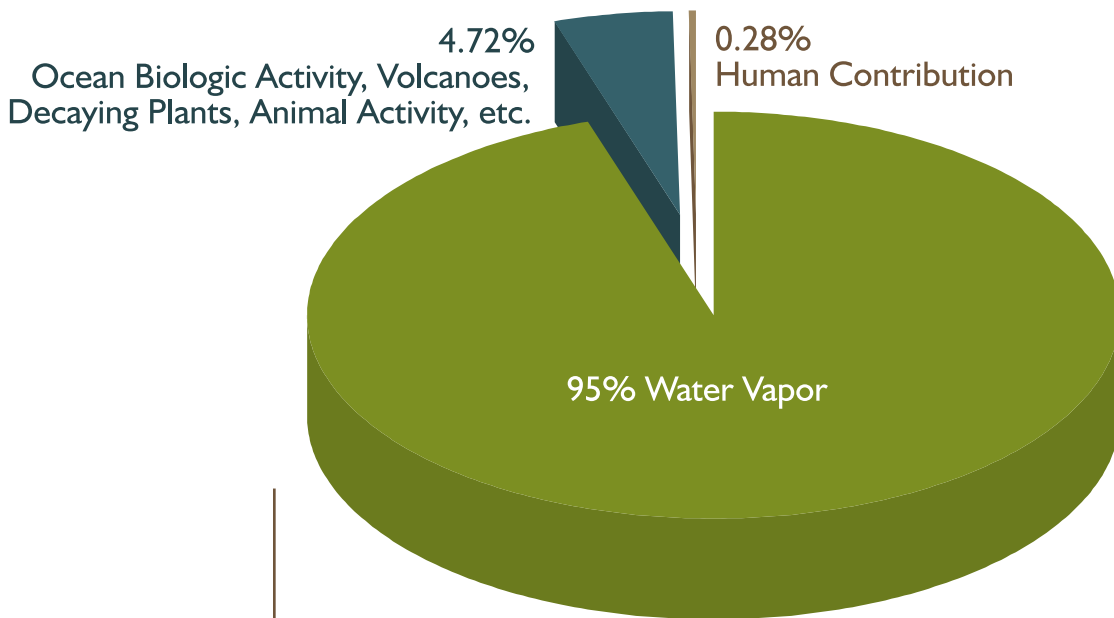
CO₂ and other trace gases are only 5 percent of the greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Water vapor makes up the other 95 percent.

Humans contribute approximately 3.4 percent of annual CO₂ emissions. However, small increases in annual CO₂ emissions, whether from humans or any other source, can lead to a large CO₂ accumulation over time because CO₂ molecules can remain in the atmosphere for more than a century.



Where Do CO₂ Emissions Come From?

What Is the Human Share of the Greenhouse Effect?



Humanity is responsible for about one-quarter of 1 percent of the greenhouse effect.