

What is Earth Hour?

Earth Hour is one of the world's largest grassroots movements for the environment. It was started by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) in 2007 in Sydney, Australia. It is held every last Saturday of March for an hour from 8.30 pm to 9.30 pm in your local time zone and engages millions of people in more than 180 countries and territories. It sees the world switching off its lights to show support for the planet. The movement is an open-source platform and welcomes everyone, anywhere to take part in the movement and help protect the planet.

Earth Hour is all about spreading awareness of environmental issues in our global and local communities. It is an annual global event organized by WWF (World Wild Fund for Nature) encouraging individuals, communities, corporates, and households to turn off their lights to show support for the fight against climate change and commitment towards a better planet. Every year, on the last Saturday of the month of March from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., millions across the world choose to turn off their lights for one hour to celebrate their commitment to the planet.

The first Earth Hour was held on 31 March 2007 at 7.30 p.m. in Sydney. More than two million residents and 2,000 businesses turned their lights out for one hour. The lights also went out on the famous Sydney Opera House. The people of the city of San Francisco were so inspired by the event in Sydney that they held their own 'Lights Out' event in October of the same year. This was the beginning of the Earth Hour movement. The event has grown over the years, with more and more people, businesses, organisations and governments taking part every year.

In 2008, a year after the first Earth Hour event, 35 countries and more than 400 cities joined in. Websites also took part, turning their homepages black in support of the initiative. By 2012, 152 countries and more than 7,000 cities and towns were taking part. In recent years, the numbers have kept increasing, with more than 188 countries and territories worldwide taking part each year. In 2019, more than two billion photos were shared on social media platforms.

A number of celebrities have put their names to the cause, including singer Ellie Goulding, tennis star Andy Murray, TV host Ellen de Generes, actor Leonardo di Caprio and ex-Beatle Paul McCartney. Politicians and world leaders have also given their support, and thousands of famous landmarks have turned off their lights, including the Eiffel Tower in Paris, the Empire State Building in New York and the Pyramids in Egypt.

The Earth Hour movement has achieved much more than getting people to turn off their lights. Since 2007, among other actions, they have planted trees in various countries around the world, including a 2,700 hectare forest in Uganda and 17 million trees in Kazakhstan. They worked together to ban the use of plastics on the islands of the Galapagos, one of the most important nature reserves on the planet and they have sponsored solar power projects in India and the Philippines.

Earth Hour is all about taking steps towards change. Our climate is changing every single day, and it's becoming harder and harder to forget that many of our daily choices have a dramatic effect on the world we live in. By staying constantly aware of what's going on with the environment, the community at Earth Hour has made several different projects in all sixty countries to help promote a healthy environment year-round. By reducing your carbon footprint and become involved in organizations like Earth Hour, you can promote active change within the environment for generations to come. Earth Hour is a great initiative and will run for years on.

Adapted from: Rinkesh, K. (2018). *What is Earth Hour*. Conserve-Energy-Future.com.
<https://www.conserve-energy-future.com/earth-hour-and-its-significance.php>