
Scientist engagement and the knowledge-action gap

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Résumé

Inexorably, the combined gravity of biodiversity loss and climate change keeps increasing. As the looming catastrophe has never looked so alarming, the amount of scientific knowledge about the bio-climatic crisis keeps rising exponentially. Here, we reflect on how researchers in ecology or climate science behave amid this crisis. In face of the disproportionality between how much more scientists know and how little more they engage, we discuss four barriers which may underlie the decoupling of scientific awareness from concrete action. We then reflect on the potency of rational thinking to trigger engagement on its own, and question what more scientific knowledge may actually allow in this context. These observations shatter the verse according to which better understanding what surrounds us is necessary to protect it efficiently. Added to the environmental cost of scientific research, such statements urgently call for researchers to collectively reflect on their situation and redirect their action.

Mots-Clés: ecology, climate change, knowledge, action

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