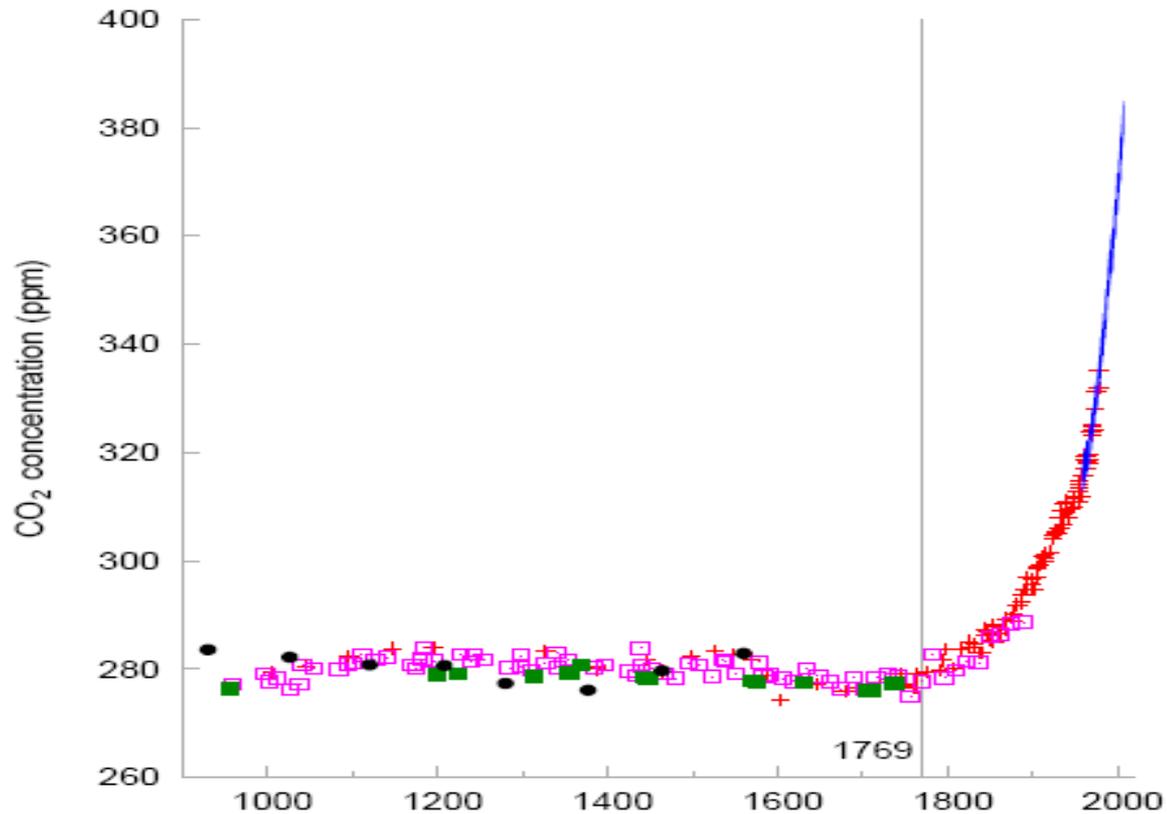


# Ocean Acidification: The Policy Context

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# Carbon Dioxide Concentrations In The Atmosphere Since The Beginning Of The Industrial Revolution



# The policy concern is because of impacts



# UNFCCC COP 16: After the disappointment of Copenhagen, Cancun ended on a high...



- ❑ **Objective:** agreed to peak emissions and an overall 2 degree target to limit temperature rise.
- ❑ **Emissions:** bringing details of what developed and developing countries are doing to tackle climate change, promised in Copenhagen, into the UN system so they can be assessed.
- ❑ **MRV:** agreed a system so we know how countries are living up to their promises to take action on emissions
- ❑ **Long-term finance:** established the Green Climate Fund and will start to get it ready to help developing countries go low carbon and adapt to climate impacts.
- ❑ **Deforestation:** agreed to slow, halt and reverse destruction of trees and agree the rules for delivering it and for monitoring progress.
- ❑ **Technology/Adaptation:** set up the mechanisms to help developing countries access low carbon technology, and adapt to climate change

**But no mention of ocean acidification despite...**



## **Royal Society Report 2005**

- *In setting targets for reductions in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, world leader should take account of the impact of CO<sub>2</sub> on ocean chemistry, as well as on climate change*

## **The Inter Academy Panel 2009**

- *We call on world leaders to:...recognise the direct threats posed by increasing atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> emissions to the oceans and therefore society...*

## **UNEP 2010**

- *...policy makers responsible for environmental and food security issues need to be more aware of the potential effects and consequences of ocean acidification*

# Why does ocean acidification matter?



It matters because of potential impacts on

- Biodiversity
- Food systems
- Industry, tourism
- [The carbon cycle]

# The UK Ocean Acidification Research Programme



- Access to the most up-to-date scientific knowledge on ocean acidification and its implications
- Knowledge integration to answer policy-relevant questions
- Will provide evidence to inform decision makers and international processes
- Scientific knowledge to feed into IPCC AR5.

- ❑ Science of ocean acidification and consequences very young
- ❑ Time from reaching scientific consensus to being mainstream policy issue can be very long e.g. HFCs
- ❑ Risk communication
  - Explain the science clearly
  - Be specific about the impacts
  - Don't over egg the pudding
  - Be prepared for 'sceptic' attacks
- ❑ How do the "limits" for ocean acidification relate to "limits" for global warming?
- ❑ UNFCCC or UNCBD?