



# The Goldilocks Planet: The 4 billion year story of Earth's climate

*Jan Zalasiewicz, Mark Williams*

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Climate change is a major topic of concern today, scientifically, socially, and politically. It will undoubtedly continue to be so for the foreseeable future, as predicted changes in global temperatures, rainfall, and sea level take place, and as human society adapts to these changes.

In this remarkable new work, Jan Zalasiewicz and Mark Williams demonstrate how the Earth's climate has continuously altered over its 4.5 billion-year history. The story can be read from clues preserved in the Earth's strata - the evidence is abundant, though always incomplete, and also often baffling, puzzling, infuriating, tantalizing, seemingly contradictory. Geologists, though, are becoming ever more ingenious at interrogating this evidence, and the story of the Earth's climate is now being reconstructed in ever-greater detail - maybe even providing us with clues to the future of contemporary climate change.

The history is dramatic and often abrupt. Changes in global and regional climate range from bitterly cold to sweltering hot, from arid to humid, and they have impacted hugely upon the planet's evolving animal and plant communities, and upon its physical landscapes of the Earth. And yet, through all of this, the Earth has remained consistently habitable for life for over three billion years - in stark contrast to its planetary neighbours. Not too hot, not too cold; not too dry, not too wet, it is aptly known as 'the Goldilocks planet'.

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