

The Pacific Coast
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The National Geographic Channel series 'America's National Parks' visits the Grand Canyon, on August 23 at 9/8c

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EXPLORE

Field Notes

National Geographic explorers, photographers, and writers report from around the world

Bangladesh

A floating farm or school? It's part of adapting to warming.

ALIZÉ CARRÈRE *Cultural ecologist*

For years Alizé Carrère had heard about the disastrous effects of climate change, especially in developing countries. But in 2012 Carrère learned of a very different situation: a group of farmers in Madagascar who were figuring out how to farm in fields eroded by deforestation and heavy rains. Instead of depending on development aid to reforest washed-out areas, the farmers adapted. Soon they began to *prefer* farming in the eroded gullies, which became rich with water and nutrients.



That sort of ingenuity in the face of hardship launched Carrère, a National Geographic grantee, on a journey to study climate change adaptation. "It's such an abstract concept, so I wanted to know what it actually looked like," she says. This year she and a film crew are documenting cases in which environmental change has spurred human inventiveness and turning the stories into a video series called *Adaptation*.

Her first stop? Bangladesh, a low-lying, densely populated country where scientists expect rising water to displace 18 million people by 2050. In the southern district of Gopalganj, Carrère watched people build floating gardens from water hyacinth, bamboo, and manure to help them fish, raise ducks, and grow produce. She saw how ingenuity can beget more of the same: A Bangladeshi architect took inspiration from the floating fields and engineered boats to serve as floating schools, hospitals, libraries, and playgrounds. Since Bangladesh, Carrère has visited



Buoyant fields made of plants and manure can support crops in Bangladesh. Carrère (at right) toured several with Bangladeshi reporter Tania Rashid.

Follow Carrère on Instagram and Twitter: @alizecarrere

northern India to see how glacial melt is being repurposed to feed a desert ecosystem and will go next to Vanuatu, where grinding sea stars into fertilizer helps grow food.

Some of the best adaptation ideas come from kids, Carrère says. They're creative, malleable, and excited to dream up new things. They also have the most at stake. —Daniel Stone

Japan

What your lunch can reveal about you

ELIZABETH UNGER *Documentarian*

Middle school is hard. Kindergarten can be even harder in a status-conscious society, where judgment extends to school lunches. Elizabeth Unger, a National

