

Owen Hiscock - David Attenborough's Japan

Hello. I'm David Attenborough. I have been journeying the planet for many decades; I have seen many things and have discovered so many interesting creatures. However, I think I may finally have found the most elusive creature of all: an exchange student who is trying to be environmentally friendly.

You see, this unusual specimen, named 'Owen', has travelled almost 6,000 miles (<https://www.airmilescalculator.com/>) across the world to Japan for his year abroad. It is well known that flying is not sustainable, but this curious critter has offset his mileage by paying for reforestation (<https://www.klm.nl/en/information/sustainability/compensate-co2-emissions>)! Whilst perhaps not a perfect solution, it is useful to keep in mind that the pilgrimage by foot would be a very exhausting one for this short, pitiful student (<https://shorturl.at/jmLVW>), and so the shortest possible flight was the next best alternative.

But after he arrives, what next? How can he follow the UN's sustainability goals (<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>) when he arrives? By navigating the impossibly complicated recycling system (<http://www.geihokukouiki.jp/contents/pdf/gomi-dashikata-gaikoku/001-english.pdf>) of course! Although Japan is world-leading in a number of aspects, it falls behind other developed countries in recycling (<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1127509/japan-recycling-rate-waste/>). The challenge here is to remember to remove both the cap and the label from each bottle, and to put them in separate bins. To be sure, this is a formidable task, but he does it with ease.

His university is but a short distance away; to make the trek on foot is well within his capabilities. But, going further away represents a possible sticking point. How is he to enjoy himself on a night out, whilst still minimising his CO2 impact? The answer is by using the trains (<https://www.modeshift.com/what-is-the-most-sustainable-type-of-transportation/>)! Japan's fantastic rail system is there to be used, and is the most green way of getting around the country.

When he arrives, though, he will surely be starving. How can Owen cater to his basic survival needs, without infringing on those of the planet? One answer is by trying to eat vegetarian (<https://www.happycow.net/asia/japan/>). For this poor soul, eating fully vegetarian is one mountain perhaps too big to fully overcome--but what's this? He still tries, whenever he can, to choose something veggie. If this proves impossible, he has an ingenious solution--fish. The impact is mitigated, his health is tip-top and it does some good work undoing the environmental impact of his colleagues, too.

It may be hard for this mere mortal to eradicate poverty, expand education and empower the underserved, but this young soul wants to spread hope. Without that, it will be much more difficult to effect change. There are eight billion people on this planet, and as this young man knows, it is hard enough to get just eight together for a day at the beach (<https://imgflip.com/i/1uky5x>)! Causing change can seem impossible. Nonetheless, this young man has decided that it is best to try and take the lead, rather than be left behind.

I've been Owen Hi--I mean, David Attenborough. Goodbye!