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The Discovery of the “Ozone Hole” As A Global Wake-Up Call

In 1985, a group of scientists made a shocking discovery: there was a giant hole in the ozone layer over Antarctica. This layer, high in the Earth’s atmosphere, protects us by blocking harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays from the sun. Without it, people, animals, and plants could suffer from sunburns, skin cancer, eye problems, and damage to the environment.

The news of the “ozone hole” spread quickly. Scientists had known that certain chemicals, called CFCs (chlorofluorocarbons), might harm the ozone layer, but no one expected to see so much

damage so soon. CFCs were used in everyday items like spray cans, foam cups, and air conditioners. They seemed safe on Earth, but when they floated high into the sky, they reacted with sunlight and broke apart ozone molecules.

What scared people most was that the damage was happening far above the Earth—out of sight—but it could affect everyone on the planet. This was one of the first times humans saw clear proof that we could change the atmosphere in a dangerous way.

People around the world realized that something had to be done—and fast. In 1987, many countries came together to sign the Montreal Protocol, an agreement to stop using ozone-damaging chemicals. It was a rare moment of global teamwork. Scientists, governments, and even businesses worked together to protect the planet.

Thanks to these efforts, the ozone layer has slowly started to heal. The hole over Antarctica is shrinking, and fewer harmful UV rays are reaching Earth. But the work isn’t over. Scientists continue to monitor the atmosphere, and people still need to be careful about what chemicals they use.

The discovery of the ozone hole taught the world a powerful lesson: humans can cause serious problems for the planet, but they can also work together to fix them. It showed that global action, science, and cooperation can make a real difference.

That’s why the ozone hole was more than just a hole in the sky—it was a wake-up call for the world.