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John works as a carbon cycle scientist with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Earth System Research Laboratory. His research focuses on the emission and absorption of the greenhouse gases carbon dioxide and methane in the atmosphere at regional and global scales. He uses both modeling of measurements of CO₂ and CH₄ and their stable and radioisotopes to better understand the processes responsible for their source and sink variations. His specific interests are in fossil fuel-combustion emissions of carbon dioxide at the national and global scales, the relationship between the Amazon forest and greenhouse gas emission and absorption and how these impact global climate.

John received his Ph.D. in chemistry from the University of Colorado in 1999, was a National Research Council post-doctoral fellow at NOAA from 2000-2002 and has been a research scientist at NOAA since then. He has been an author on 110 peer-reviewed scientific journal articles. He has also been a contributing author for the World Meteorological Organization quadrennial assessment of ozone depletion, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Fourth Assessment Report and other international reports.