

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

Carbon indulgence of celebrities' private jets generates attention

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The private aviation market is projected to grow to \$38.34 billion by 2029. Image credit: PrivateJetVilla

By AMIAH TAYLOR

Private jets the indisputable status symbols of the elite are gaining more media attention for their environmental impact as well as the arbitrariness of their use.

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In July of this year, socialite Kylie Jenner launched a now-infamous Instagram [post](#) featuring herself and partner, Travis Scott. The pair received a barrage of social media criticism after taking a 17-minute California flight from Camarillo to Van Nuys, covering just a 40-mile distance while producing an estimated ton of carbon dioxide emissions, per reports from [The Guardian](#).

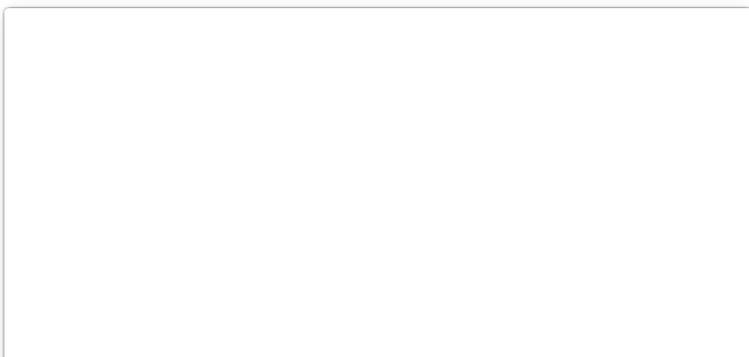
"For celebrities who want to use their private jets as a prop, they can easily reveal proof they have been offsetting their flights," said Doug Gollan, founder and editor in chief of [Private Jet Card Comparisons](#), Miami.

"There is simply no excuse for them not to offset their flights."

A ton of evidence

Last year, private jet use soared to new heights and broke previous records.

Over three million business jet take-offs were recorded in 2021. 3.3 million to be exact the most for a single year and seven percent more than the previous high in 2019, according to [WingX](#).



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Private jet usage is increasing dramatically in recent years both in the United States and in Europe

As of July, American celebrities emitted an average of 3376.64 tons of CO2 emissions each from their private jet usage in 2022, according to findings from sustainability research firm **Yard**. This figure is 482.37 times more than the average person's annual emissions, at seven tons of CO2.

The top ten celebrities guilty of sizable carbon footprints due to private aviation during the time period analyzed include athlete Floyd Mayweather, director Steven Spielberg, influencer Kim Kardashian, entrepreneur Oprah Winfrey and many other notable names.

At the top of the list of celebrity emitters is American pop singer Taylor Swift, whose flight emissions as of July came in at 8,293.54 tons of CO2 emissions. For perspective, that is 1184.8 times more than the typical person's total annual emissions.

Ms. Swift's shortest recorded flight of the year, as of the summer, was a 36-minute flight from Missouri to Nashville, per firm data. Despite not actively touring, the young talent has spent the equivalent of 15.9 days in the air.

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Singer Taylor Swift is the top celebrity private jet emitter in the nation, according to recent data

The second-worst offender, American boxer Floyd Mayweather, was responsible for 7076.8 tons of CO2 emissions, with an average of 25 flights per month. His shortest flight lasted 10 minutes.

In tenth place was the aforementioned rapper Travis Scott, who has racked up 3033.3 tons of carbon emissions thus far. His average flight journey covers a minuscule 7.31 miles, and his flight time stands at 5.8 total days so far this year.

Offsetting the damage

Last year, the United Nations' [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#) (IPCC) released new data regarding the rapid rate of global warming, illuminating just how far the issue continues to climb ([see story](#)).

According to the NGO, private jets are five to 14 times more polluting than commercial planes per passenger and 50 times more polluting than trains.

Experts are proposing carbon credits as a potential solve, due to the disproportionate impact that private jets have on the environment.

For companies looking to neutralize their own greenhouse gas emissions without overhauling their business models, one way to do so would be to purchase carbon credits, a permit that supports the extraction of 1 ton of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, usually in the form of agricultural projects such as mass tree plantings.

Carbon credits have been publicly criticized by [Greenpeace](#) as a system that essentially allows entities with means to buy off low-cost land while not directly ruling out the source of the problem: pollution, allowing corporations and celebrities to continue business as usual, and relegating the tool to that of potential greenwashing status ([see story](#)).

Experts have conveyed that change will only occur if companies integrate their efforts to decrease carbon emissions into everyday decision-making and operational processes, while some continue to champion carbon offsets and claim that private aviation is being targeted despite larger environmental offenders existing in different industries.

"Aviation globally only accounts for 2 percent of carbon emissions and private jets are 2 percent of that 2 percent, so the fact that the industry is often targeted isn't based on reality," Mr. Gollan said.

"Most private jet flights are for missions that are not possible using the airlines," he said. "And that's not even speaking about how private jets bring first responders and relief supplies after natural disasters into smaller airports larger commercial airplanes can't get into."

"What's more, sustainable aviation fuel will cut CO2 emissions by up to 80 percent and many providers include or allow customers to buy carbon offsets."