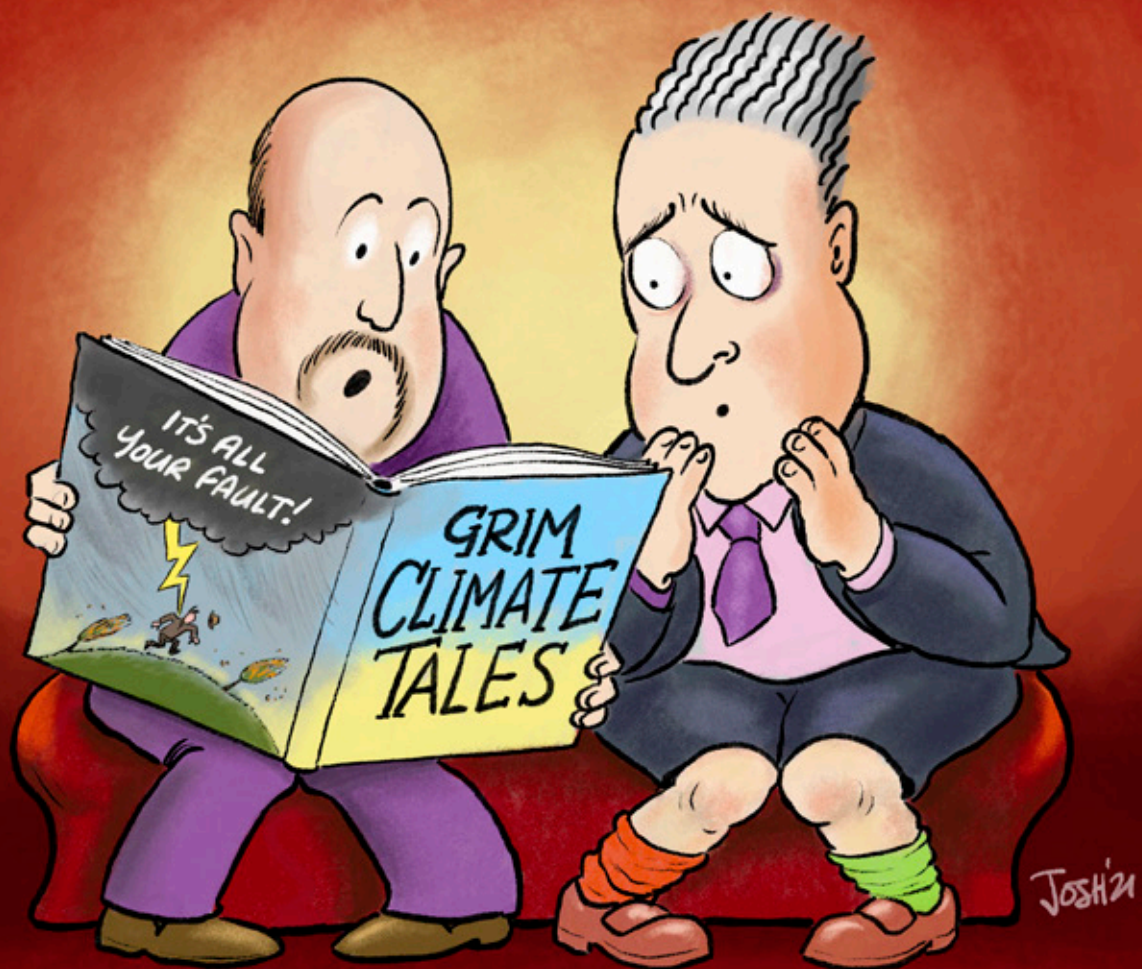


# A SHORT HISTORY OF **CLIMATE ALARM!**

Paul Homewood



The Global Warming Policy Forum

# A Short History of Climate Alarm!

Paul Homewood

© Copyright 2021, The Global Warming Policy Forum

MORE!  
FLOODS! DROUGHTS!  
HURRICANES! HAIL!  
FIRE! FAMINE!  
DEATH! PANIC!



JostH'20

THEN

MORE!  
~~FLOODS! DROUGHTS!~~  
~~HURRICANES! HAIL!~~  
~~FIRE! FAMINE!~~  
DEATH! PANIC!



NOW

## **Contents**

About the author	iii
Preface	v
1970s Ice Age scare	1
If the cold does not get you, the heat will!	1
X-years to save the planet	2
UK to freeze, while the Netherlands drown	2
Children just aren't going to know what snow is	3
Mediterranean summers	4
Permanent droughts	5
Arctic death spirals	6
Antarctica	6
Sea level rise to wipe out entire nations!	7
Climate refugees	8
Food shortages	9
Stronger hurricanes	9
Polar bears threatened with extinction	9
Summary	10
Notes	13
About the Global Warming Policy Forum	18

## **About the author**

Paul Homewood had a career as an accountant in industry. He has been writing on climate and energy issues since 2011.



# FRANKENSCIENCE



OF THE CLIMATE KIND

## Preface

'In the space of one hundred and seventy-six years the Lower Mississippi has shortened itself two hundred and forty-two miles. That is an average of a trifle over one mile and a third per year. Therefore, any calm person, who is not blind or idiotic, can see that in the Old Oolitic Silurian Period, just a million years ago next November, the Lower Mississippi River was upwards of one million three hundred thousand miles long, and stuck out over the Gulf of Mexico like a fishing-rod. And by the same token any person can see that seven hundred and forty-two years from now the Lower Mississippi will be only a mile and three-quarters long, and Cairo and New Orleans will have joined their streets together, and be plodding comfortably along under a single mayor and a mutual board of aldermen. There is something fascinating about science. One gets such wholesale returns of conjecture out of such a trifling investment of fact.'

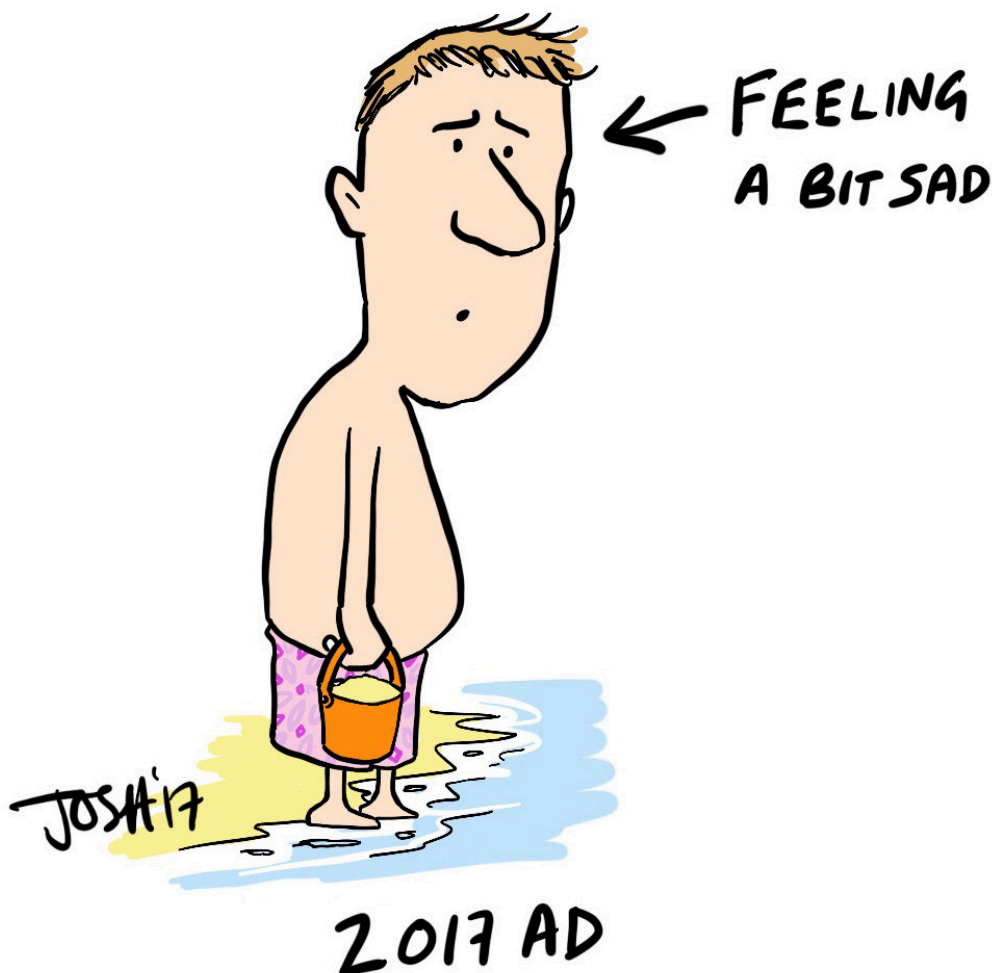
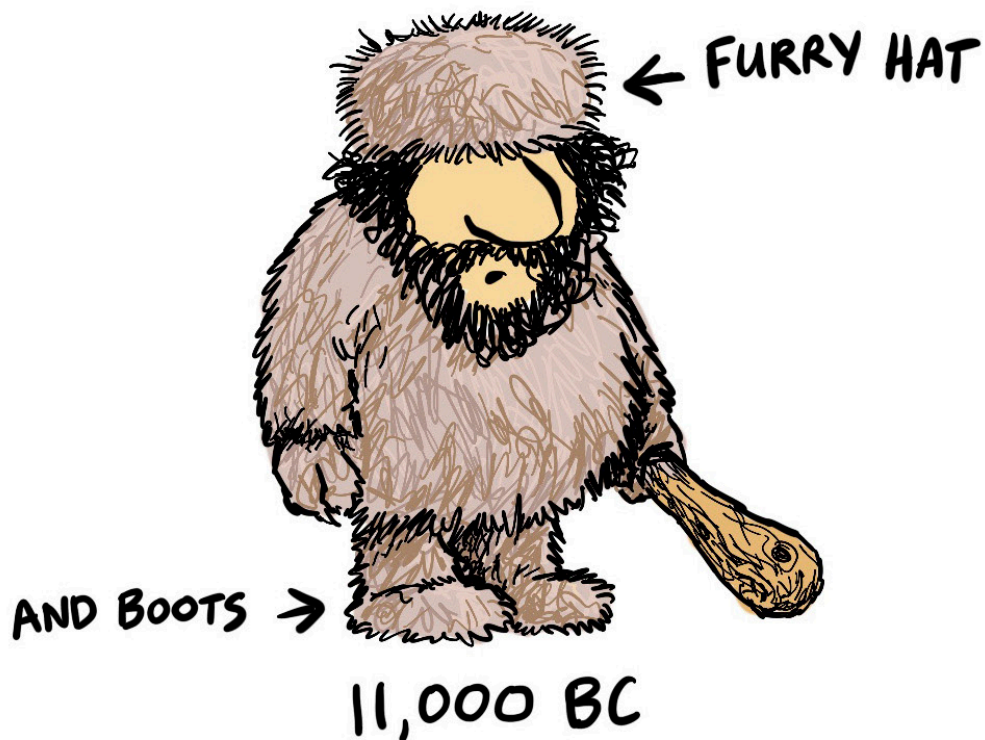
Mark Twain, *Life on the Mississippi*

Mankind has always seemed to be fascinated by promises of apocalypse and global catastrophe. Often they were based around religion. The Book of Revelations, for instance, foretold an array of disasters, such as wars, plagues and famines in punishment of man's sins. But many civilisations had similar stories, from the Assyrians to the Hindus, and the Aztecs to the Vikings.

Early myths had concluded that the city of Rome would be destroyed in 634 BC. Prophecies of doom multiplied in the Middle Ages, often based upon the idea of divine retribution for the sins of mankind. In the 1970s a new brand of prophecy emerged, not based on religion but instead on environmentalism. However, these claims shared the common denominator of the sins of man. Many supposed experts predicted dire famines, mass starvation, falling life expectancy, ozone holes, a new ice age and the end of civilisations. Stanford University biologist Dr Paul Ehrlich even predicted that everybody would disappear in a cloud of blue smoke before 1990.

We can look back now and laugh at these crackpots, but in those days, they were treated very seriously indeed. In more recent times, we have become used to ever-more-frequent claims of impending doom, this time because of climate change. But are such claims any more credible than those earlier ones? This analysis looks at some of the history of climate alarm.

A VERY SHORT HISTORY OF  
**CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS**  
ON MANKIND





## **1970s Ice Age scare**

Numerous reports in the 1970s reflected concern that the Earth was heading towards a new ice age. These are nowadays often dismissed as mere newspaper gossip, but they were far more than that.

Some scientists forecast a full ice age, for instance NASA's Dr Rasool, who said that air pollution would cause a drop in temperatures of six degrees.<sup>1</sup> Such predictions were of the more extreme variety, but there was widespread acceptance amongst climate scientists that global temperatures had fallen sharply since the 1940s, and that this trend was likely to continue.

The US government was so concerned about events that it set up a Subcommittee on Climate Change in 1974, in turn leading to the US Climate Program in the same year and the subsequent formation of the Climate Analysis Center, designed to monitor and predict climate change. This was the predecessor to today's NCEI, the National Centers for Environmental Information run by the US Department of Commerce.<sup>2</sup>

Needless to say, the cooling trend ended soon after the subcommittee was set up, and warming resumed.

## **If the cold does not get you, the heat will!**

In the 1980s, the cooling trend reversed, and it did not take long for forecasts of apocalypse to re-emerge, but this time based on the idea of a hothouse planet. In 1989, Noel Brown, director of the New York office of the UN Environment Program did not hold back, warning us that:<sup>3</sup>

- entire nations could be wiped off the face of the Earth by rising sea levels if the global warming trend was not reversed by the year 2000;
- coastal flooding and crop failures would create an exodus of 'eco-refugees';
- sea levels would rise by up to three feet;
- coastal regions would be inundated – one-sixth of Bangladesh could be flooded, displacing a quarter of its 90 million people, and a fifth of Egypt's arable land in the Nile Delta would be flooded, cutting off its food supply;
- it would cost the United States at least \$100 billion to protect its east coast alone;
- shifting climate patterns would bring back the Dust Bowl conditions of the 1930s to Canadian and US wheat lands.
- the most conservative scientific estimate was that the Earth's temperature would rise from 1 to 7 degrees over the following 30 years.

Well, the year 2000 came and went, emissions of greenhouse gases carried on climbing, and global temperatures rose by a modest 0.4°C. Needless to say, none of Brown's cataclysms came about either, as later chapters will reveal.

## **X-years to save the planet**

Noel Brown gave us until 2000 to save the planet. But over the years, the impending date of doom has been continually pushed back. In 2009, Gordon Brown, UK Prime Minister at the time, baldly stated that we had 'fewer than 50 days to save our planet from catastrophe'. His deadline ran out on 9 December 2009.<sup>4</sup>

Australian Chief Scientist, Penny Sackett, was more optimistic. Just days before Gordon Brown's zero hour arrived, she warned us we had an extra five years to save the world from disastrous global warming.<sup>5</sup> Three years earlier, in 2006, Al Gore was much more specific, threatening that, unless drastic measures were taken to reduce greenhouse gases within ten years, the world would reach a point of no return.<sup>6</sup> When the world ignored Al Gore's warning, the UN's Christiana Figueres gave us another three years' breathing space, but that deadline unfortunately ran out too, just five months ago.<sup>7</sup>

However, it is Prince Charles who must take the prize for getting it wrong most often. Here is a list of his alarms over the years:

- July 2009: He told an audience of industrialists and environmentalists at St James's Palace that he had calculated that we had just 96 months left to save the world.<sup>8</sup>
- July 2015: He warned that we had just 35 years to save the planet from catastrophic climate change.<sup>9</sup>
- July 2019: He warned global leaders that the next 18 months would decide our ability to keep climate change to survivable levels and to restore nature to the equilibrium needed for our survival.<sup>10</sup>
- February 2020: He warned that humans had just ten years left to save the planet.<sup>11</sup>

Unfortunately, when he said 'ten years', he actually meant 'one hour', so he corrected himself in November 2020, telling the world that 'we are literally at the last hour' in the fight against climate change.<sup>12</sup>

The world has not ended as predicted, despite the fact that emissions of carbon dioxide have continued to grow rapidly year on year.<sup>13</sup> It is noteworthy that none of these predictions of doom came with any scientific basis attached. On the contrary, the official reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) invariably shy away from making such predictions.

## **UK to freeze, while the Netherlands drowns**

One could be excused for thinking that the Pentagon was a rather serious outfit, not given to fantasy and ballyhoo. Yet in 2004, they commissioned a report on climate change.<sup>14</sup> The key findings included the following points:

- By 2007 violent storms would smash coastal barriers, rendering large parts of the Netherlands uninhabitable. Cities



such as The Hague would have to be abandoned.

- Between 2010 and 2020, Europe would be hardest hit by climatic change, with an average annual temperature drop of 6°F (3°C). Climate in Britain would become colder and drier, as weather patterns began to resemble Siberia.
- Deaths from war and famine would run into the millions, until the population had been reduced sufficiently to allow the Earth to cope.
- Riots and internal conflict would tear apart India, South Africa and Indonesia.
- A 'significant drop' in the planet's ability to sustain its present population would become apparent over the next 20 years.
- Millions would be prevented from growing crops, either by climate change directly or by sea-level rise. Rich areas such as the US and Europe would become 'virtual fortresses' to prevent millions of climate migrants.
- Mega-droughts would affect the world's major bread-baskets, including America's Midwest, where strong winds would bring soil loss.
- China's huge population and food demand made it particularly vulnerable. Bangladesh would become nearly uninhabitable because of rising sea levels.

# AN INCONVENIENT FREEZE

JUST AS EXPECTED



The Pentagon proceeded to suppress the report, which was probably because they knew it was a load of old rubbish. However, somewhat predictably, a host of 'climate experts' accused George Bush of sweeping the threat of climate change under the carpet.

Perhaps even more shocking than the absurdities contained within the report was the list of luminaries who lined up to endorse it, including Professor John Schellnhuber, former chief environmental adviser to the German government, Sir John Houghton, former chief executive of the Meteorological Office, and Sir Bob Watson, chief scientist for the World Bank and former chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

### **Children just aren't going to know what snow is**

In March 2000 Dr David Viner was a senior research scientist at the Climatic Research Unit of the University of East Anglia, the world leaders in climate science. In an interview with the *Independent* that month, Viner baldly claimed that, within a few years, winter snowfall would become 'a very rare and exciting event'. 'Children just aren't going to know what snow is', he declared.<sup>15</sup>

He was, of course, referring to Britain. In the twenty years that have passed since then, his prediction has failed to come true. In most years since, in fact, Britain has continued to experience heavy snowfalls. Indeed, the winters of 2008/09 and 2009/10 were particularly badly affected. December 2010 was the coldest December for more than 100 years, with widespread disruption resulting from snow.<sup>16</sup>

More recently, the 'Beast from the East' brought several days of bitter cold and blizzards in February 2018. Thousands of schools were forced to shut, rural towns and villages were cut off for days, thousands of flights and rail journeys were cancelled, and there were weather-related traffic accidents across the country.<sup>17</sup>

While Viner was referring specifically to Britain, his theory had wider implications. Yet when we look across the Northern Hemisphere, we find that, far from becoming increasingly uncommon, winter snow extent has been steadily growing since he made his claim.

### **Mediterranean summers**

The end of snow was not the only prediction made by Dr Viner. In 2006, he confidently stated that within twenty years, the Mediterranean would become far too hot for European holiday makers, who would instead flock to Blackpool to take advantage of warmer summers in the UK.<sup>18</sup> Such claims were common. For instance, the year before, scientists at a two-day climate change conference at the University of Surrey had said that England would soon begin to look like the Mediterranean, with native woodlands replaced by olive groves, vineyards and sunflowers, while traditional English gardens would be unable to survive, be-


ing replaced with palms and eucalyptus, as temperatures rose by 3°C by 2050.<sup>19</sup>

Back in the real world, however, most British summers are still disappointing affairs, and even the occasional warm one is still not as hot as the summers of 1976 and 1995. Nor is there any discernible trend in summer rainfall, which still varies considerably from year to year. Dry, Mediterranean-style weather it certainly is not!

Naturally, when these hot, dry summers failed to materialise, scientists decided that we had wet summers to look forward to instead. We were assured that this was because of 'melting Arctic ice'.<sup>20</sup> It seems that they were as far off the mark as David Viner was. Then Environment Secretary Caroline Spelman had different concerns in 2012, claiming that 'drought may be the new norm for the UK'. Needless to say, this was occasioned by a couple of months of dry weather. Laughably, it was succeeded, two months later, by a spring and summer that were among the wettest on



A cartoon illustration of a man with a beard and a purple tunic, looking distressed. He is holding a large rectangular sign with a black border. The sign contains the following text in all caps: "MORE! FLOODS! DROUGHTS! HURRICANES! HAIL! FIRE! FAMINE! DEATH! PANIC!". The background behind him is a soft, greyish glow.



A cartoon illustration of the same man from the previous panel, looking equally distressed. He is holding a large rectangular sign with a black border. The sign contains the same text as the first sign, but each line is crossed out with a thick red diagonal line: "MORE! ~~FLOODS! DROUGHTS!~~ ~~HURRICANES! HAIL!~~ ~~FIRE! FAMINE!~~ ~~DEATH! PANIC!~~". The background behind him is a soft, yellowish glow.

Josh '20

**THEN**

**NOW**



record!<sup>21</sup> More to the point, UK rainfall data shows that drought years were much more extensive and severe in the past.<sup>22</sup>

Whilst Caroline Spelman was merely a politician, the Met Office's Chief Scientist at the time, Julia Slingo, really should have known better. After a couple of cold winters, she told MPs that the decrease in the amounts of ice in the far north was contributing to colder winters in the UK and northern Europe, as well as to drought.<sup>23</sup> She followed that up in 2013 by claiming that 'climate change was loading the dice towards freezing, drier weather'.<sup>24</sup> Of course, a year later, after a warm and wet winter, she conveniently forgot her previous prognostications, and declared that this weather was also linked to climate change.<sup>25</sup>

Needless to say, the cold winters turned out to be simply the occasional weather event they had been in the past. Neither have UK winters become any warmer since 2013 than they were at other times in the past. In other words, typical British weather.

It is hardly surprising that the Met Office keeps getting these long-term predictions wrong, when they cannot even predict short-term weather. After all, in October 2010, with the help of their brand new supercomputer, they were sure the UK was heading for a mild winter. Just a month later, the country was struggling under several feet of snow!<sup>26</sup>

## **Permanent droughts**

We have already seen how the Pentagon incorrectly predicted 'mega-droughts' in the US Midwest. In reality, rainfall in the region has been well above average since then, and the sort of severe droughts that used to be commonplace have been extremely rare in the last thirty years.<sup>27</sup>

Other scientists have predicted permanent drought in the US southwest, due of course to global warming. For instance, in 2007, one study claimed that the Dust Bowl droughts would become the norm within a few years.<sup>28</sup> In fact droughts in the southwest are not becoming more common, and nothing in recent decades has matched the severe droughts of the 1950s.<sup>29</sup>

In 2011, Andrew Dessler, Professor of Atmospheric Sciences at Texas A&M University, proclaimed that the hot Texas summer that year would become the new norm.<sup>30</sup> As is so often the case, this scare story was based on single unusual event, and, just as typically, after he made his claim, temperatures quickly returned to their previous levels.<sup>31</sup>

Predictions of apocalypse are not just limited to the US. Tim Flannery was Chief Commissioner of the Climate Commission in Australia between 2011 and 2013, and is still considered one of the leading experts on climate change there. Over the years he has made a habit of predicting that Australia will run out of water:

2004: 'I think there is a fair chance Perth will be the 21st century's first ghost metropolis. It's whole primary production is in dire straits and the eastern states are only 30 years behind.'

2007: 'Think of the worst drought Australia has faced since record-keeping began, then take away three-quarters of the trickle that flowed in the Murray-Darling back then. That's how much water is flowing through Australia's arterial rivers this year.'

2007: 'Brisbane and Adelaide – home to a combined total of three million people – could run out of water by year's end.'

2007: 'Over the past 50 years southern Australia has lost about 20 per cent of its rainfall, and one cause is almost certainly global warming. Similar losses have been experienced in eastern Australia, and although the science is less certain it is probable that global warming is behind these losses too. But by far the most dangerous trend is the decline in the flow of Australian rivers: it has fallen by around 70 per cent in recent decades, so dams no longer fill even when it does rain...In Adelaide, Sydney and Brisbane, water supplies are so low they need desalinated water urgently, possibly in as little as 18 months.'<sup>32</sup>

And then the rains came, as they always do in the land of 'droughts and flooding rains...'. By December 2008, Adelaide's reservoirs were 75% full, Perth's 40%, Sydney's 63%, and Brisbane's 46%. The following year, dams in Brisbane, Canberra and Sydney were filled to overflowing. Since then, rainfall in Southern Australia has fluctuated, just as it has always done, but droughts have not been as severe or extended as they were in the first half of the 20th century.<sup>33</sup>

## **Arctic death spirals**

Over the years, we have been assured by many experts that the sea ice in the Arctic would soon melt away. In 2007, for instance, Professor Wieslaw Maslowski told us that northern polar waters could be ice-free in summers within just 5-6 years.<sup>34</sup> In December that year, Jay Zwally of NASA agreed, giving the ice till 2012.<sup>35</sup> A year later, in 2008, Professor David Barber went one step further, saying the ice would all be gone that very summer.<sup>36</sup>

For sheer persistence in getting it wrong, however, the prize must go to Peter Wadhams, Professor and Head of the Polar Ocean Physics Group in the Department of Applied Mathematics and Theoretical Physics at the University of Cambridge:

- In 2012, he predicted that the Arctic would be ice-free by 2015/16.<sup>37</sup>
- In 2014, he thought it might last till 2020.<sup>38</sup>
- In 2016, he confidently predicted the Arctic would be ice-free that summer (though curiously he now defined 'ice-free' as less than 1 million square kilometers!).<sup>39</sup>

And the reality? The record for lowest sea ice extent since these predictions first appeared was recorded in 2012. Since then no year has recorded less than 4 million square kilometers.<sup>40</sup>

## Antarctica

While the Arctic was going to melt, other experts predicted we would all soon be living in the Antarctic. In 2004, Professor Sir David King, then the UK Government's Chief Scientist, claimed at a Parliamentary select committee hearing that we were rapidly heading back to the climate of 55 million years ago, when the Antarctic was the most habitable place for mammals, because it was the coolest place, and the rest of the earth was rather inhospitable because it was so hot.<sup>41</sup> According to the *Independent*, King stated that 'Antarctica is likely to be the world's only habitable continent by the end of this century if global warming remains unchecked'.<sup>42</sup>

Four years later, experts from the highly reputable Forum for the Future were much more alarmed, declaring that 3.5 million refugees would have flocked to the Antarctic by 2040 because of rising temperatures.<sup>43</sup> I don't think we really need to look at the temperature records in the Antarctic to know that it is still icebound and totally unsuitable for human life. But even in coastal stations like Mawson, average annual temperatures rarely get above  $-10^{\circ}\text{C}$ , and there is no sign they will get any warmer anytime soon!<sup>44</sup>

This was not the only crackpot suggestion from Sir David. At the same select committee hearing, he also reckoned that the Greenland icesheet might be gone within '50 to 200 years'. Since he spoke, Greenland has lost about 3000 gigatonnes of ice.<sup>45</sup> But Greenland's icesheet contains approximately 2,600,000 gigatonnes, so at the current rate of loss, the icecap will take about 14,000 years to melt.<sup>46</sup>

## Sea-level rise to wipe out entire nations!

One of the most persistent scare stories over the years has concerned sea-level rise. As long ago as 1957, a notable physicist, Dr Joseph Kaplan, was warning that the oceans would rise by 40 feet in the 'next 50 or 60 years'.<sup>47</sup> Later, in 1983, the US Environmental Protection Agency reported that the sea level could rise as much as 11 feet by the end of the next century.<sup>48</sup>

As we have already learnt, the director of the UN Environment Program claimed in 1989 that entire nations could be wiped off the face of the Earth by rising sea levels if the global warming trend were not reversed by the year 2000. And in 1995 the IPCC's scientists said that most of the beaches of the US east coast would have disappeared within 25 years.<sup>49</sup>

One of the leading climate scientists of recent decades, James Hansen, then head of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, was very specific in 1988.<sup>50</sup> He claimed that New York's West Side Highway would be under water within 40 years. Needless to say, the highway is still there and full of traffic.<sup>51,52</sup> Sea levels have been rising steadily at a rate of 2.87mm/year in New York, so since Hansen made his prediction, they have gone up by just over 4 inches. Given that the highway is 10 feet or more above sea level, I suspect it is safe for a few more centuries yet.<sup>53</sup>

Island nations have been the poster children for sea-level scares. The Maldives government even held a cabinet meeting underwater in



2009, in order to highlight their supposed plight.<sup>54</sup> But that has not stopped them continuing to build new airports and resort complexes on the islands. Five new airports were opened in 2019 alone, to bring tourists to several new hotel resorts now under construction on under-developed atolls.<sup>55</sup> It appears that they, along with investors such as the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development, know that sea levels are not the threat painted.

And for good reason. Expert studies have revealed that many low-lying Pacific islands are growing, not sinking, largely due to coral debris, land reclamation and sediment.<sup>56</sup> In fact, all around the world – including the UK, we find that sea levels are now rising no faster than they were a century ago.<sup>57</sup>

But this has not stopped 'experts' falling over each other to see who can predict the biggest rise in sea level. One example is the authors of the Climate Central website, who in 2019 reckoned that the seas could rise by as much as 10.8 metres by the end of the century, submerging Cardiff, Swansea and north Wales, east Yorkshire and Hull, Peterborough and Norfolk, and the coast from Lancaster to Liverpool.<sup>58</sup>

## WHAT IS HAPPENING IN ANTARCTICA?



## Climate refugees

The UN has often been at the centre of claims that millions of refugees would be forced to flee because of climate-related disasters, such as drought, hurricanes and sea-level rise. For instance:

- 2005 - 'Rising sea levels, desertification and shrinking freshwater supplies will create up to 50 million environmental refugees by the end of the decade' – Janos Bogardi, director of the Institute for Environment and Human Security at the United Nations University in Bonn.<sup>59</sup>
- 2008 - 'It has been estimated that there would be between 50 million and 200 million environmental migrants by 2010.' – Srgjan Kerim, President of the UN General Assembly.<sup>60</sup>
- 2011 - 'Fifty million 'environmental refugees' will flood into the global north by 2020, fleeing food shortages sparked by climate change' – Professor Cristina Tirado, UCLA.<sup>61</sup>
- 2014 - 'Climate change has already cut into the global food supply' – Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.<sup>62</sup>

The 2008 UN report even published a map to show where these supposed refugees would come from. So embarrassing was this, that the UN tried to hide it a few years later.<sup>63,64</sup>

In reality, the UN's own Food and Agriculture Organisation shows that cereal production has continued to steadily climb since 2010, both globally, and in Africa and Asia in particular.<sup>65,66</sup> They also say that the percentage of chronically undernourished people in lower-middle-income countries has fallen from about 30 percent in 1990–92 to about 13 percent two decades later.<sup>67</sup>

But the most direct way to disprove claims about climate refugees is simply to look at population trends. In the countries highlighted in the UN map as most vulnerable to climate change, far from escaping in their millions, people have stayed and prospered.<sup>68</sup>

## Food shortages

Claims of impending hunger are sometimes quite specific. For instance, in 2008 scientists told us that impoverished farmers in South Asia and southern Africa could face growing food shortages due to climate change within just 20 years.<sup>69</sup> In particular, they noted that cereals were most at risk. In fact, data from the UN Food and Agriculture Organization shows that output of cereals in southern Asia continues to rise steadily. In southern Africa, despite the usual fluctuations, the trend is also unmistakably upwards.<sup>70</sup>

Back in 2016, researchers from the University of Oxford were convinced that there would be serious global shortages of fruit and veg by 2050, caused of course by global warming.<sup>71</sup> We have no idea what will happen in 2050. But the actual data shows us that global output of both fruit and veg has been consistently rising since 1961, as the world has warmed.<sup>72</sup>

And in 2015, scientists at the Royal Botanic Gardens were worried that rising temperatures would cause the world to run out of coffee by 2080.<sup>73</sup> Their apocalyptic predictions were pitched many decades in the future, but again, when we look at the real-world data, there is no evidence whatsoever to back such wild claims. On the contrary, the world's coffee industry is thriving.<sup>74</sup>

### **Stronger hurricanes**

In 2010, scientists told us that global warming would lead to more intense hurricanes in the Atlantic.<sup>75</sup> In reality there has been little change in the frequency of major hurricanes (Category 3–5) since the 1950s.<sup>76</sup>

And in 2013, top climate researcher Kerry Emanuel, of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, assured us that the world could see as many as 20 additional hurricanes and tropical storms each year by the end of the century because of climate change. There would also be an increase in their intensity.<sup>77</sup>

None of this is supported so far by the actual data, which shows that there has been no increase in the number of hurricanes or major hurricanes globally since 1980.<sup>78</sup>

### **Polar bears threatened with extinction**

Polar bears have long been the poster child of global warming, even to the extent of environmentalists distributing bogus, photoshopped images of them apparently stranded on ice floes.<sup>79</sup> In 2004, 40 members of the Polar Bear Specialist Group of the International Conservation Union (IUCN) concluded that the imposing white carnivores – the world's largest bear – should be classified as a 'vulnerable' species, based on a likely 30 percent decline in their worldwide population over the following 35 to 50 years. There were 20,000 to 25,000 polar bears across the Arctic at that time.<sup>80</sup> Four years later, the US Fish and Wildlife Service officially listed the polar bear as a 'Threatened Species', because of dwindling Arctic sea ice.<sup>81</sup> As recently as 2017, they were still warning that the bears could become extinct if greenhouse gas emissions were not significantly reduced.<sup>82</sup>

In fact, since 2004 the global population of polar bears has grown, with latest official estimates putting it at between 22,000 and 31,000 individuals.<sup>83</sup> This is much higher than it was in 1980, when sea ice was much more extensive.<sup>84</sup> More-



over, three recent studies suggest the IUCN count in 2015 may have been an underestimate.<sup>85</sup> Given that the population of polar bears may have been as low as 12,000 in the 1960s, they appear to be thriving now.<sup>86</sup>

It is not only polar bears that are said to be at risk. Concerns have been raised for many years about the Pacific walrus. For instance, Sir David Attenborough claimed:

Ocean currents move heat around our planet and maintain a climate favourable for life. But our ocean system, in relative equilibrium for millennia, is changing at a worrying rate. Deep in the polar north, we meet walrus mothers and their newborn calves, searching for an ice floe to rest on. But with rising temperatures, summer sea ice is retreating – their battles to survive are becoming ever harder.<sup>87</sup>

However, the US Fish and Wildlife Service have studied the situation closely, and declared in 2017:

The US Fish and Wildlife Service has found that the Pacific walrus does not require protection as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The finding follows a comprehensive review and analysis of the best available scientific information concerning the species, as well as local and traditional ecological knowledge of Alaska Native peoples.<sup>88</sup>

# THEN

"CHILDREN JUST AREN'T GOING TO KNOW WHAT SNOW IS"



Joshi'20

# NOW

HELLO!



12

## Summary

These examples are just the tip of the iceberg. There are literally hundreds of scare stories, from deaf fish and giant oysters, weaker winds, stronger winds, obesity and UFOs. All things that would be caused or made worse by climate change. Many of these have been archived on the Number-watch website.<sup>89</sup>

While some are the work of cranks, far too many come from supposedly reputable sources, and are of course lapped up by the media, who are always desperate for headlines. Part of the problem may be the colossal amounts of money available for any research that can claim to be climate related, no matter how tenuous the link. It is difficult not to conclude that many of the studies on which these claims are made would never have got off the ground otherwise.

And yet nobody seems to be held to account when their predictions of doom don't materialise. Meanwhile we are still inundated with similarly absurd assertions. Only recently the UK Met Office pronounced that snow in England would soon be a thing of the past, evidently not learning from David Viner's faux pas twenty years before.<sup>90</sup>

All of this has had a damaging effect on the standing of climatology as a whole. While ridiculous claims were being made by some scientists, where were their peers, who should have been standing up challenging them? And where were the scientists, when the media, politicians and Extinction Rebellion were declaring 'climate emergencies' and worse?

It is hard not to conclude that the importance of getting a political message across was more important than scientific integrity. We would do well to recall the words of the renowned climate scientist, Stephen Schneider, in an interview in 1989:

On the one hand we are ethically bound to the scientific method, in effect promising to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but, which means that we must include all the doubts, caveats, ifs and buts. On the other hand, we are not just scientists, but human beings as well. And like most people, we'd like to see the world a better place, which in this context translates into our working to reduce the risk of potentially disastrous climate change. To do that we have to get some broad-based support, to capture the public's imagination. That, of course, entails getting loads of media coverage. So we have to offer up scary scenarios, make simplified, dramatic statements, and make little mention of any doubts we might have. This double ethical bind which we frequently find ourselves in cannot be solved by any formula. Each of us has to decide what the right balance is between being effective and being honest. I hope that means being both.<sup>91</sup>

## Notes

1. <https://cei.org/blog/wrong-again-50-years-of-failed-eco-pocalyptic-predictions/>.
2. <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/summary?doi=10.1.1.556.2807>.
3. <https://apnews.com/article/bd45c372caf118ec99964ea547880cd0>.
4. <https://cei.org/blog/wrong-again-50-years-of-failed-eco-pocalyptic-predictions/>.
5. <https://www.heraldsun.com.au/archive/news/weve-got-5-years-to-save-world-says-australias-chief-scientist-professor-penny-sackett/news-story/614a7441983b090314f05f7f705a1d5a>.
6. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/2006-al-gore-does-sundance/>.
7. <https://notalotofpeopleknowthat.wordpress.com/2017/07/13/three-years-to-save-the-world/>.
8. <https://www.independent.co.uk/environment/green-living/just-96-months-to-save-world-says-prince-charles-1738049.html>.
9. <http://web.archive.org/web/20150720220112/http://www.westernmorningnews.co.uk/Prince-Charles-exclusive-tackle-climate-change/story-27440039-detail/story.html>.
10. <https://www.breitbart.com/europe/2019/07/12/rich-eco-loons-like-prince-charles-should-pay-climate-change/>.
11. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8017939/Weve-got-10-years-save-planet-warns-Prince-Charles.html>.
12. <https://www.climatedepot.com/2020/11/10/wait-what-prince-charles-now-says-world-is-literally-at-the-last-hour-in-fight-against-climate-change-but-he-previously-issued-10-year-18-month-100-month-35-year-tipping-po/>?
13. <https://ourworldindata.org/co2-emissions>.
14. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2004/feb/22/usnews.theobserver>.
15. <https://web.archive.org/web/20130422045937/> and <http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/snowfalls-are-now-just-a-thing-of-the-past-724017.html>.
16. [https://digital.nmla.metoffice.gov.uk/IO\\_9d8b6c02-0fd3-491b-97e0-03d59cd79ff7/](https://digital.nmla.metoffice.gov.uk/IO_9d8b6c02-0fd3-491b-97e0-03d59cd79ff7/).
17. [https://digital.nmla.metoffice.gov.uk/IO\\_26f99c79-2cb0-48ae-af27-f168762bd5ae/](https://digital.nmla.metoffice.gov.uk/IO_26f99c79-2cb0-48ae-af27-f168762bd5ae/).
18. <https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2006/jul/28/travelnews.uknews.climatechange>.
19. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/4091068.stm>.
20. <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2012/aug/08/shape-of-british-summer-to-come>.
21. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2012/feb/21/drought-new-norm-for-uk>.
22. <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/research/climate/maps-and-data/uk-temperature-rainfall-and-sunshine-time-series>.
23. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2012/mar/14/met-office-arctic-sea-ice-loss-winter>.
24. <https://www.itv.com/news/update/2013-04-10/met-offices-urgent-inquiry-into-arctic-effect-on-uk-weather/>.
25. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-26084625>.
26. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/208012/Winter-to-be-mild-predicts-Met-Office>.
27. <https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/cag/national/time-series>.
28. <https://phys.org/news/2011-01-southwest-permanent-drought.html>.
29. <https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/cag/national/time-series>.
30. <https://www.chron.com/opinion/outlook/article/Texas-is-vulnerable-to-warming-climate-2079164.php>.

31. <https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/cag/national/time-series>.
32. <https://climatism.blog/2018/03/12/tim-flannery-professor-of-dud-predictions-and-climate-falsehoods/>.
33. <http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/change/index.shtml#tabs=Tracker&tracker=timeseries>.
34. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/7139797.stm>.
35. <https://www.foxnews.com/story/scientists-arctic-is-screaming-global-warming-may-have-passed-tipping-point>.
36. <https://www.groundreport.com/north-pole-may-be-ice-free-this-summer/>.
37. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2012/sep/17/arctic-collapse-sea-ice>.
38. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/arctic-ice-cap-in-death-spiral-xvwm398zpd>.
39. <https://www.independent.co.uk/environment/climate-change/arctic-could-become-ice-free-first-time-more-100-000-years-claims-leading-scientist-a7065781.html>.
40. [https://web.nersc.no/WebData/arctic-roos.org/observation/ssmi\\_ice\\_ext.png](https://web.nersc.no/WebData/arctic-roos.org/observation/ssmi_ice_ext.png).
41. <https://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200304/cmselect/cmenvaud/490/4033002.htm>.
42. <http://web.archive.org/web/20100817023019/http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/why-antarctica-will-soon-be-the-only-place-to-live--literally-561947.html>.
43. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/earth/earthnews/3353247/Climate-change-study-predicts-refugees-fleeing-into-Antarctica.html>.
44. [https://data.giss.nasa.gov/cgi-bin/gistemp/stddata\\_show\\_v4.cgi?id=AYM00089564&dt=1&ds=14](https://data.giss.nasa.gov/cgi-bin/gistemp/stddata_show_v4.cgi?id=AYM00089564&dt=1&ds=14).
45. <http://polarportal.dk/en/greenland/mass-and-height-change/>.
46. <https://wattsupwiththat.com/2019/08/03/greenland-endures/>.
47. <https://stevengoddard.wordpress.com/2013/08/17/phd-physicist-greenhouse-effect-to-raise-sea-level-40-feet-in-the-next-four-years/>.
48. <https://stevengoddard.wordpress.com/2015/03/05/epa-predicts-11-feet-of-sea-level-rise/>.
49. <https://realclimatescience.com/2017/02/ipcc-us-beaches-gone-by-2020/>.
50. <https://www.salon.com/2001/10/23/weather/>.
51. [http://www.columbia.edu/~jeh1/mailings/2011/20110126\\_SingingInTheRain.pdf](http://www.columbia.edu/~jeh1/mailings/2011/20110126_SingingInTheRain.pdf).
52. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:West\\_Side\\_Highway\\_from\\_1\\_WTC\\_New\\_York\\_City\\_2.JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:West_Side_Highway_from_1_WTC_New_York_City_2.JPG).
53. [https://tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov/sltrends/sltrends\\_station.shtml?id=8518750](https://tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov/sltrends/sltrends_station.shtml?id=8518750).
54. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1221021/Maldives-underwater-cabinet-meeting-held-highlight-impact-climate-change.html>.
55. <https://maldives.net.mv/31166/maldives-to-open-five-new-airports-in-2019/>.
56. <http://www.abc.net.au/science/articles/2010/06/03/2916981.htm>.
57. [https://tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov/sltrends/sltrends\\_station.shtml?id=170-053](https://tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov/sltrends/sltrends_station.shtml?id=170-053).
58. <http://web.archive.org/web/20191210051944/https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/empowering-the-planet/chilling-doomsday-map-shows-how-uk-will-be-left-underwater-in-80-years-time/ar-AAJMosJ?ocid=spartandhp>.
59. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2005/oct/12/naturaldisasters.climatechange1>.
60. <https://www.un.org/press/en/2008/ga10725.doc.htm>.
61. <https://www.smh.com.au/world/50-million-environmental-refugees-by-2020-experts-say-20110222-1b314.html>.



62. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/mar/31/climate-change-food-supply-un>.
63. <https://thenewamerican.com/embarrassing-predictions-haunt-the-global-warming-industry/>.
64. <https://web.archive.org/web/20080501091406/http://maps.grida.no/go/graphic/fifty-million-climate-refugees-by-2010>.
65. <http://www.fao.org/worldfoodsituation/csdb/en/>.
66. <http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#compare>.
67. <https://www.worldhunger.org/world-hunger-and-poverty-facts-and-statistics/>.
68. <https://ourworldindata.org/search?q=population>.
69. <http://web.archive.org/web/20080208130139/https://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2008/01/080131-warming-crops.html>.
70. <http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#compare>.
71. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/earth/environment/climatechange/12181496/Climate-change-Global-warming-fruit-and-veg-shortage-could-lead-to-1200-extra-UK-deaths-a-year-by-2050.html>.
72. <http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#compare>.
73. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/science/science-news/11442620/Kew-quest-to-prevent-coffee-dying-out.html>.
74. <http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#compare>.
75. <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/news/2010/1/100121-hurricanes-global-warming/>.
76. [www.aoml.noaa.gov/hrd-faq/#1569507388495-a5aa91bb-254c](http://www.aoml.noaa.gov/hrd-faq/#1569507388495-a5aa91bb-254c).
77. <https://eu.usatoday.com/story/weather/2013/07/08/climate-change-global-warming-hurricanes/2498611/>.
78. <http://climatlas.com/tropical/>.
79. <https://wattsupwiththat.com/2010/05/12/new-bear-species-discovered-ursus-bogus/>.
80. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/07/06/AR2005070601899.html>.
81. <https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp0/profile/speciesProfile?spcode=A0IJ>.
82. [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/polar-bears-climate-change\\_n\\_5873ebb2e4b02b-5f858a8579](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/polar-bears-climate-change_n_5873ebb2e4b02b-5f858a8579).
83. <https://polarbearsience.com/2015/11/18/iucn-red-list-says-global-polar-bear-population-is-22000-31000-26000/>.
84. <https://polarbearsience.com/2015/11/18/iucn-red-list-says-global-polar-bear-population-is-22000-31000-26000/>.
85. <https://polarbearsience.com/2017/02/23/global-polar-bear-population-larger-than-previous-thought-almost-30000/>.
86. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB121078668964492405>.
87. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/p04thmv7/blue-planet-ii-series-1-1-one-ocean>.
88. [https://www.fws.gov/news/ShowNews.cfm?\\_ID=36158](https://www.fws.gov/news/ShowNews.cfm?_ID=36158).
89. <https://www.numberwatch.co.uk/warmlist.htm>
90. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-55179603>
91. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen\\_Schneider](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_Schneider).

## THE GLOBAL WARMING POLICY FORUM

---

**Director**

Benny Peiser

## **About the Global Warming Policy Forum**

The Global Warming Policy Forum is the campaigning arm of the Global Warming Policy Foundation, an all-party and non-party think tank and a registered educational charity which, while open-minded on the contested science of global warming, is deeply concerned about the costs and other implications of many of the policies currently being advocated.

Views expressed in the publications of the Global Warming Policy Forum are those of the authors, not those of the Forum, its board, or its director.

For further information about the Global Warming Policy Forum, please visit our website at [www.thegwpcf.com](http://www.thegwpcf.com).

