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The Pillars Supporting Net Zero are Crumbling



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## The Pillars Supporting Net Zero are Crumbling

Data adjustments, reduced climate sensitivity, failed predictions of doom

and poor strategy are undermining the claims of climate catastrophists

DAVID TURVER

JUL 30



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## Introduction

It has become fashionable to refer to anyone who is sceptical of the Climate Emergency or the Net Zero as a “Denier.” Of course, this has connotations of denying one of the worst atrocities of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which I guess is why they do it. They want to make you guilty by association and shame you into submission to the agenda. This has the effect of shutting down debate. However, there are strong signs that each of the pillars supporting the Net Zero edifice are crumbling making debate even more necessary.

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## Question Marks over the Scale of Global Warming

The first pillar of Net Zero is the claim of rapid warming. This is a tricky point to argue because almost all (including me) would agree that the world has warmed since the end of the Little Ice Age.

However, the scale of warming we have seen is a contentious subject. Part of the problem is that those who compile the various global datasets keep altering the historical record. This is the area that first made me sceptical of the whole Net Zero agenda. It seems that modern scientists think that meteorologists from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century could not read thermometers properly. In fact, it seems our ancestors took readings that were too high and so the changes modern scientists make almost invariably have the effect of cooling the past and warming the present. This is illustrated in Figure 1 below which shows how the record of US temperatures from 1880 to 1998 has been adjusted from 1999 to 2019.

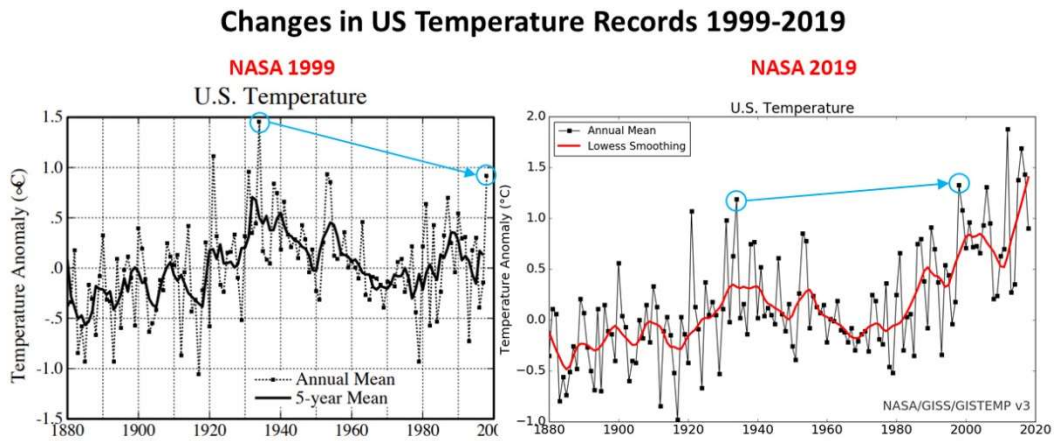


Figure 1 - Changes in US Temperature Records 1999-2019

Note how the peak in the 1930's was higher than 1998 in the 1999 record and lower in the 2019 record. Note also how the difference in the smoothed average from 1880 to 1998 has increased from  $\sim 0.2^{\circ}\text{C}$  in 1999 to  $\sim 1^{\circ}\text{C}$  in 2019. That is about 0.8 degrees of extra warming just from altering the data. The source for the 1999 chart is [here](#) (Figure 6 p37) and [here](#) for the 2019 chart.

The Met Office has also changed the Central England Temperature (CET) record as Paul Homewood has discussed at his [website](#). His analysis is shown in Figure 2.

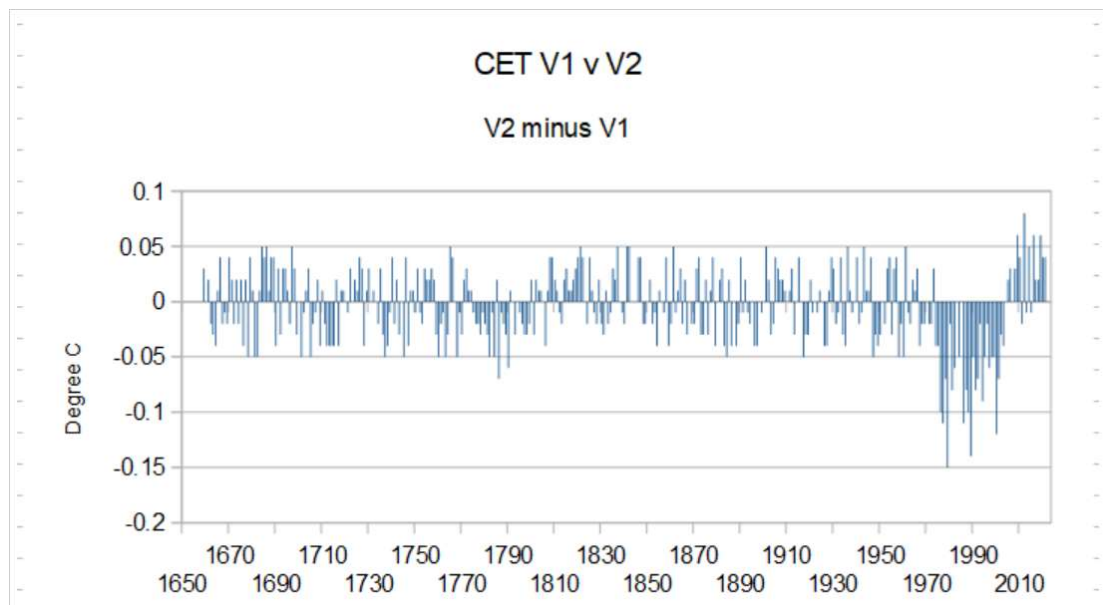


Figure 2 - Changes to CET Record (credit Paul Homewood)

The changes up to 1970 are quite small, but the years from 1970 to 2003 have been

cooled quite markedly and more recent temperatures have been adjusted upwards. This has the effect of exaggerating the recent warming.

In addition, in 2009 there was the [Climategate affair](#) that revealed scientists at one of the world's leading climate research facilities, UEA's Climate Research Unit, were conspiring to use "tricks" to "hide the decline" in temperatures and thought it was a "travesty" that they could not explain the lack of warming at that time. That pause in warming now seems to have been adjusted from the global temperature record.

I think most people would agree that the Earth has warmed, but the amount of warming is certainly debatable, causing cracks in the first pillar supporting the Net Zero agenda.

## Causes of Global Warming

Most, including me, agree that increased concentrations of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere have caused some extra warming in addition to natural variation.

The key question is what is the sensitivity of the atmosphere to a doubling of CO<sub>2</sub>?

This is straying into a more contentious area. The IPCC has shifted its thinking somewhat over the years, with their best estimate rising by about half a degree.

Their [second assessment report from 1995 p34](#) estimated climate sensitivity to be in the range 1.5-4.5°C with a best estimate of 2.5°C. The [third assessment report \(TAR\) p20](#) from 2001 suggested a range of 1.7-4.2°C. By the [fourth report p20](#) in 2008, the best estimate had risen to 3°C. The [fifth assessment report \(p16\)](#) showed a likely range of 1.5-4.5°C with no best estimate. The [latest report \(p11\)](#) indicates a wide plausible range of 2-5°C with a high confidence in the range of 2.5-4°C and a best estimate of 3°C.

The IPCC assessment contrasts with the work of other scientists that has shown decreasing estimates of sensitivity over time. The website [Notrickszone](#) has published a chart showing how estimates have changed (See Figure 3 below).



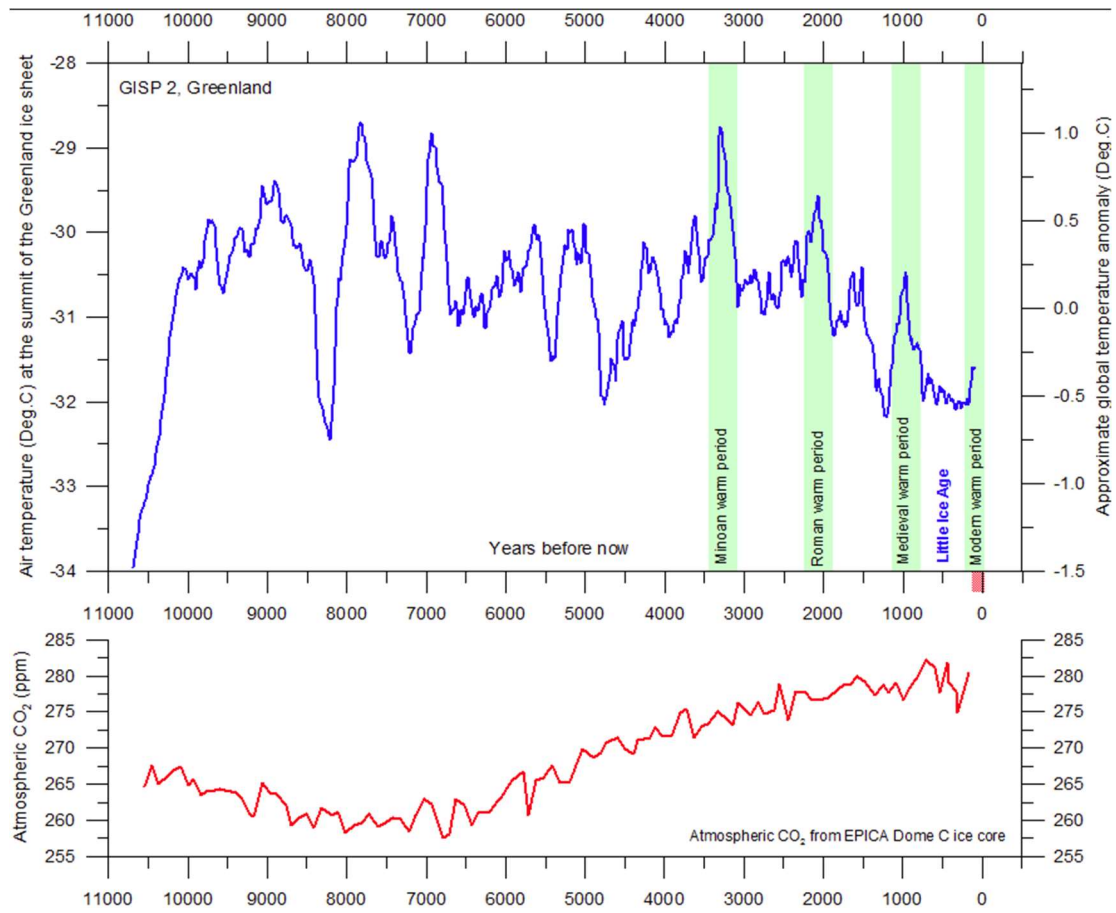


Figure 4 - Comparison of Temperature and CO<sub>2</sub> concentration since last Ice Age (credit theclimaterecord.com)

On much the much longer timeframe of 600m years (see Figure 5), it can be seen that the Earth has seen Ice Ages even with CO<sub>2</sub> levels even an order of magnitude higher than today and warmer temperatures than today with similar CO<sub>2</sub> levels.

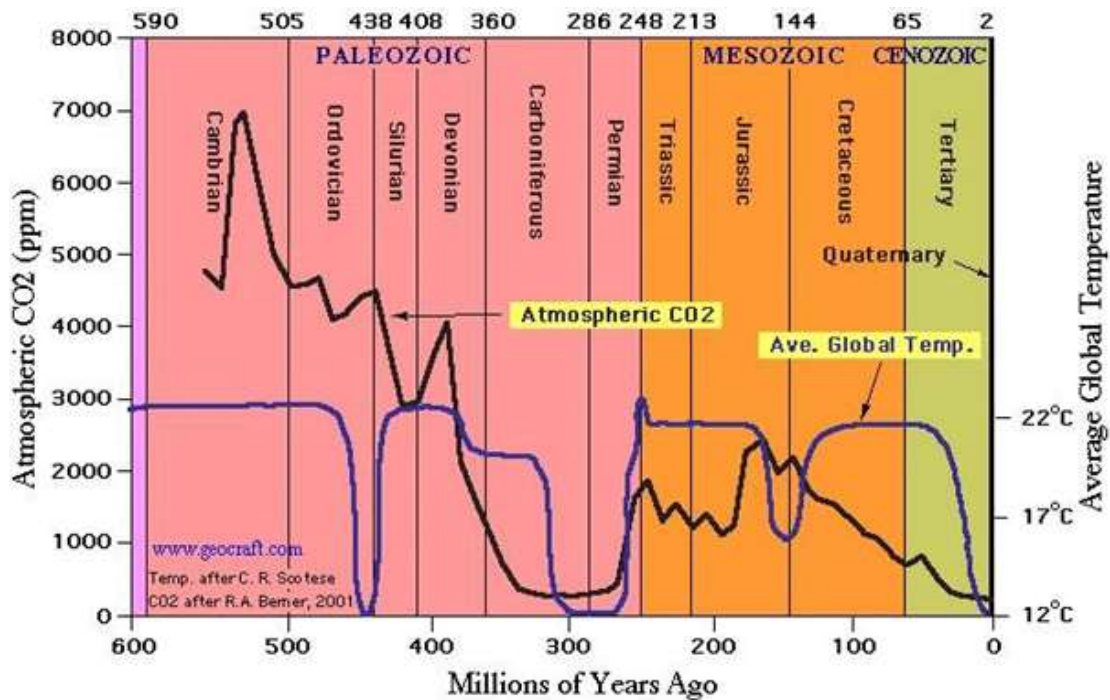


Figure 5 - Global Temperature vs CO<sub>2</sub> levels over 600 million years (Credit MacRae 2008)

It is clear that the CO<sub>2</sub> demon may not be quite harmful as we are led to believe. In fact, all plant life is dependent upon CO<sub>2</sub> and if plants cannot survive neither can any animal life including humans. So, the second pillar supporting the Net Zero edifice is crumbling too.

## No Evidence of Climate Emergency

Even if you choose to ignore the contrary evidence of the amount of warming and the causes of warming, the next pillar supporting the Net Zero zealots is the claim of a “Climate Emergency,” “Climate Crisis” or more recently “Climate Breakdown.” A belief in imminent catastrophe means you have to ignore the vast catalogue of failed predictions of doom, overlook the lack of evidence of any significant change in extreme weather and disregard the benefits of a warmer planet with more CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere.

It is worth noting here that prior to the recent hysteria about weather and climate, a warm period was described as a climatic optimum. Examples include the Holocene Climate Optimum from between 5,000 and 9,000 years ago and the Medieval Warm Period is also known as the little climatic optimum. They were known as optima because warmer weather tended to favour better harvests and thus more food. Abundant food allowed humankind to flourish and invest more effort in the

development of society rather than simply subsist from day to day.

## Failed Predictions of Climate Doom

The modern story of climate doom began with a dire warning (see p4) to the President of the United States in 1972 that a “global deterioration of climate, by an order of magnitude larger than any hitherto experienced by civilized mankind...maybe due very soon.” The scientists writing this letter were concerned about global *cooling*, not global warming. They warned that the “present rate of cooling seems fast enough to bring glacial temperatures in about a century.”

By the late 1980’s the threat had flipped by 180° to one of global warming. In 1988, there was a grim warning that the Maldives would be underwater within 30 years. Of course, the Maldives are still there. In fact, there is evidence that the islands have grown in size over the past six decades. The Maldivians are so afraid of fossil fuel emissions that they opened four new airports in 2020, just before they demanded climate reparations from hydrocarbon producers at COP26.

In 1989, James Hansen, one of the leading climate scientists, predicted that New York City’s West Side Highway would be underwater within 20 or 30 years. Of course, that 30 years expired in 2019 and even now, New York’s West Highway is still above water. In 2000, Dr David Viner said that within a few years “children just aren’t going to know what snow is.” In fact, snow extent in the Northern Hemisphere in the winter is showing a gentle upward trend.

Back in 2002, George Monbiot predicted global famine within 10 years. In fact, since 2001, the proportion of people that are undernourished in the world fell from 13.1% to 9.3% in 2020. This improvement came despite world population rising from 6.23bn in 2001 to 7.84bn in 2020.

In 2008, James Hansen was back again, this time predicting that in five to ten years the Arctic will be free of ice in summer. In fact, there’s been no trend in Arctic Sea Ice minima since about 2007. Predictions of imminent doom for polar bears have also shown to be unfounded because polar bear populations are rising.

The catastrophists would have more credibility if even a single one of their predictions had come to pass. Their credibility is even further damaged by claims from the UN Global Under-Secretary for Communications that they “own the science” and control which climate science appears in Google search results. If their “science” was robust, they would not need to censor dissenting voices.



# No Significant Change in Extreme Weather

In the most recent AR6 climate report (A.3. p8), the IPCC has slightly hardened its position on the human influence on heatwaves, heavy precipitation, droughts and tropical cyclones. However, the GWPF published a report that contradicts the IPCC's arguments with actual data.

For instance, the area suffering from drought in North America is much lower now than 900-1300. Similarly, droughts in Europe were longer and more severe from 1400 to 1480 and from 1770 to 1840 than in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The IPPC says (section 11.5.4) "Confidence is in general low in attributing changes in the probability or magnitude of flood events to human influence." Various other studies have concluded that there is little or no evidence that flooding is becoming more prevalent worldwide.

The IPCC claims (A3.4) that it is likely that the global proportion of major (Category 3–5) tropical cyclone occurrence has increased over the last four decades." However, the evidence shows that the frequency of tropical cyclones has diminished since 1981 and the proportion of major hurricanes has remained roughly constant. Moreover, the Tropical Cyclone Accumulated Cyclone Energy is cyclical and has fallen in recent years (see Figure 6).

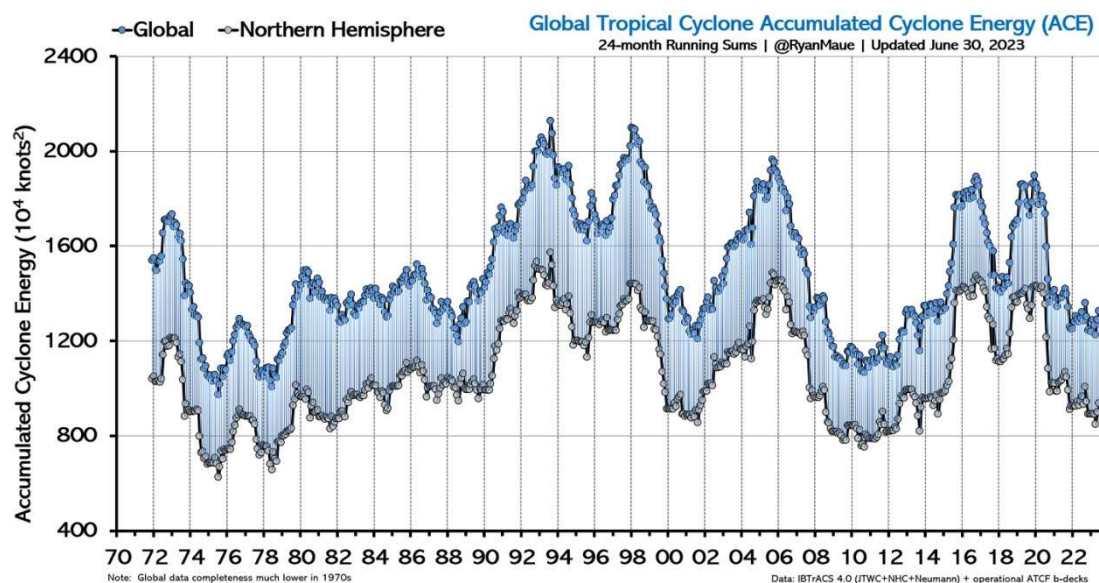


Figure 6 - Trends in Tropical Cyclone ACE (Credit Ryan Maue)

There is also evidence (p17) that the number of major tornadoes has been falling since 1950.

Even though wildfires are not strictly weather, the subject is topical today, so worth

addressing. The IPCC (Box TS.10) does say that there is “medium confidence that weather conditions that promote wildfires have become more probable in southern Europe, northern Eurasia, the USA, and Australia over the last century.” However, the evidence (pp12-14) shows that the area burned by wildfires in Southern Europe, Australia and the US has been on a long term downtrend. The more recent uptrend in US wildfire burn area (still ~80% down on the 1930’s peak) is attributed to poor forest management allowing the build-up of combustible undergrowth.

In short, there is precious little evidence that extreme weather events are even increasing and none at all that we are in the midst of a climate emergency nor any evidence that the climate is breaking down.

## Fewer Deaths from Extreme Weather Events

In addition, as Figure 7 shows, climate related disasters are killing far fewer people than 100 years ago, despite global population being far higher and more people living close to coastlines.

### Climate-Related Disasters Kill Ever Fewer

Global deaths from floods, droughts, storms, wildfire and extreme temperatures, annual average by decade 1920-2019, per year for 2020 and 2021

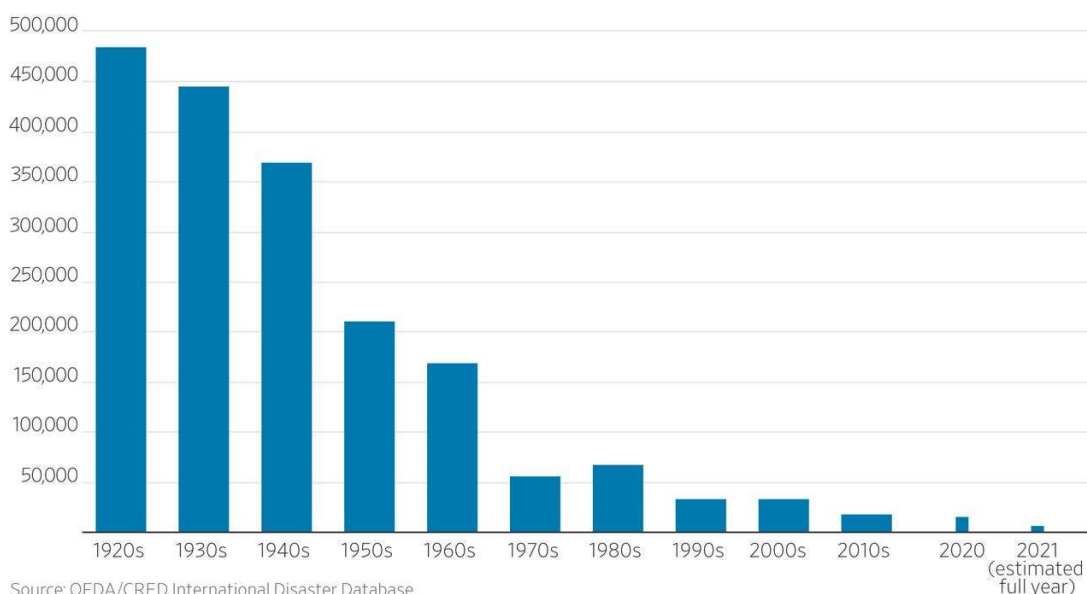


Figure 7 - Climate Related Deaths by decade

Could it be that we can adapt to extreme weather if we allow economic development?

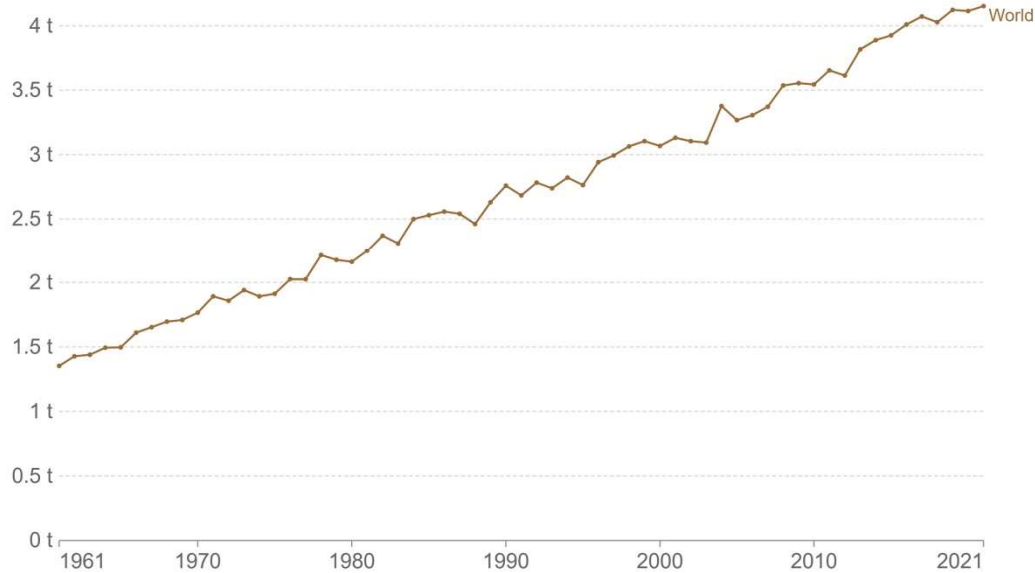
## Benefits of Warming and more CO<sub>2</sub>

Contrary to the emotional outpourings from prophets of climate doom, there have been some benefits from the extra CO<sub>2</sub> and the gentle warming we have experienced.

For instance, as Figure 8 from [Our World in Data](#) shows global cereal yields have tripled since the 1961.

### Cereal: Yield

Yields are measured in tonnes per hectare. Cereals include wheat, rice, maize, barley, oats, rye, millet, sorghum, buckwheat, and mixed grains.



Source: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

CC BY

Figure 8 - Global Cereal Yields since 1961

Moreover, as [Matt Ridley has written](#), there has been a ~15% increase in green vegetation over 30 years. This is equivalent of adding a new continent of green vegetation twice the size of mainland United States.

Quite contrary to claims of climate emergency, it does appear as though things are actually getting better. The pillar of climate catastrophe has already crumbled to dust.

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## Climate Mitigation versus Climate Adaptation

Despite all the evidence to the contrary, Net Zero zealots still insist that there is a climate emergency and that we must take some sort of action to ward off this evil threat. Broadly, there are two options available to us.

The first is adaptation. Investment in things like flood defences, irrigation, selective plant breeding and air conditioning allow us to adapt to the changes in climate that

may arise in the future.

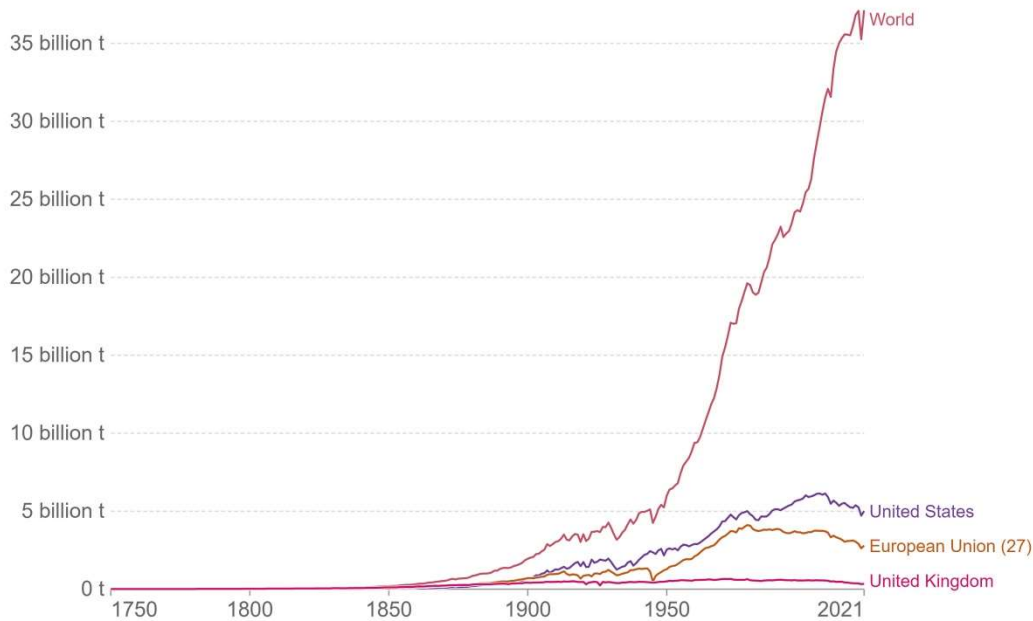
The alternative strategy is mitigation which means cutting CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by trying to decarbonise our energy system. This quickly mutates into an almost religious commitment to installing lots of wind and solar power capacity. These technologies do not emit much in the way of CO<sub>2</sub>, but they score badly on a range of other sustainability measures such as land use and mineral intensity. Plus, after all that effort, the electricity they produce is unreliable and requires back up by flexible power sources such as natural gas. Until recently, there has been very little emphasis on the highest density, most reliable source of power that also has the smallest environmental footprint, namely nuclear power.

Now, for a little thought experiment on the potential results of each strategy. First, let us consider what happens with a mitigation strategy if all the rest of the world also adopts the strategy. Well, we will end up with a decarbonised global energy system, but we will also have energy scarcity if all other countries follow the approach suggested by National Grid ESO. As a result, industrial activity will be lower and we are likely very much poorer, because there are currently no countries with low energy use and high GDP per capita. We will have no money left to spend on adaptation measures.

If there is only limited take-up of mitigation strategies, the result is even worse. There is no sign that developing countries are reducing their CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. In fact, quite the opposite. As Figure 9 from Our World in Data shows, global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions have risen dramatically, despite emissions falling in the UK, the USA and EU-27.

## Annual CO<sub>2</sub> emissions

Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions from fossil fuels and industry<sup>1</sup>. Land use change is not included.



Source: Global Carbon Budget (2022)

OurWorldInData.org/co2-and-greenhouse-gas-emissions • CC BY

**1. Fossil emissions:** Fossil emissions measure the quantity of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emitted from the burning of fossil fuels, and directly from industrial processes such as cement and steel production. Fossil CO<sub>2</sub> includes emissions from coal, oil, gas, flaring, cement, steel, and other industrial processes. Fossil emissions do not include land use change, deforestation, soils, or vegetation.

Figure 9 - Annual CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions by Country and Region

It is clear that UK emissions are but a rounding error in the grand scheme of things. Unilateral elimination of our CO<sub>2</sub> emissions will make no difference to global emissions. Even multi-lateral action from the UK, US and EU has made precious little difference, with global emissions rising sharply even though Western emissions have fallen. All we have achieved is a hollowing out of our own economies while the rest of the world has continued growing. Last year China issued new permits for 106GW of new coal power plants, the equivalent of two large 1GW plants each week. Moreover, restricting access to finance for cheap abundant power in developing countries will condemn them to perpetual poverty and ironically make them more vulnerable to climate change.

By contrast adaptation measures have the following benefits. First, they require no international treaty and they can be applied locally where they produce results quickly. Adaptation measures also work to protect against changes in the climate that are not driven by CO<sub>2</sub>. Adaptation measures might also have additional benefits such as more efficient water use or more robust crop varieties.

Oddly enough, humanity thrived as we emerged from the last Ice Age. Since then, sea levels have risen by around 120m as shown in Figure 10.

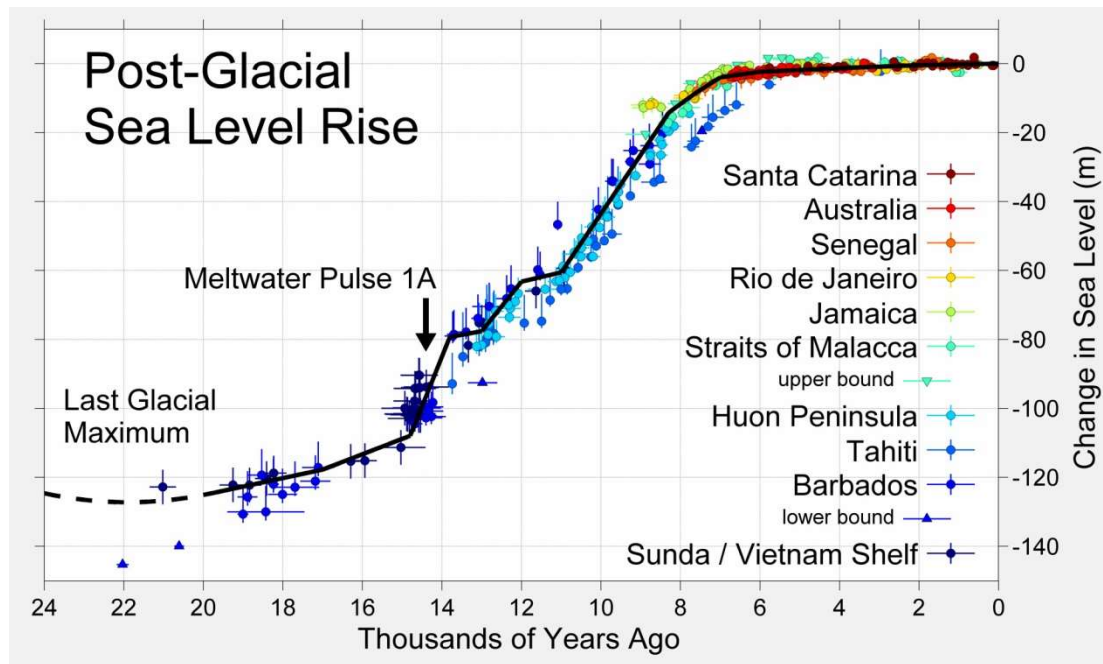


Figure 10 - Post Glacial Sea Level Rise (from Wikipedia)

There is no reason why we cannot continue to adapt.

It is clear that Western mitigation policies are worse than useless, causing actual harm at home and abroad while doing nothing to impact the emissions. Adaptation policies would be simpler to implement, more effective and cause less economic and social damage. Even if we are heading for climate catastrophe, the mitigation strategy is disastrous. This pillar of the Net Zero agenda is also crumbling.

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## Increasingly Strident Climate Propaganda

As if to illustrate the fragility of the pillars supporting the Net Zero edifice, the Climate Industrial Complex is stepping up the frantic propaganda to instil fear and shore up support for their preferred policies. There's a nexus of influencers including from the House of Lords Environment and Climate Change Committee and the Behavioural Insights team who are calling the shots. They are obsessed with changing our behaviour to meet their demands. This means intermittent wind and solar power, restrictions on where and how we travel and curbs on what we are allowed to eat. Of course, it is pure coincidence that the beneficiaries of taxpayer funded stipends, political donations, research grants and renewable energy subsidies tend to be the

loudest cheerleaders for more of the same Net Zero policies.

CNN was caught on tape admitting that they were going to “beat to death” climate change reporting and “milk it quite a bit.” The results of this type of propaganda can already be seen. It means that climate propaganda stories seem to spread around the world before rational analysts have got their boots on. One of the most egregious recent examples is this image sponsored by the European Union (see Figure 11).

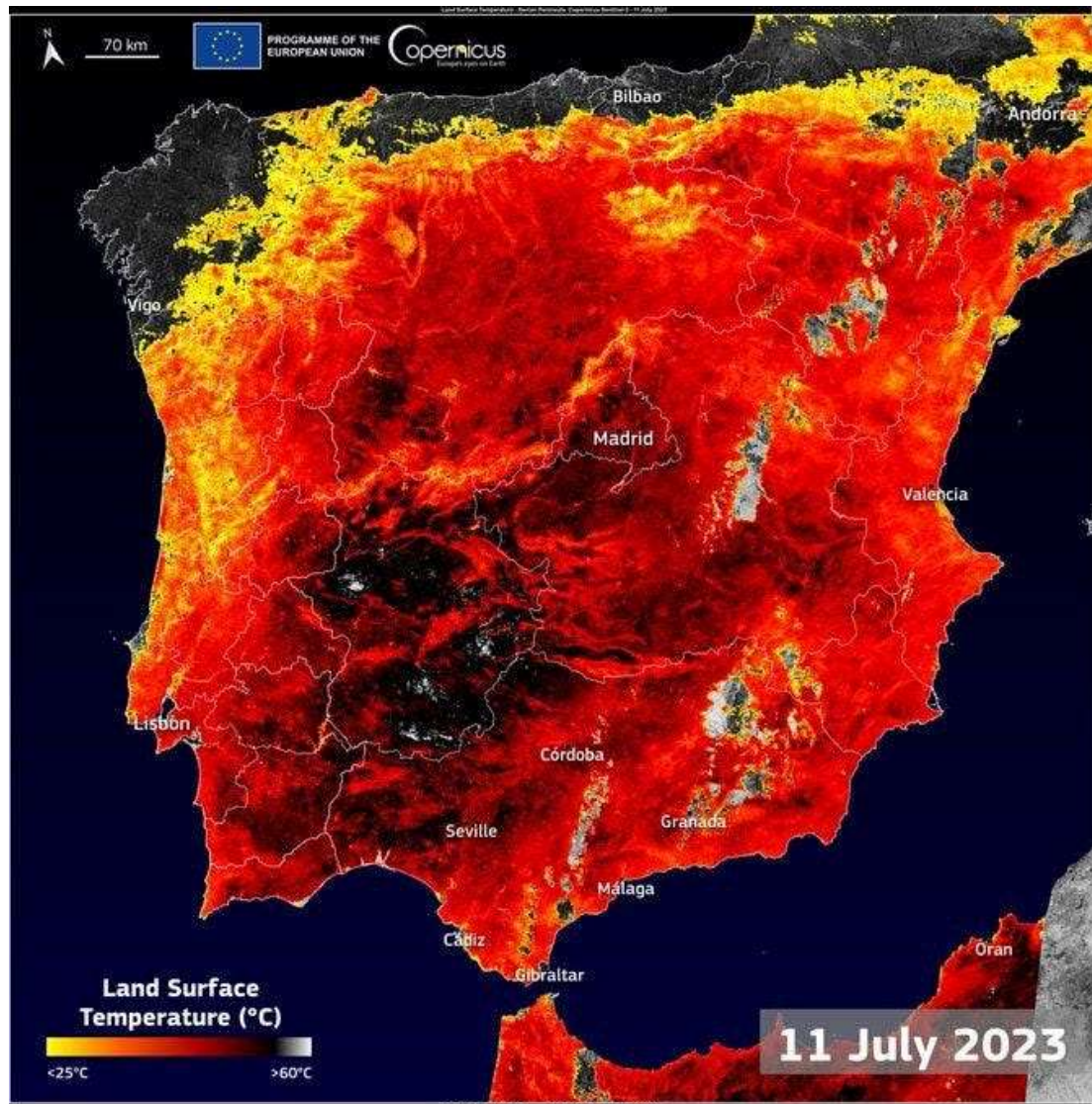


Figure 11 - Land Surface Temperature not Air Temperature

It shows temperatures rising to over 60°C. However, there was a sleight of hand in the image because it was showing land temperatures, not the more usual air temperatures. Land temperatures are almost always higher than air temperatures, particularly on sunny days in summer. In other words, pure scaremongering propaganda.

Even the Lancet (their Figure 3) is spreading propaganda. They showed a misleading chart that gave the impression that excess deaths from heat were comparable to those

from cold. In reality, there are around 10 times more deaths from cold than heat. Thankfully, Bjorn Lomborg has produced a chart (see Figure 12) with equal axes to demonstrate the impact of the misleading chart.

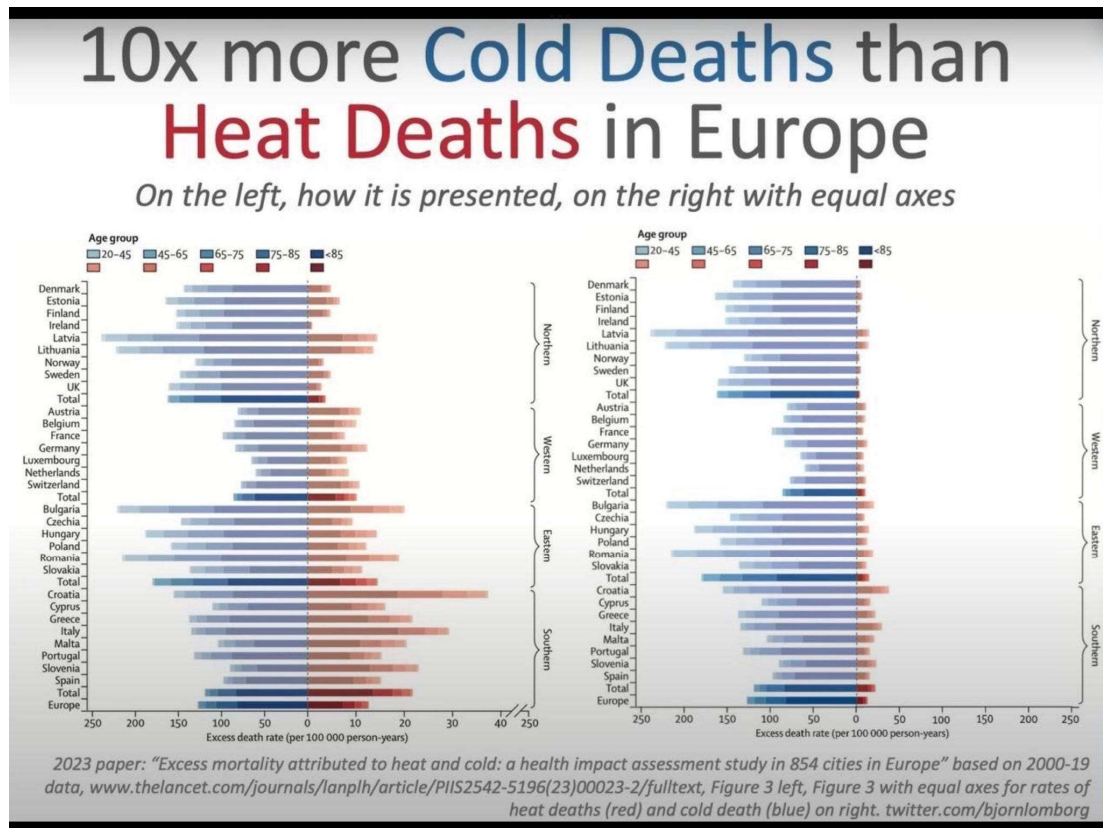


Figure 12 - Fake Chart of Heat Deaths in the Lancet

Stepping up the hysterical rhetoric, the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres appeared unhinged when he declared that “the era of global warming has ended, the era of global boiling has arrived.” The more the evidence of climate catastrophe falls apart, the more blatant and extreme the propaganda becomes.

The suppression of dissenting opinions also continues. The winner of the Nobel Prize for Physics, Dr John Clauser has been cancelled because he dared to say that the climate emergency narrative is a “dangerous corruption of science that threatens the world’s economy and the well-being of billions of people.”

If the only response to criticism is cancellation it shows that their arguments are very weak. The supposedly virtuous and caring ones want to ignore that a bit more warmth might even save lives and cheap energy will allow developing nations to lift more of their people out of poverty.

## Conclusions



It is clear that all of the pillars that support the Net Zero agenda are crumbling. Yes, we have seen some warming of global temperatures, but these are likely exaggerated. Yes, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions do have an impact on global temperatures, but the actual impact is probably lower than estimated by the IPCC.

These conclusions are supported by the fact that the predictions of climate catastrophe simply have not materialised and there's precious little evidence that any of the key measures of extreme weather are getting worse. In reality, we have seen benefits from mild warming such as increased crop yields and a greener planet. What we should really fear is a colder climate. That is when harvests fail and people starve.

Even if the doomsayers are right that we are about to see some sort of climate breakdown, it is clear that the preferred strategy of mitigation is the wrong one. Adaptation is much the better strategy because it will produce benefits even if we pursue that strategy unilaterally and even if the climate change we are seeing is largely natural. Mitigation will probably never work and certainly will not work while developing countries continue to expand coal and gas-fired power plants and increase their CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

This perhaps explains why the climate catastrophists and subsidy harvesters are stepping up the propaganda to try and generate popular hysteria and demand for action. But when even someone like Tony Blair acknowledges the futility of unilateral efforts, the Net Zero edifice must be close to collapse.

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