

From: Alex Epstein, Energy Talking Points
<alexepstein@substack.com>
Sent: Sunday, September 3, 2023 9:53 AM
To: cask4@cox.net
Subject: 25 myths in the media's Idalia coverage

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25 myths in the media's Idalia coverage

The media are using Hurricane Idalia to spread the false narrative that fossil fuels make extreme weather danger worse.

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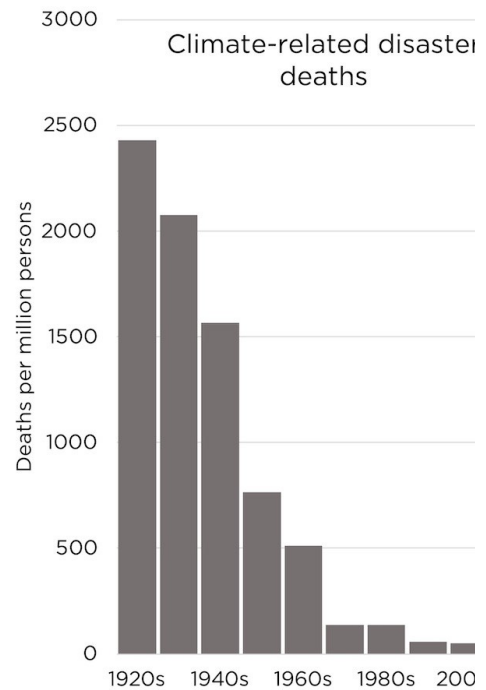
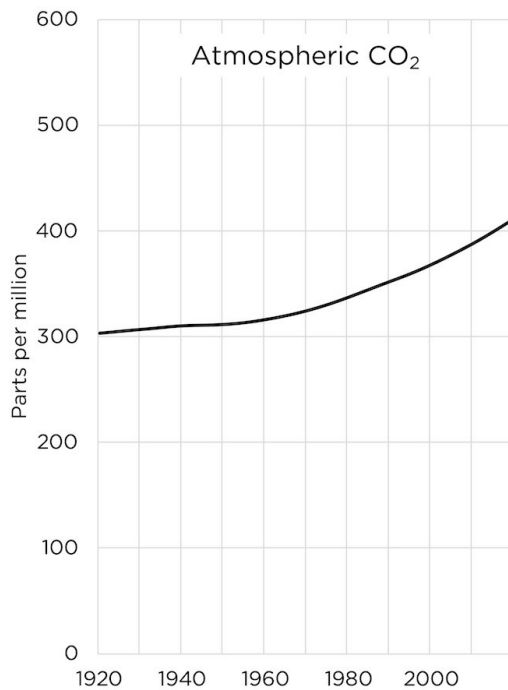


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The media are using Hurricane Idalia to spread the false narrative that fossil fuels make extreme weather danger worse.

*In reality, **fossil fuels make us safer from extreme weather.***

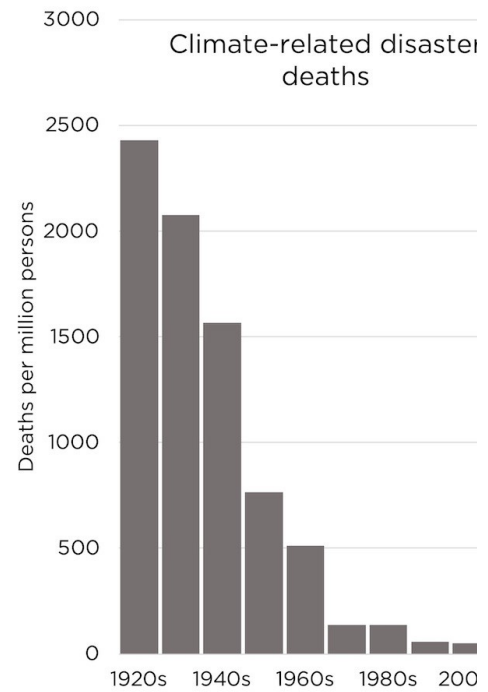
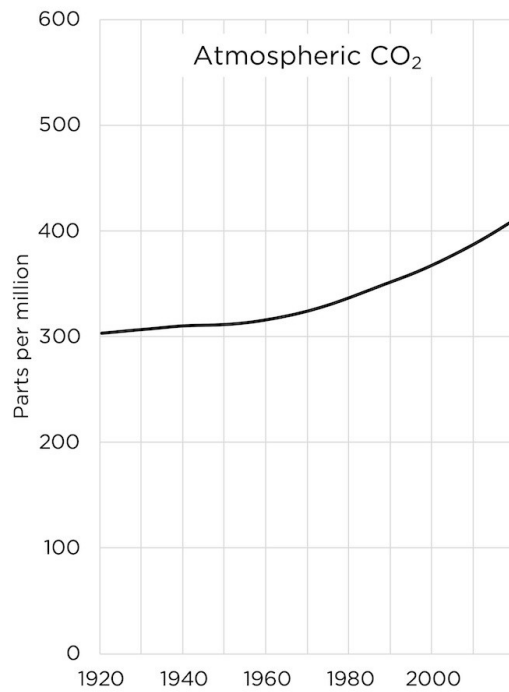
Here are answers to the media's top 25 extreme weather myths.¹



- Myth 1: The world is experiencing unprecedented danger from extreme weather thanks to fossil fuels.
- **Myth 2: The media and its designated experts are accurately reporting on fossil fuels and extreme weather.**
 Truth: The world is experiencing unprecedented **safety** from extreme weather thanks to FFs—because FFs' **climate mastery benefits** overwhelm any negative climate side-effects.
Truth: The media and its “experts” are:
1. totally ignoring how fossil fuels make us safer than ever from extreme weather
2. wildly overstating fossil fuels' negative impact on weather.
- **Myth 3: The effect of fossil fuels on extreme weather danger is solely negative.**

Truth: Not only can **warming from fossil fuels have significant benefits** (fewer cold deaths) but the **low-cost energy fossil fuels provide for billions gives us an unprecedented ability to master extreme weather.**

- Fossil fuels have made us far safer from extreme weather by providing low-cost energy for the amazing machines that protect us against storms, protect us against extreme temperatures, and alleviate drought. **Deaths from extreme weather have decreased 98% over the last century!**³

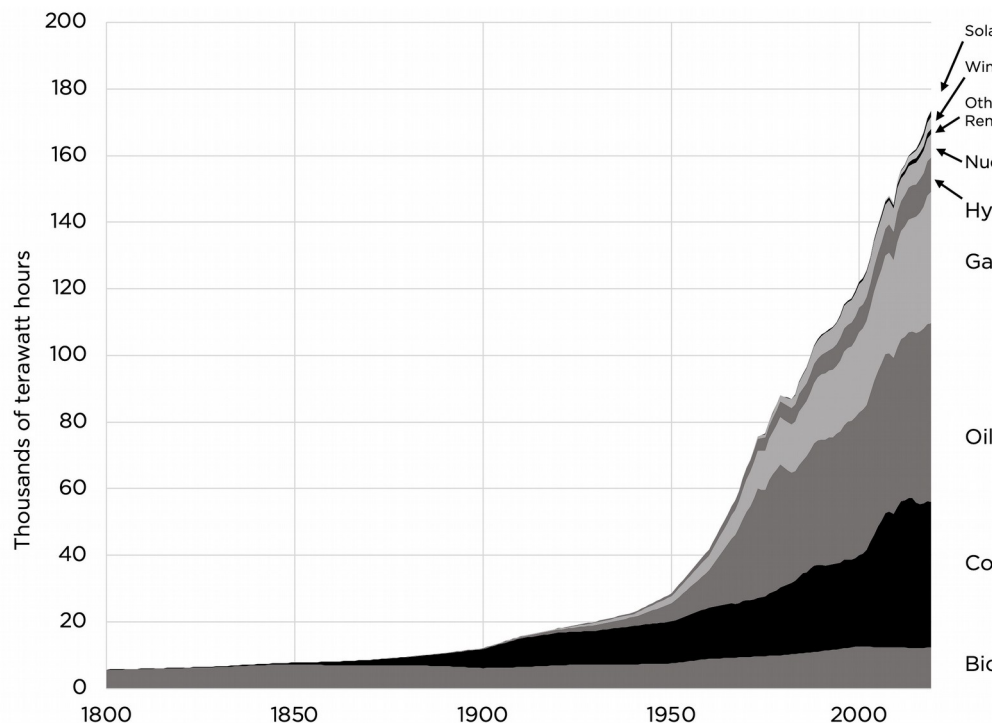


- **Myth 4:** We don't need fossil fuels to protect ourselves from extreme weather—we can just use alternatives.

Truth: As **Europe is illustrating**, there is **no near-term replacement for fossil fuels** for the 1/4 of the world that uses abundant energy—let alone the 3/4 of the world that doesn't.⁴

- Fossil fuels will for decades remain uniquely able to provide low-cost, reliable energy to billions. That's **why fossil fuels are 80% of world energy and still growing.**

Restricting fossil fuel use means far less energy for climate mastery activities such as heating, cooling, and irrigation.⁵



- **Myth 5:** The media and its designated experts are **accurately reporting the scientific linking of fossil fuel use and hurricanes.**

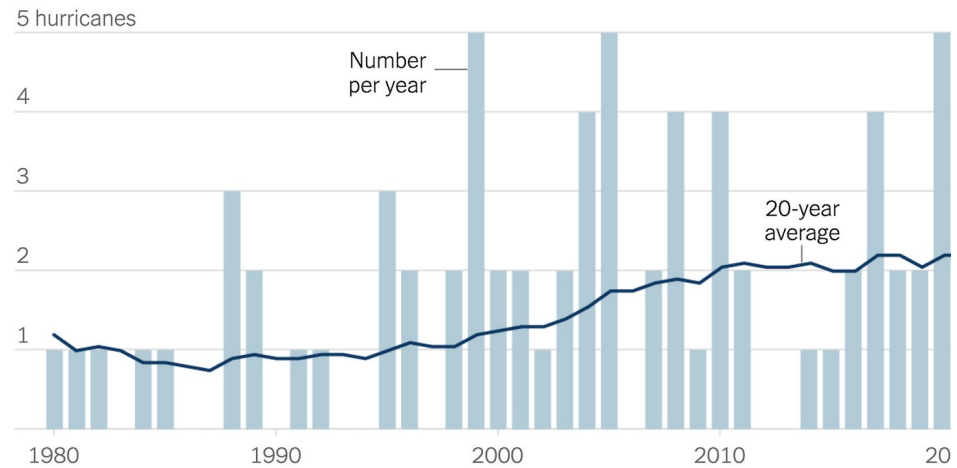
Truth: This “reporting” is riddled with

- 1. deliberate misrepresentations** (e.g., hurricane frequency)
- 2. biases** (e.g., only reporting negative links)

- **Myth 6:** Media **claims about increasing hurricane frequency are accurate.**

Truth: Leading media outlets have **deliberately misrepresented the flat long-term hurricane trend.** E.g., the New York Times **cherry-picking a starting point—the low point of 1980—to make a flat trend seem upward.**⁶

Category 4 and 5 Atlantic hurricanes since 1980



Source: NOAA • By The New York Times

Changes in Atlantic major hurricane frequency since the late-19th century

Gabriel A. Vecchi , Christopher Landsea, Wei Zhang, Gabriele Villarini & Thomas Knutson

Nature Communications 12, Article number: 4054 (2021) | [Cite this article](#)

20k Accesses | 12 Citations | 1105 Altmetric | [Metrics](#)

Abstract

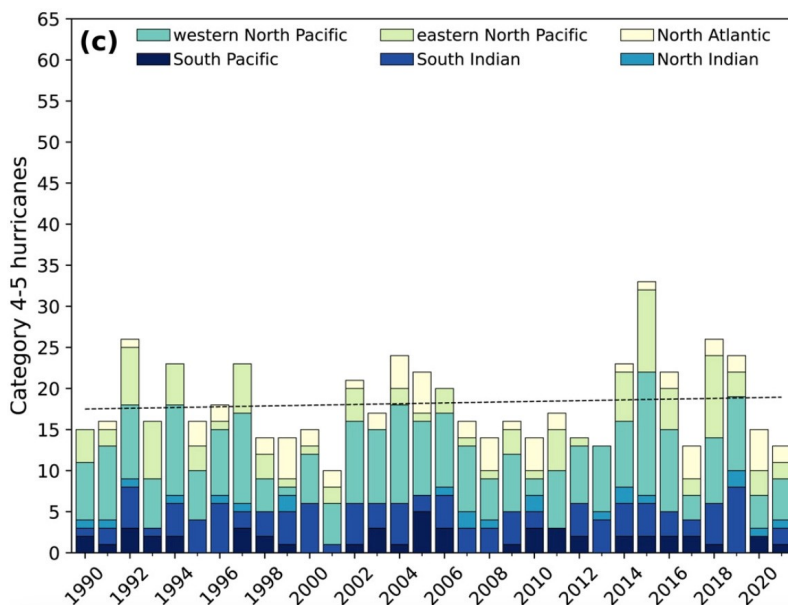
Atlantic hurricanes are a major hazard to life and property, and a topic of intense scientific interest. Historical changes in observing practices limit the utility of century-scale records of Atlantic major hurricane frequency. To evaluate past changes in frequency, we have here developed a homogenization method for Atlantic hurricane and major hurricane frequency over 1851–2019. We find that *recorded* century-scale increases in Atlantic hurricane and major hurricane frequency, and associated decrease in USA hurricanes strike fraction, are consistent with changes in observing practices and not likely a true climate trend. After homogenization, increases in basin-wide hurricane and major hurricane activity since the 1970s are not part of a century-scale increase, but a recovery from a deep minimum in the 1960s–1980s. We suggest internal (e.g., Atlantic multidecadal) climate variability and aerosol-induced mid-to-late-20th century major hurricane frequency reductions have probably masked century-scale greenhouse-gas warming contributions to North Atlantic major hurricane frequency.

- Leading media outlets have also **deliberately ignored statements** by the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change about **how any increases in hurricane frequency in records are likely due to increasing reporting**, not actual frequency.⁷

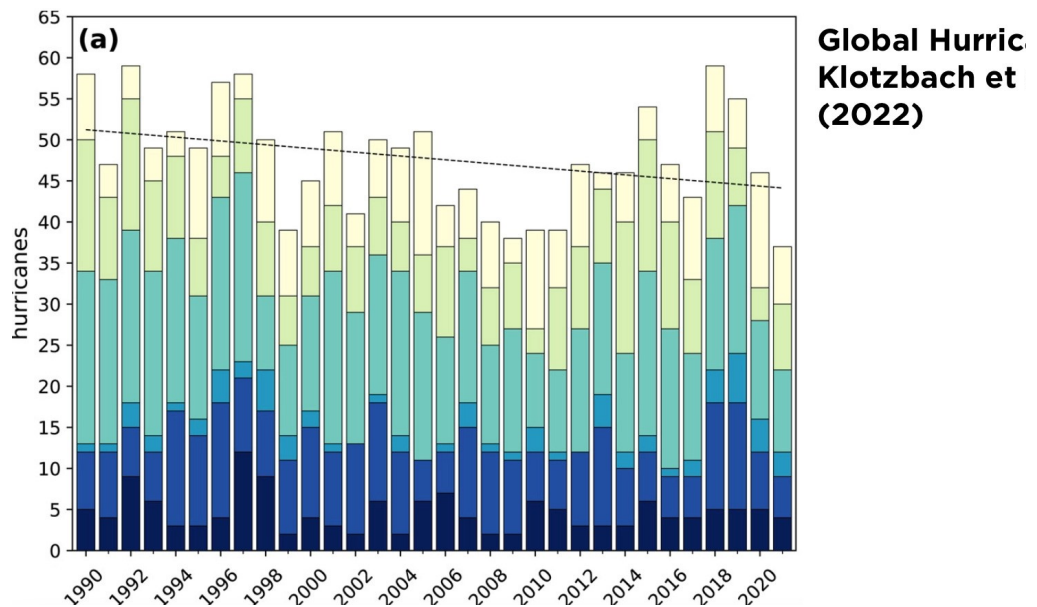
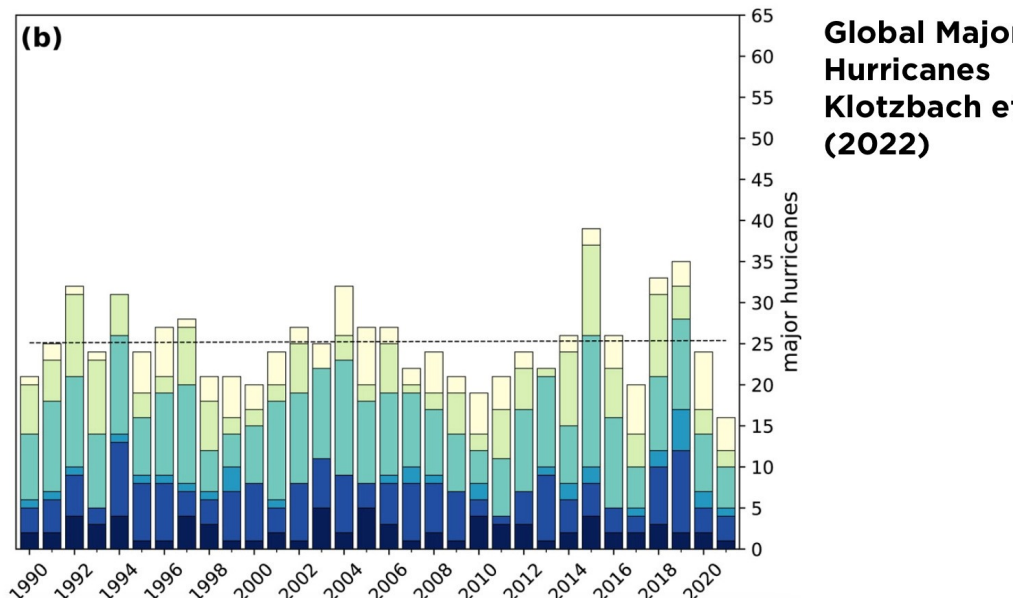
In summary, Figures 3 and 4 show increases in U.S. landfalling hurricanes, basin-wide hurricane counts, and the proportion of basin-wide hurricanes that reached category 3 intensity since the early 1970s or 80s. But these strong recent increases are not representative of the behavior seen in longer (century-scale) records. Century-scale rising trends in basin-wide hurricane indices largely disappear after one adjusts the timeseries estimates of the number of likely “missing” storms in the pre-satellite era. Such adjustments for missing storms still have uncertainties, as they are simply estimates based on historical ship tracks, and we will likely never know exactly how many hurricanes and major hurricanes occurred over the Atlantic basin during the past century. **We conclude that the historical Atlantic hurricane data at this stage do not provide compelling evidence for a substantial greenhouse warming-induced century-scale increase in: frequency of tropical storms, hurricanes, or major hurricanes, or in the proportion of hurricanes that become major hurricanes.**

Source: <https://www.gfdl.noaa.gov/global-warming-and-hur>

- Here are the **latest data on global hurricane frequency and intensity from a 2022 paper** (Klotzbach et al). **Does this remotely resemble what trusted media sources tell you?**⁸



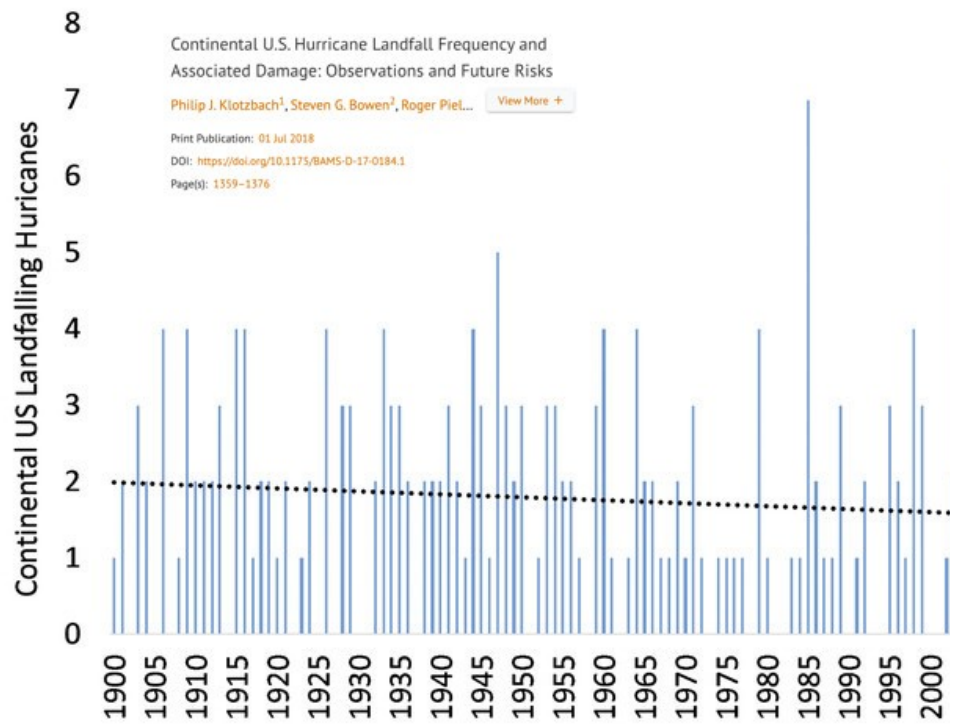
Global Cat 4-5 Hurricanes
Klotzbach et al (2022)



- Here's **recent US data for landfalling hurricanes**, both overall and major. Again, consuming the New York Times and other trusted sources would you have any idea that the data looked like this?⁹

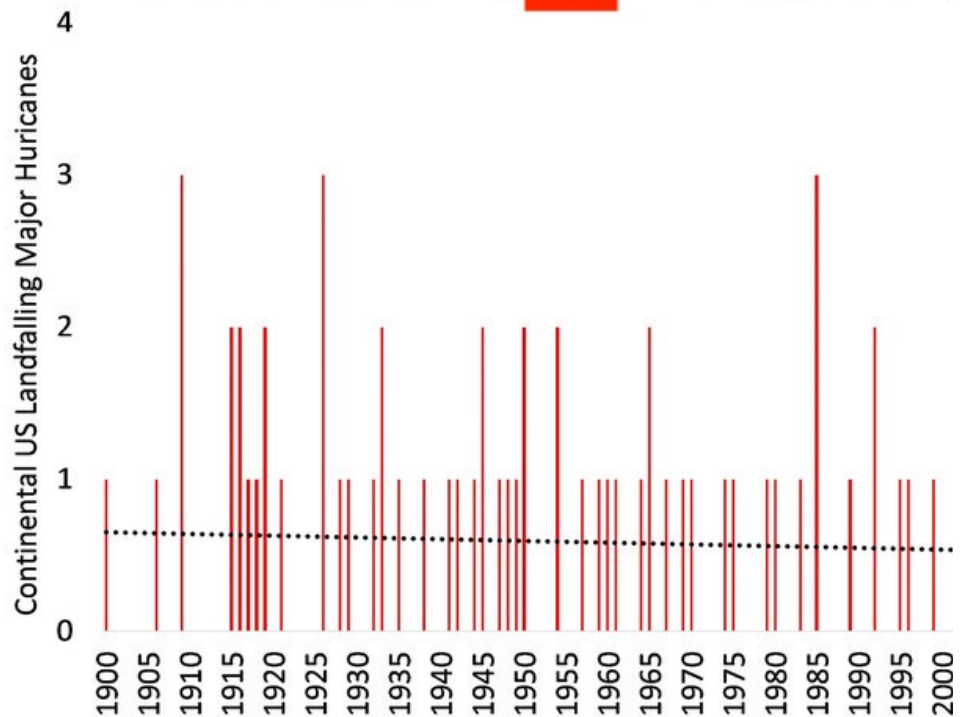
(a)

Continental US Landfalling Hurricanes (1900-2017)



(b)

Continental US Landfalling Major Hurricanes (1900-2017)



- **accordingly**. E.g., media favorite Friederike Otto wants **climate research** **Myth 7: Hurricanes are expected to get more frequent** as **“on the offensive.”**¹² as temperatures rise.

Truth: More frequent

Otto also works closely with lawyers using WWA research to develop lawsuits aimed at forcing companies or governments to lower their impact on the environment or even see compensation for victims.

- Because she openly tailors her research toward political ends, Otto has been criticized as advocate. But she says it’s “nonsense” to knock scientists for considering how their work be used. She credits her second doctorate in philosophy with her rejection of the purist view of science as solely the pursuit of knowledge. Philosophers, she said, “take a step back, a then take another step back, and then take another step back and see, OK, what is it actually that we are trying to do?”

- **Myth 11:** Extreme weather “attribution” researchers are **simply trying to understand extreme weather and have found fossil fuels guilty.**

Truth: Extreme weather **“attribution” only looks for negative impacts of fossil fuels on extreme weather**, brazenly ignoring any avoided negative impacts.

- One of the few climate researchers who is openly looking at the full impact of fossil-fueled climate change, including potential avoided damage, is **meteorologist and hurricane expert Dr. Ryan Maue. What are the chances we see his point about avoided hurricanes in the mainstream news?**



Ryan Maue @RyanMaue

Hurricane Dorian 3-years ago stalled just off the Florida coast in Bahamas & tracked north, paralleling

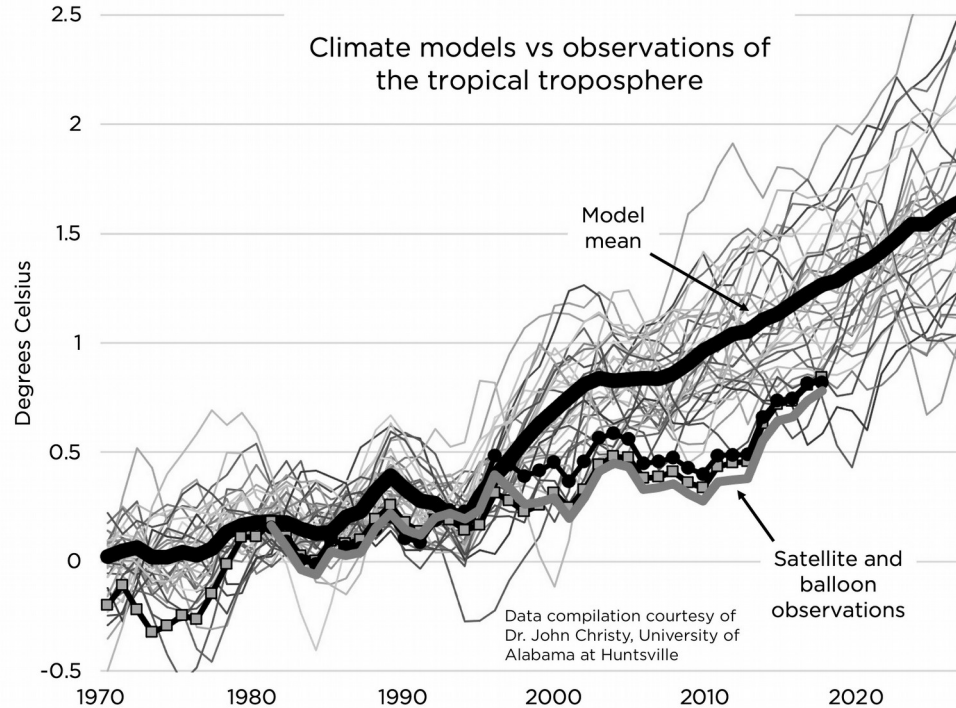
the coast. New analysis of the event strongly suggests that climate change stopped Dorian's advance. Researchers have directly linked slowing of hurricanes to climate change.

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- **Myth 12: Attributions of X% of an extreme weather event to humans are credible.**

Truth: Not only are many attributors clearly biased, but **no precise estimate of this kind is possible given today's climate modeling limits**, where **mainstream models hugely diverge** from one another.¹³



- **Myth 13: Fossil fuels made Hurricane Idalia worse for Florida.**

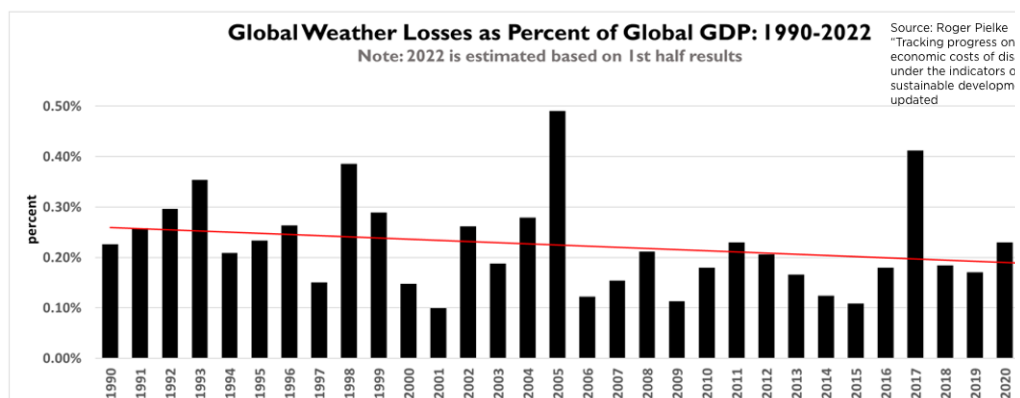
Truth: While we can't know exactly how Idalia was different because of human climate impacts, we know that without fossil fuels Florida would be a third-world place that Idalia would have utterly devastated.

- We also don't know how many hurricanes the US East Coast and other vulnerable spots dodged or will avoid thanks to global warming. Models cannot give us this information and since it's not a negative, no mainstream and public researcher in the field is looking for ways to find out.
- **Myth 14:** Thanks to fossil fuels more people are dying from extreme weather.

Truth: Thanks to fossil fuels more people are not dying from extreme weather—and everything else. Fossil-fueled prosperity has driven climate disaster deaths down 98% and life expectancy up by decades.¹⁴

- **Myth 15:** Thanks to fossil fuels we are suffering overwhelming damage from extreme weather.

Truth: The trend of real weather damage is flat—despite many factors increasing vulnerability, like increasing coastal populations and bad incentives from government bailout policies.¹⁵



Sources: Munich Re, World Bank, Aon

Updated from: Pielke 2019. Tracking progress on the economic costs of disasters under the indicators of the sustainable development goals. *Environmental Hazards*

Note: 2022 is estimated based on IH 2022 results reported by Aon, adjusted based on (a) historical relationship of loss estimates of Aon to Munich Re & (b) relation to full year results. Green represents ~90% range of relationship of IH to full year losses.

- **3 keys to understanding climate damage statistics:**
 - 1. Damage should be measured percentage of GDP** not compared dollar-for-dollar to a poorer past with less wealth at risk. (E.g., Miami Beach)
 - 2. More people today choose to live in damage-prone areas.**
 - 3. Government bailout policies increase damage.**



Michael Shellenberger @ShellenbergerMD

The increasing cost of hurricane damage can be explained entirely by more people and more property in harm's way. Consider how much more developed Miami Beach is today compared to a century ago. Once you adjust for rising wealth, there is no trend of increasing damage.

Miami Beach, Then and Now



Source: Roger Pielke, Jr., The Climate Fix: What Science

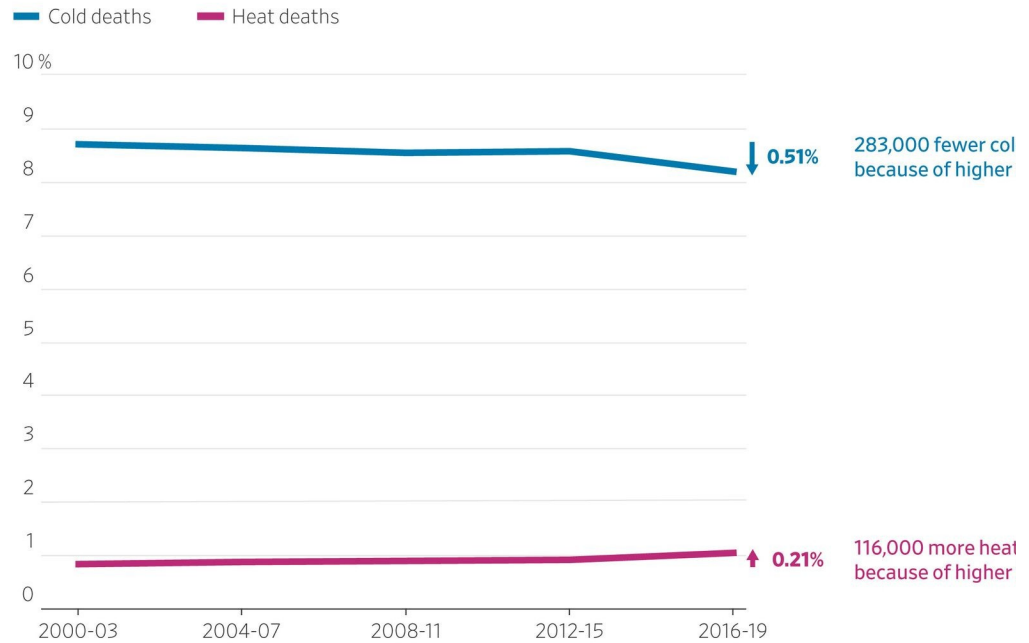
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- **Myth 16: Extreme temperatures are a bigger danger than ever thanks to fossil fuels.**

Truth: Extreme temperatures are a smaller danger than ever thanks to fossil-fueled heating and A/C—plus the net-benefits of warming in a world where far more people die of cold than heat.¹⁶

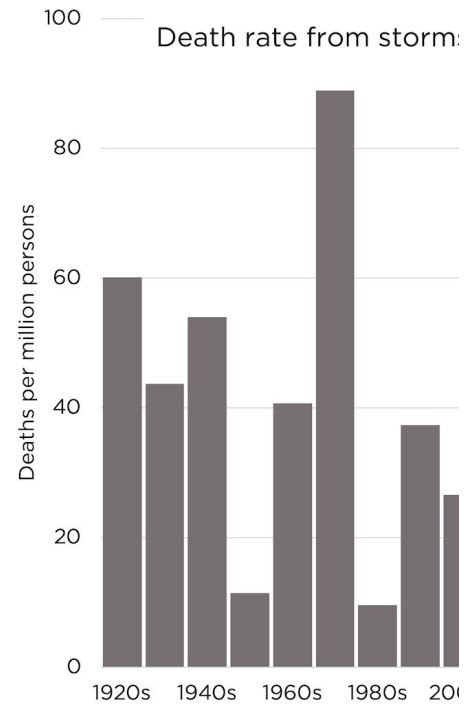
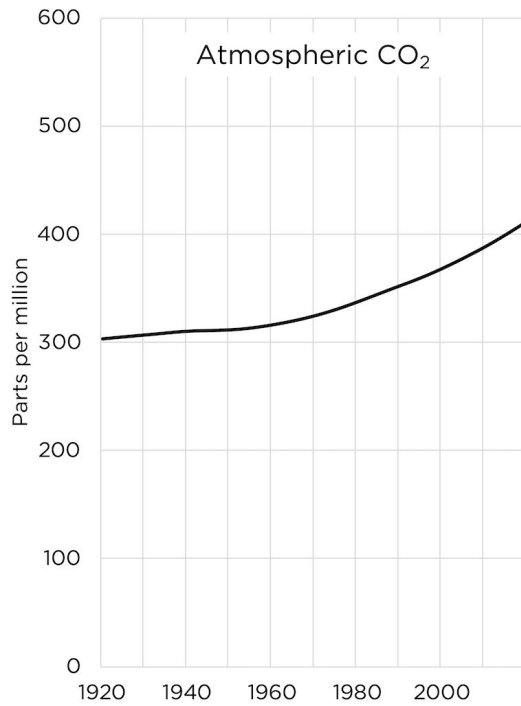
Heat and Cold Related Deaths, 2000-2019, as a Percentage of All Global Deaths



Source: Lancet

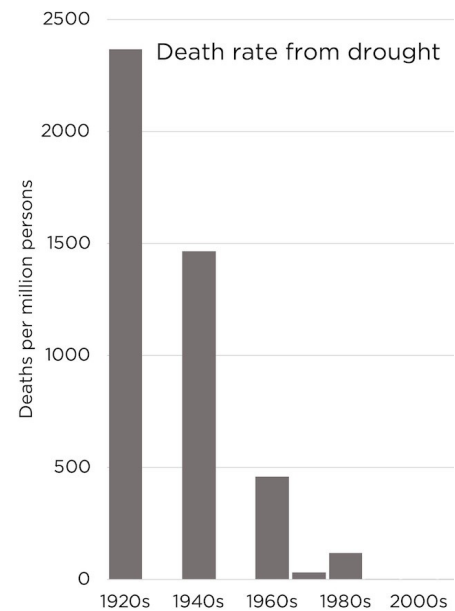
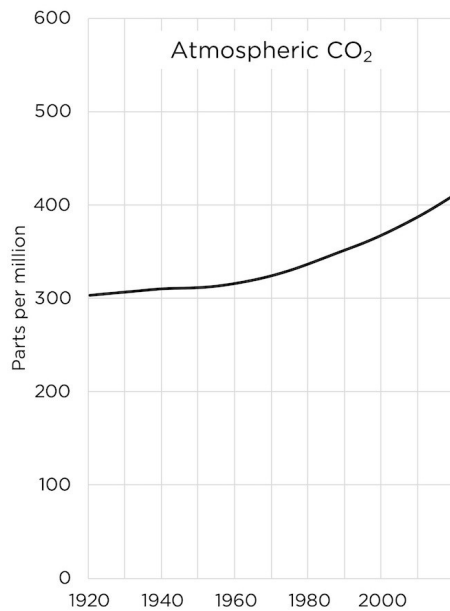
- **Myth 17: Storms are a bigger danger than ever thanks to fossil fuels.**

Truth: Storms are a smaller danger than ever thanks to the **fossil-fueled machines that build sturdy buildings, as well as fossil-fueled weather warning systems and fossil-fueled disaster relief efforts.**¹⁷



- **Myth 18: Drought is a bigger danger than ever thanks to fossil fuels.**

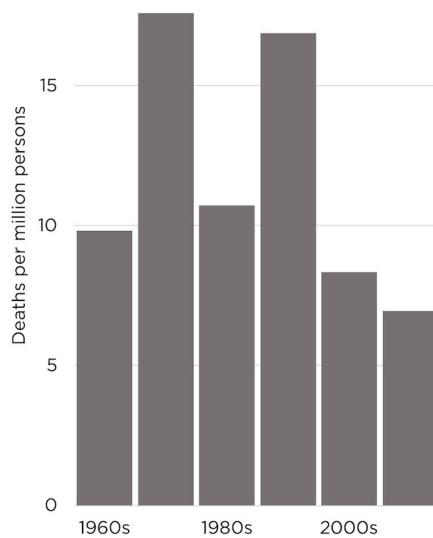
Truth: Drought is a smaller danger than ever thanks to fossil-fueled irrigation, crop transport, and agriculture. With more such mastery our crop productivity can continue to improve.¹⁸



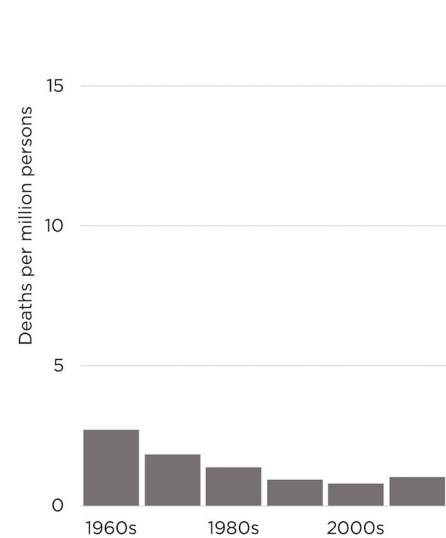
- **Myth 19: Floods are a bigger danger than ever thanks to fossil fuels.**

Truth: Floods are a smaller danger than ever thanks to fossil-fueled flood control infrastructure and disaster relief.¹⁹

20 World death rate from floods



20 G7 death rate from floods



- **Myth 20: The rich, fossil-fueled world has ruined the poor**

and Business at the University of Groningen. For years not shown, the population is assumed to have grown at a steady rate.

world by making them vulnerable to extreme weather.

Population estimates for the 2010s come from World Bank Data.
Truth: Fossil fuels have made everyone more prosperous and less vulnerable to extreme weather.

3

For every billion people on the poor world needs more fossil fuels²⁰
(extreme temperature, drought, flood, storms, wildfires) declined 98%--from an average of 247 per year during the 1920s to 2.5 per year during the 2010s.

Data on disaster deaths come from EM-DAT, CRED / UCLouvain, Brussels, Belgium - www.emdat.be (D. Guha-Sapir).

Population estimates for the 1920s from the Maddison Database 2010 come from the Groningen Growth and Development Centre, Faculty of Economics and Business at the University of Groningen. For years not shown, the population is assumed to have grown at a steady rate.

Population estimates for the 2010s come from World Bank Data.

4

Alex Epstein - Talking Points on Earth Day truth: Fossil fuels make Earth BETTER

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BP - Statistical Review of World Energy

Our World in Data - Energy Production and Consumption

6

New York Time - Ian Moves North

Vecchi et al. (2021) - Changes in Atlantic major hurricane frequency since the late-19th century

7

NOAA - Global Warming and Hurricanes

8

Klotzbach et al. (2022) - Trends in Global Tropical Cyclone Activity: 1990-2021

9

Klotzbach et al. (2018) - Continental U.S. Hurricane Landfall Frequency and Associated Damage: Observations and Future Risks

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NOAA - Global Warming and Hurricanes

11

NOAA - Global Warming and Hurricanes

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Politico - The climatologist who put climate science 'on the offensive'

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Climate Etc. - New Confirmation that Climate Models Overstate Atmospheric Warming

Ross McKittrick - On the choice of TLS versus OLS in climate signal detection regression

Dr. Roy Spencer - Hot Summer Epic Fail: New Climate Models Exaggerate Midwest Warming by 6X

14

For every million people on earth, annual deaths from climate-related causes (extreme temperature, drought, flood, storms, wildfires) declined 98%--from an average of 247 per year during the 1920s to 2.5 per year during the

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Population estimates for the 2010s come from [World Bank Data](#).

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[Roger Pielke Jr. - Weather and Climate Disaster Losses So Far in 2022, Still Not Getting Worse](#)

[Roger Pielke Jr. - Tracking progress on the economic costs of disasters under the indicators of the sustainable development goals](#)

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[Bjorn Lomborg - Climate Change Saves More Lives Than You'd Think](#)

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[UC San Diego - The Keeling Curve](#)

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MSNBC - Ron DeSantis denied human-caused climate change. Idalia wanted a word.

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