

# What Paul Ehrlich and Groundhog Day Have in Common

Out he pops every Feb. 2 to the music, shouts, and fanfare of thousands of spectators, Punxsutawney Phil of Pennsylvania, the most celebrated prognosticator of weather in the United States. Should Phil cast his shadow on this auspicious date, the country will face six more weeks of winter. No shadow, and an early spring is on the way.

The various beloved groundhogs designated as Phil have only a so-so [track record](#) in their weather predictions, with a 39 percent accuracy rate.

Still, Phil performs better than some of his human counterparts.

In 1968, Paul Ehrlich along with his wife, Anne, wrote [The Population Bomb](#), in which they [predicted](#) that in the 1970s hundreds of millions of people on our overpopulated planet would die from starvation. Their crystal ball proved defective, as that famine never took place, in part because of a [green revolution](#) in agriculture. Two years later, Ehrlich gazed again into the future and [prophesized](#) that by 1980 the world's oceans would be dead. "Large areas of coastline," he said, "will have to be evacuated because of the stench of dead fish."

Wrong again.

Despite these gutter balls, the nonagenarian Ehrlich continues to deliver his [doomsday warnings](#) about overpopulation and climate change, recently appearing, for example, on 60 Minutes.

Other oracles have chimed in with their own dire visions of the future. In 1970, scientist James P. Lodge Jr. looked into

what he [called](#) his “smoggy crystal ball” and [predicted](#) that pollution might well block out the sun and bring about a new ice age early in the 21st century. Around the time of the first Earth Day, again in 1970, other experts followed suit, [prophesizing](#) everything from a coming ice age to urbanites forced to wear gas masks against pollution.

Whoops again.

And then, all of a sudden, the climatologists took a 180, and a crowd of seers declared that the planet was overheating. Automobiles and planes, [flatulent cows](#), coal-burning plants, and a dozen other culprits were blamed for the impending disaster. Since then, government officials, some scientists, and a coterie of the world’s [richest and most powerful people](#) have delivered [warning after warning](#) forecasting humanity’s demise or eradication, all of which have failed to materialize.

Meanwhile, these Chicken Littles with their “sky is falling” message have propagandized generations of Americans. Millennials and the Gen Z crowd are more concerned about [climate change](#) than their predecessors. Large numbers of Millennials [fear](#) having children because of their carbon footprints. One [study](#) found that young people and children ages 16 to 25 are having mental health problems because of anxiety about climate change.

Ask almost anyone in these groups what proof they can offer to make their case, and nearly all of them will reply, if they can reply at all, “Because science says so.” Ask for details and data, and the conversation will cease. This drumbeat about climate change goes on every day, but when have we ever heard any of these advocates give us a lucid, non-emotional argument for climate change based on real data? We heard this same justification—“The science tells us”—as an argument for supporting the devastating policies of the COVID pandemic, which were predicated on falsehoods and guesswork rather than

on reasoned debate.

In Ancient Greek mythology, Cassandra is the oracle whose predictions were accurate but who was cursed by Apollo to have no one believe her. Today we have flipped Cassandra on her head: The prognostications of our modern-day prophets are often way off base, but many, many people nevertheless believe them.

Given that these false prophecies brought no consequences to the fortune tellers, I'll offer a few forecasts of my own:

If the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse saddle up, bringing famine, war, pestilence, and death, the cause of those disasters will be human, not atmospheric. Our policies—not nature—will do the killing.

The billions of dollars spent trying to harness the climate by those who can't control waste and spending in the federal budget will fatten the pockets of opportunists without making a smidgeon of difference in our carbon emissions.

China, India, and parts of Latin America and Africa may give a hat tip to climate change, but they're unlikely to add to the misery of the poor in their countries. China will keep putting up [coal power plants](#) while Europe and the United States litter the landscape with windmills.

No matter what the cost, no matter what the reality, the West will continue pushing climate change as a danger that demands ever-more regulation. Too many people have now bought into that creed to reverse direction. In addition, climate change is the ideal vehicle for greater government control and power.

Will events prove me wrong? No idea. But I certainly hope so.

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*Image credit: CBS*

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