

The Environment: Quality of Life, OR Quantity of Flesh?

A Many people have difficulty appreciating large numbers, millions or billions, such as when enumerating the ongoing growth of human numbers. This may help:

1 Suppose all new births on earth were emerging postnatally from one enormous maternity home and you were there. You would be seeing 5 new babies a second. Entering the vast world morgue nearby there'd be about two bodies per second. The difference is actually close to 2.7 per second, or 85 million extra people a year. Could you count them out? No-one can say very large numbers aloud in less than a second for each. There are 31,536,000 seconds in a year. So counting aloud at one a second you couldn't keep pace, indeed one year of new arrivals would take you nearly 3 years to count.

2 Since 1974 when the world population was 4 billion the increase has been, remarkably consistently, one billion extra humans every c 12 years (the landmark years being 1987, 1999, 2011 and 2022).

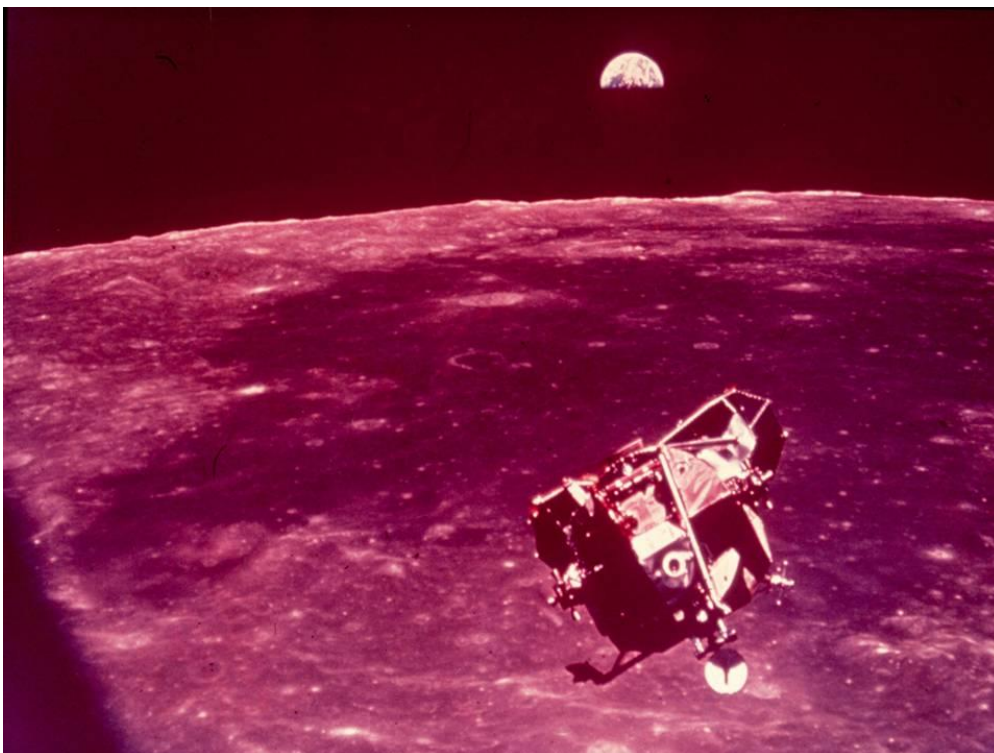
3. If you started counting the latest billion on Jan 1st, having after 12 years only reached the extra-human numbered 378,432,000, you would need another 20 years to complete the counting task!

4 The total now (2025) is over 8,000,000,000. At one a second that total could only be counted in about three human life-times [254 years]. **Phew!** Norman Borlaug (given the 1970 Nobel Peace Prize for the 'Green Revolution') called this the '**Population Monster**' www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/1970/borlaug/lecture

5 The collective impact of this through everyone's resource consumption and pollution – which must **also** be addressed - is now scarily out of balance. On a finite planet, ever-increasing human numbers amplify current inequity and injustice, affecting humans, but are also devastating almost all non-human life. Our crucial need for food means we daily destroy habitats, directly, whether under water or on land - agriculture being the greatest single factor in rising emissions of greenhouse gases - or indirectly via climate change.

B Other people find it difficult to appreciate finitude, the smallness of earth.

This picture helps. It shows "**Earth-rise**" when viewed from close to the moon [Apollo 11]. Our only home looks mighty small, even from the tiny distance (in space terms) of a quarter of a million miles.



Furthermore, 70 percent of it is salt water and half the rest is inhospitable mountain, desert or (disappearing) icecap. How could it be sustainable, to continue supplying ever more human planet-trashers and greenhouse gas-emitters?! And therefore, how ludicrous not to remove the many barriers worldwide to women's choice to access contraception....

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'There is no Plan-et B...'

See also www.ecotimecapsule.com/pagecontents/articles/thepromise.pdf