



Dispatches From The Wild, Weird World Of Humanity And Its Biosphere

April 27 2022

France



On April 24th, Emmanuel Macron won reelection to a second five-year term as President of France. This is a huge bullet dodged for the West and Europe, and a hopeful sign that France will accelerate its transition to clean energy. During the campaign, Macron [promised](#) to make France "the first major nation to abandon gas, oil and coal" and unveiled an excellent energy plan. This includes building 50 offshore wind farms by 2050 to bring France's total [offshore wind capacity up to 40 gigawatts](#) and building at least six and possibly up to 14 new nuclear reactors, all to help France reach carbon neutrality by 2050. (Note: it's [much more cost-effective to build nuclear reactors in France than in the US](#), for a number of reasons included standardized reactor design, a more nuclear-friendly regulatory system, and a [single state-owned utility](#) working closely with the government, so this actually stands a chance of happening). Macron has [drawn some criticism](#) for not making quite as much progress on climate as he had promised in his 2017 campaign, but he's overall pushing in the right direction, supporting French, EU, and global decarbonization. His opponent, far-right leader Marine Le Pen, had, almost unbelievably, promised to [dismantle all existing wind farms and solar farms](#) and ban the construction of new renewables, with no apparent rationale beyond pique. Macron's victory is great news!

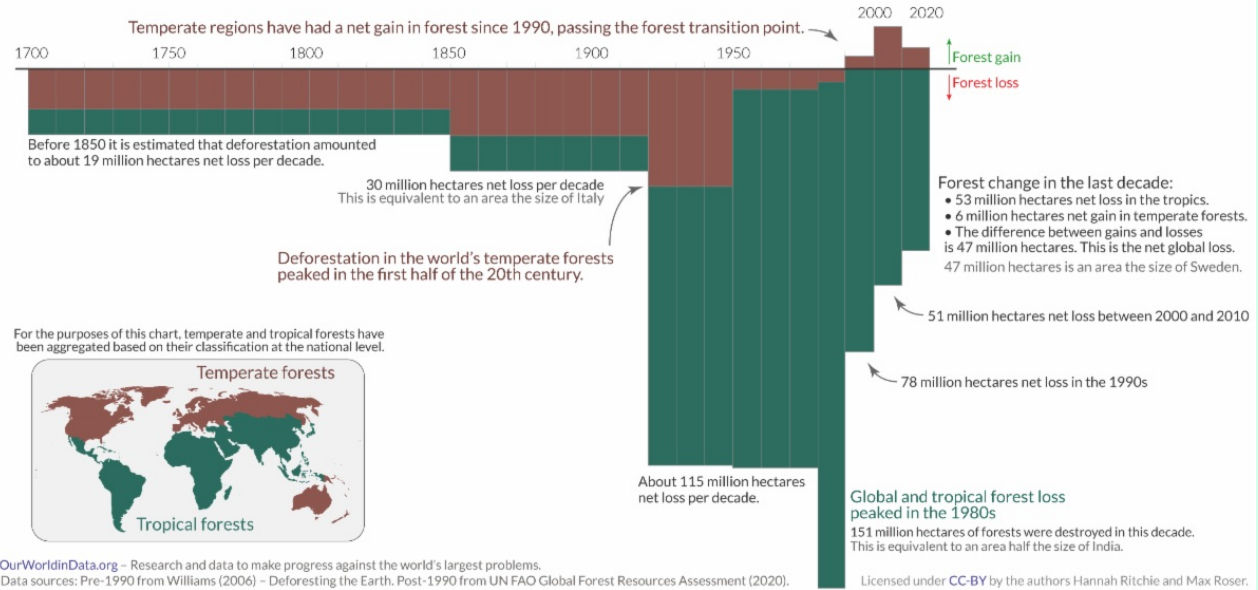


Forests

Three centuries of global forest losses – and gains



Shown is the net change of the forest area per decade. Net change is the difference between forest losses and forest gains.
1.5 billion hectares of forests were destroyed between 1700 and 2020 – this is equal to an area 1.5-times the size of the USA.

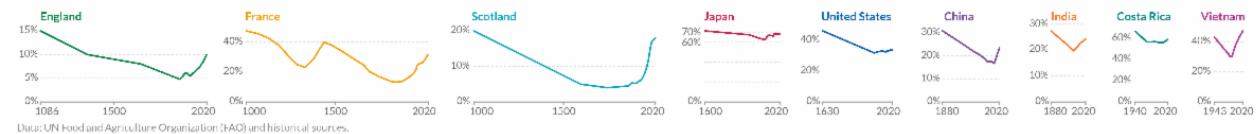


Our World in Data, always a great source of statistics on global trends, recently published [new articles and graphics on the global forest transition](#). After centuries of deforestation, temperate forests worldwide are starting to expand again, mostly due to Europe and America growing richer, no longer burning wood for power and heat at large scales, and needing less land for more efficient farming. Tropical forests are still declining (mostly due to harvesting for charcoal to burn or space for cattle ranching), and that remains a *big* problem, but the rate of loss has slowed since a peak in the 1980s ([see graphic above, or check out the full article here](#)). Several temperate-forest countries, from France to Japan to the US and even some tropical-forest countries, like India, Costa Rica, and Vietnam have seen their forest cover rise in recent decades. ([See graphic below or check out the article](#)).

Forest Transitions: Countries that brought their history of deforestation to an end



Shown is the share of the country's land area that is forested



And many governments in temperate countries are pushing to continue this trend. For example, Scotland. The Scottish Highlands have been undergoing deforestation for thousands of years, and only 4.2% of Scotland was forested by 1910. By 2018, that figure had risen to 18%, and the Scottish government [plans to bring it to 21% by 2032](#) with a wildly popular reforestation initiative, which polling found is [supported by 80% of the population](#).

And on Earth Day 2022, President Biden signed [an executive order](#) directing the U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and the National Park Service—that is, the major agencies administering federal land—to [prioritize the conservation of old-growth forests](#). They are directed to produce the first-ever inventory of all of America's old-growth forests (to be made public within a year),

publish the first-ever U.S. National Nature Assessment on the state of all American lands and waters, identify and develop plans to counter major forest threats from drought to insect infestation, coordinate with states, tribes, and landowners to enhance wildfire risk reduction efforts (using money already allotted by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law), increase tree seed collection and nursery capacity for reforestation projects on federal land, [and more!](#) This is a great example of the kind of under-the-radar progress that happens when you have environmentally sensible leaders in office.



Personal Message

I'm Sam Matey, and I've been writing the Weekly Anthropocene since October 2017. I'm heading towards a new stage in my career, and I'd love to find new opportunities where I can use my skills to help make a difference in the world.

After completing my Bachelor's in Environmental Science in 2019, I'm currently in the final stages of an intensive one-year online [Master's degree from UCLA in Applied Geographic Information Systems and Technology](#). I've gained skills in remote sensing with satellite imagery, geospatial database management with SQL and PostGIS, and geospatial analysis with R, Python, JavaScript, and Google Earth Engine. [My sample portfolio of geospatial work is here](#), and [my LinkedIn profile is here](#).

I'll be graduating in early June 2022. I'm actively looking for opportunities to use my skillset starting then.

The fields I'm particularly interested in include climate science and adaptation, renewable energy siting and development, geospatial analysis of landscapes, ecosystem ecology, the ecology and sustainable development of human settlements, and wildlife conservation and management. However, I'm open to all possibilities!

Feel free to reach out to me atsamuelmatey@g.ucla.edu if you know of any relevant opportunity, or if you can put me in contact with someone else who might.

Thank you so much,
Sam H. Matey.



The Weekly Anthropocene

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**Contact Us
Today**

