

Abrahm Lustgarten / ON THE MOVE: The Overheating Earth and the Uprooting of America

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT CLIMATE MIGRATION

- The reality is that there is no place in America where we won't have to deal with climate change; it is inescapable. And large numbers of Americans are beginning to migrate.
- Over the next 30 years, perhaps 20-40% of Americans could be moving as a result of climate migration. Even at the smallest end of the spectrum that is roughly **twice the largest migration in American history**.
- Half of all Americans, 160 million people, will face diminishing environmental quality that is in line with past climate-driven migrations. Multiple studies suggest that at least 13 million people will be displaced by coastal flooding and sea level rise alone.
- Americans have gravitated toward some of the country's most dangerous environments because government-subsidized insurance schemes steered them there. Now those policies could bankrupt whole state governments, and promise to place higher costs_ in the form of assessments_ in individuals' mailboxes.
- Research suggests between one third and one half of humanity, or 2 to 6 billion people, will face degrading climate conditions by 2070 that will force them to consider migrating as a solution.
- * By 2070, 19% of the earth's surface could be outside of the parameters that have supported human life for the past 6,000 years.
- Americans increasingly face greater personal financial risk as climate change costs soar and insurance and other policy subsidies go away. This is changing perception of climate change from a cultural/political issue to a household economics issue, and that shift is transforming how people choose where to live.
- Warming will drive economic decline across large regions, which will drive migration. In the U.S. **867 counties are estimated to see economic damages greater than \$1 million each year, directly due to climate change by 2040.**
- Scientists have identified "normal" conditions that have supported most of human civilization for the past 6,000 years. As of 2022, they estimate that 600 million people globally have slipped outside of that "climate niche", and **for every one-tenth of a degree of future warming 140 million more people will be pushed outside of those ideal conditions.**
- The U.S. government estimates that holding global warming to 1.5°C **would sharply reduce the economic fallout of climate change, allowing the U.S. GDP to grow between 1 and 4 percent faster than it otherwise might.**
- The summer season in the United States already lasts approximately seven weeks longer than it did a century ago.
- 2• For more than a century there were only three U.S. cities that endured more than 30 days above 105 degrees in a year, each of them along the southwest border with Mexico. By the second half of this century, 152 American cities will sustain such temperatures. - MORE ON BACK -
- In all the years of recorded weather, days with a heat index above 130 degrees remained so rare in the U.S. that fewer than 2000 people experienced more than 7 days of it in a year. Just 26 years from now though, by 2050, 6 million Americans might experience such heat each year.

- The hotter the climate, the more the West's water is evaporating before anyone can use it. The Colorado River already loses about 10 percent of its annual flow to evaporation, and a hot summer, **the water level in the nation's second largest reservoir, Lake Powell, drops as much as four inches each month, losing about 120 billion gallons of water each year.**
- Farm production in the United States has already dropped by more than 12 percent since 1961 because of warming. Scientists estimate that by 2050 **Dust Bowl-era yields will become the new norm across the Great Plains.**
- * Farming will be forever changed, the west water supplies will need to be recalibrated to human needs, the economic growth of hardest hit places in the south will be stymied.
- Agriculture will be thoroughly transformed in the U.S. More than 1,000 counties are projected to see their yields of major commercial crops decline by 2040. **By 2080, crop failure will spread to more than 1,900 U.S. counties—representing more than half the country. In more than 100 of those counties across the Southwest, the declines in crop yields will be total, or about 100 percent.** They will become unfarmable.
- Coastal flooding is already happening as much as ten times more often than it did in 1960. The Union of Concerned Scientists estimates that **more than half a million more people could see their homes and streets flood at least every other week before they are done paying off their current 30-year mortgages.**
- Louisiana has effectively experienced two feet of sea level rise since 1950, when the effect of rising oceans there is combined with subsiding land. The state loses about thirty-five square miles of land each year, and **an area the size of two football fields every sixty minutes.**
- In Florida between **one-third and two-thirds of current housing sits below future tide lines, depending on the rate of future warming, including as much as 79 percent of all the structures in Miami-Dade County and nearly 70 percent of those in Broward County**
- Model simulations for climate migration suggest that the San Francisco Bay Area will see an **exodus of as many as 700,000 people as coastal waters subsume parts of the cities around the bay.**
- **By 2030, the World Bank estimates, four out of every ten urban residents, more than two billion people globally, will live in slums. The International Committee of the Red Cross estimates that almost all of the growth in slums—96 percent of it—is expected in the world's most fragile and climate-threatened cities, which already face heightened risk of conflict.**
- Climate Migration follows a pattern with pile-on effects: rural people move first to nearby cities, sharply increasing demand for water and electricity and food, which each become more expensive and demand better infrastructure to deliver it. The rising costs drive more people deeper into poverty and widen wealth gaps, ultimately fostering a rise in crime and divisive conflict.

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