



Written by [John Stossel](#) on January 25, 2023

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## Population Panic

Have you heard? The world is about to end!

*60 Minutes* recently featured Paul Ehrlich, author of the bestseller, *The Population Bomb*. “Humanity is not sustainable,” he said.

Why would *60 Minutes* interview Ehrlich?

For years, Ehrlich said, “We are very close to a famine” and, “In the next 15 years, the end will come.” He’s been wrong again and again.

Yet, *60 Minutes* takes him seriously. “Paul Ehrlich may have lived long enough to see some of his dire prophecies come true,” intoned reporter Scott Pelley. Now, *60 Minutes* says, “scientists say” the earth is in the midst of a “mass extinction”!

Doom sells.

Ehrlich’s book sold an amazing 3 million copies. It claimed the Earth’s rising population would lead to worldwide famine.

The opposite happened.

The world’s population more than doubled. But today there is *less* famine!

*60 Minutes* did mention that Ehrlich was wrong about widespread starvation, but they ignored his many other silly predictions. One was that by the year 2000 (because of climate change), England will not exist.

Ehrlich won’t talk to me now, but seven years ago, when my producer asked him about his nonsense, Ehrlich said, “When you predict the future, you get things wrong.”

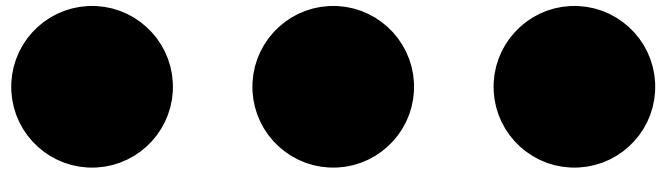
The media should ignore doomsayers like Ehrlich, and pay more attention to people like Marian Tupy, editor of HumanProgress.org.

In my new video, Tupy points out that “life is getting better.” The modern era has brought much longer lives and the greatest decline in poverty ever.

Of course, universities, media and politicians say capitalism is destroying the earth, so young people throw soup on famous paintings. It’s the moral thing to do, they believe, because we face an apocalypse!

“If you sell the apocalypse,” says Tupy, “people feel like you are deep and that you care” But “if you are selling rational optimism, you sound uncaring.”

Uncaring? It’s the doomsayers who are anti-people. Ehrlich once even floated the idea of sterilizing people, and reducing population growth by having government poison our food.



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“Ehrlich sees human beings as destroyers rather than creators,” says Tupy, “no different from rabbits. When they consume all grass around us, their population explodes, but then it’s going to collapse. But human beings are fundamentally different. We have the capacity to innovate.”

It’s counterintuitive to think that people can be good for the environment. “We use stuff,” I say to Tupy.

“We use stuff, but we also grow stuff,” he responds. “What matters is new knowledge. Think about something as simple as sand. When we started melting down sand to create glass, we used the first glass for glass beads. Now we create microchips.”

Similar innovation in farming, transportation and genetic engineering is why our growing population doesn’t destroy nature.

“Forests have grown by 35% in North America and Western Europe in the last 20 years,” Tupy points out.

That’s because innovative humans found ways to produce more food on less land. Also, prosperous countries can afford to protect nature.

But this idea that human innovation *helps* nature is nowhere near as popular as the idea that humans destroy earth.

Many young people are so misled that many don’t want to have kids.

But that would *hurt* the world! Fewer women having babies today is probably more of a threat than climate change.

Not only do we need young people to take care of the growing number of us old people, we need them to invent the things that will solve the Earth’s problems.

More children means more people who might grow up to cure cancer or invent a carbon-eating machine.

However, more people by itself is not enough to provide the innovation we need.

“Certainly not,” says Tupy. “If the number of people was all that mattered, China would have been the richest country for centuries. What you need is people, and *freedom*. If you let human beings be free, they will create more value for everyone.”

*Every Tuesday at [JohnStossel.com](#), Stossel posts a new video about the battle between government and freedom. He is the author of Give Me a Break: How I Exposed Hucksters, Cheats, and Scam Artists and Became the Scourge of the Liberal Media.*

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