

The environment: Quality of life OR Quantity of human 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. More accurately, the difference is 3 per 1.11 secs, or about 85 million extra people a year. Could you count them out?*

No-one can say large numbers aloud in less than a second for each. There are 31,536,000 seconds in a year. So counting at about 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 'only' 4 billion the increase has been, remarkably consistently, 1 billion extra humans every c 12 years (later landmark years being 1987, 1999, 2011 and (probably) 2023. If you started counting 1 billion on Jan 1st, having reached after 12 years only the extra-human numbered 378,432,000, you would need another 20 years to complete the task!*

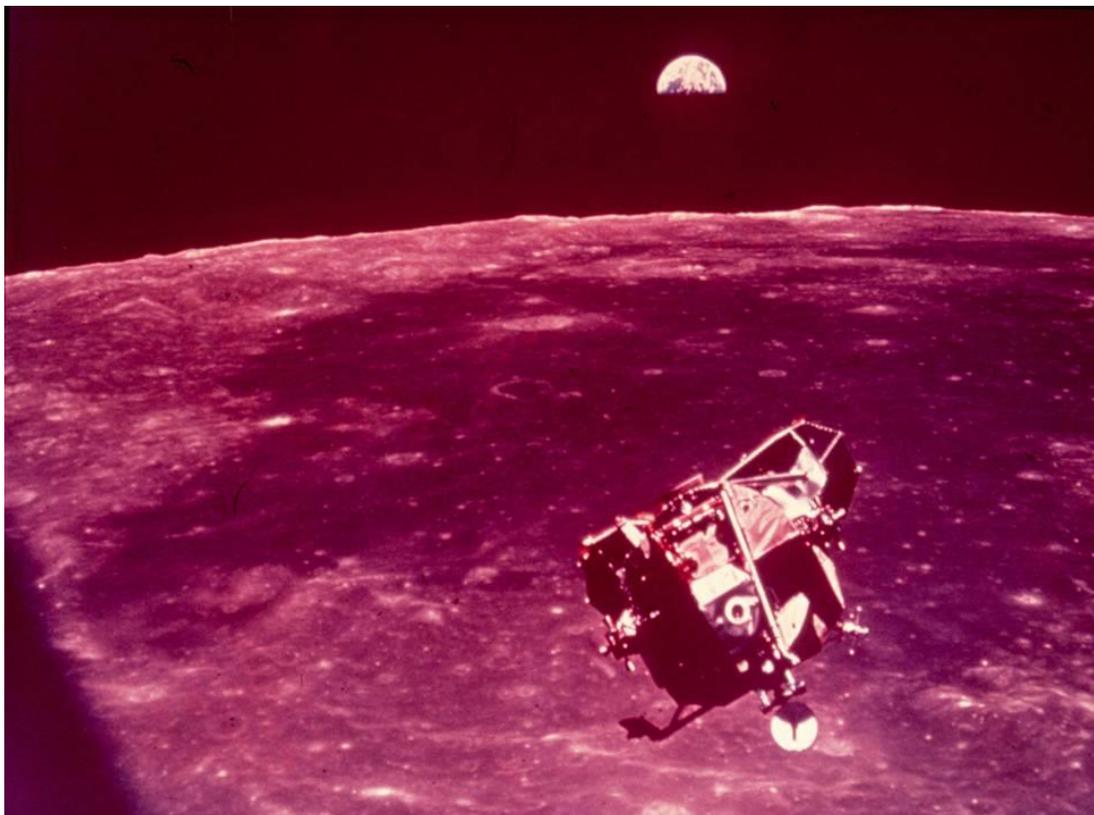
3 *The total looming shortly is 8000,000,000 and at one a second that number could only be counted in about 3 human life-times [254 years].*

Phew!

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

This picture helps there. It shows "Earth-rise" as viewed from close to the moon [Apollo 11]. It looks mighty small, our only home, even from the tiny distance (in space terms) of ¼ million miles. Furthermore, 70 % is salt water and half the rest is inhospitable mountain, desert or (sadly now melting) icecaps. How could it be sustainable, to add human planet-trashers at the above rates?

There is no Plan-et B... See also p. 33 of www.ecotimecapsule.com/pagecontents/articles/thepromise.pdf



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