



CLIMATE FACT CHECK: FEBRUARY 2026 EDITION

Climate Change Is NOT Worsening Wildlife Viruses - NOT Harming Coffee Production - 'Global Warming' NOT Causing More Snow - Sea Level Rise NOT a looming catastrophe

February 17th: Climate Change Isn't Worsening Wildlife Viruses in New Jersey

Inside
Climate
News

Claim: *Inside Climate News* (ICN) recently published [an article](#) claiming that climate change threatens to result in more ranavirus outbreaks among New Jersey amphibians, causing indirect environmental and economic harms. "Climate change could throw an extra wrench into the gears," ecologist Kirsten Monsen-Collar told *Inside Climate News*.

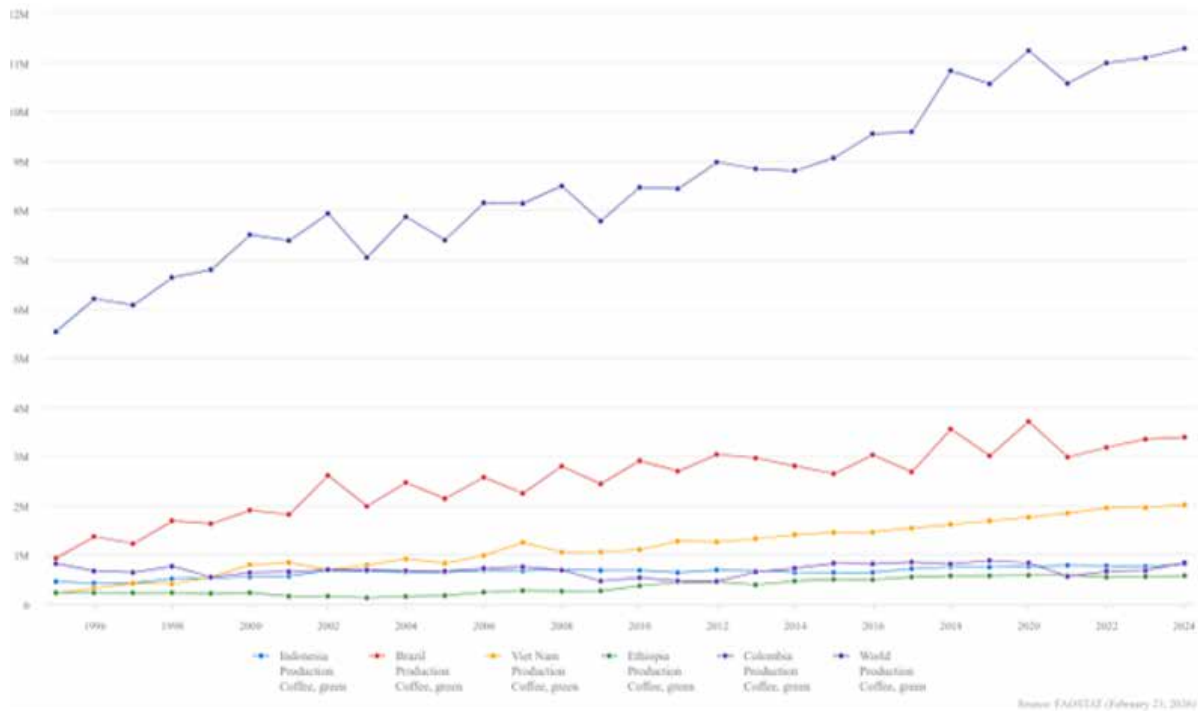
Fact-Check: This is false. [The World Organization for Animal Health](#) explains that ranaviruses spread via direct contact with infected animals, ingestion of viral particles, and contact with contaminated surfaces, including water and soil. It also flags fomites, meaning human-mediated spread on gear and materials. The same message appears in state wildlife guidance, such as the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources [ranavirus page](#). The ICN article also undermines its own climate framing when it quoted researchers involved admitting "still struggled to see any consistent pattern," and variables like pond size, depth, canopy cover, tree species, and proximity to human impact were "not clearly associated with presence or absence of the disease."

February 20th: No, Climate Change Hasn't Harmed Coffee Production



Claim: [An article](#) posted by WCNC, Charlotte, North Carolina's NBC affiliate, claims that "Warming temperatures in the biggest coffee-growing regions are impacting the price of coffee and the ability to grow it." The author cites Kristina Dahl, Ph.D., Vice President for Science at Climate Central, and a "[study](#)" she produced, as the sole evidence for this claim.

Fact-Check: This is false. Data from the United Nations [Food and Agriculture Organization](#) (FAO) show that coffee production in each of the top coffee-producing countries has increased substantially. From 1995 to 2024, the most recent year for which data is available, global coffee production has more than doubled, increasing by more than 104%. By country, Brazil's coffee production has increased by 264%, Colombia (2%), Ethiopia (156%), Indonesia (76.4%), and Vietnam (824%). Based on this data, it is simply untenable to claim modest warming has made coffee production more difficult.

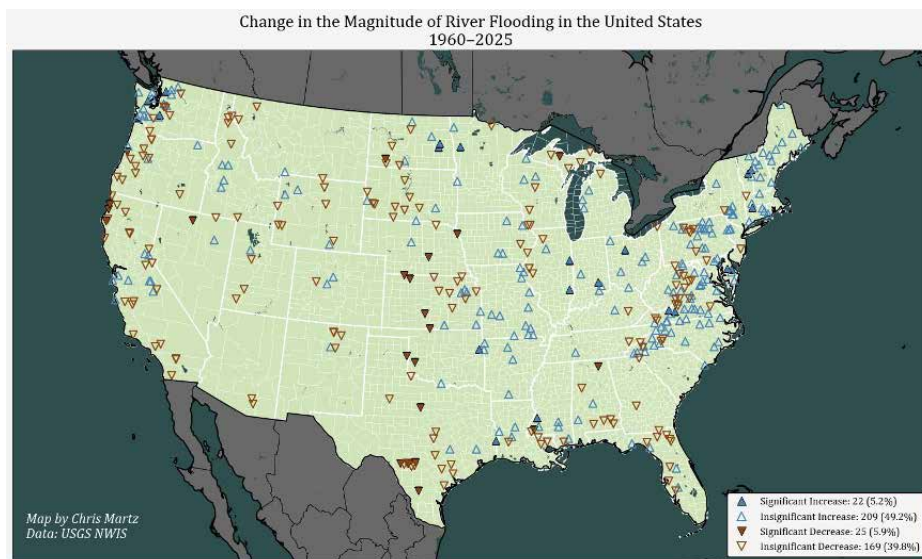
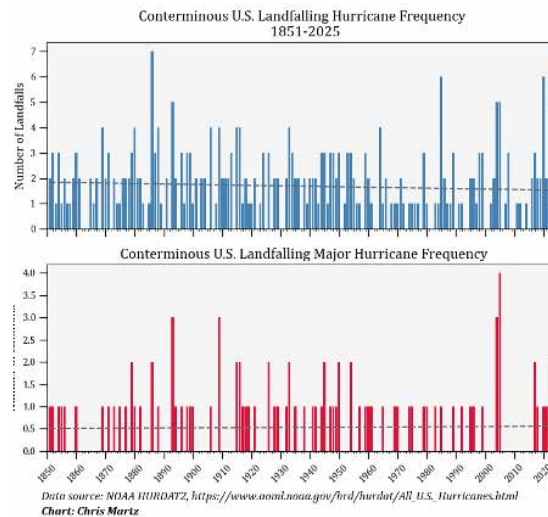
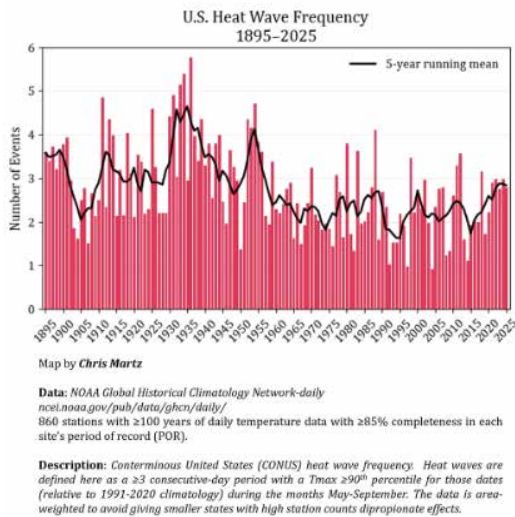


February 20th: There is NO such thing as 'climate-driven floods, hurricanes, and extreme heat'

AP

Claim: Following the rollback of Obama's 2009 EPA Endangerment Finding, the Associated Press (AP) [published an article](#) claiming that "Black, Latino, and other racial and ethnic groups are typically more vulnerable than white people to pollution and climate-driven floods, hurricanes, extreme heat..." In other words, they are arguing that "climate-driven" extreme weather is disproportionately impacting minorities.

Fact-Check: While it may be true that minority groups in high-risk, disaster-prone areas are impacted more harshly by extreme weather due to socioeconomic differences, there is no such thing as "climate-driven floods, hurricanes, and extreme heat." There is no evidence that any of these extremes have worsened. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) [station data](#) reveal a long-term decline in U.S. heatwave frequency since 1895; [NOAA HURDAT2](#) data show no increase in either hurricane or major hurricane strikes since 1851; and USGS river and stream [gauge data](#) show no statistically significant trends in river flooding since 1960. If climate change isn't resulting in worsening weather, it can't be causing unfair racial impacts.



February 22nd: No, Global Warming Doesn't Cause More Snow

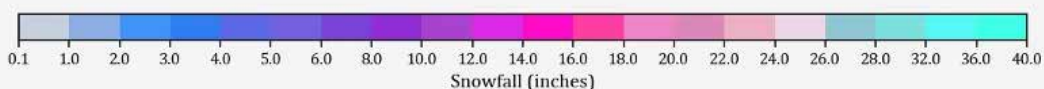
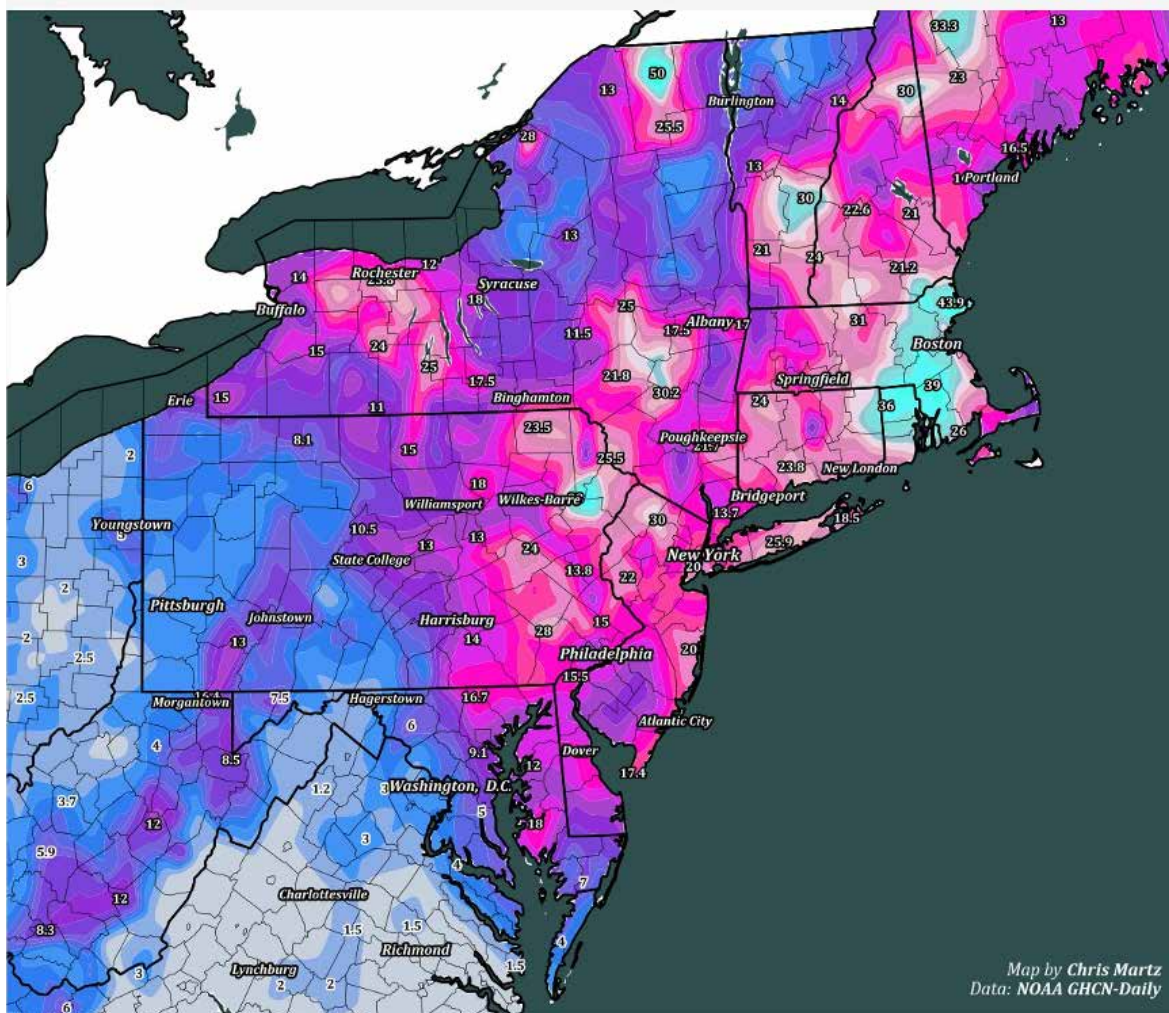


Claim: During the Northeastern United States Blizzard of February 2026, climate activist organization, *Climate Power*, [posted on X](#) (formerly Twitter) that

anthropogenic “climate change isn’t just extreme heat and rising temperatures, it’s this too,” and attached an image of a snow-covered city street with the caption “Yes, this is climate change too.”

Fact-Check: This is nonsense. In order for it to snow, air temperatures must be at or below freezing throughout a large depth of the troposphere (the lowest layer of the atmosphere where weather occurs). Theoretically, the rain-snow line should shift poleward in a warming climate, not equatorward. A reduced temperature differential between the high- and mid-latitudes, should reduce the frequency and intensity of such storms. The nor’easter that produced the benchmark Blizzard of February 1978 followed a similar path. The same winter weather that has occurred before is not evidence of climate change; it’s just proof that we have seasons and it is currently winter.

Blizzard of February 6–7, 1978



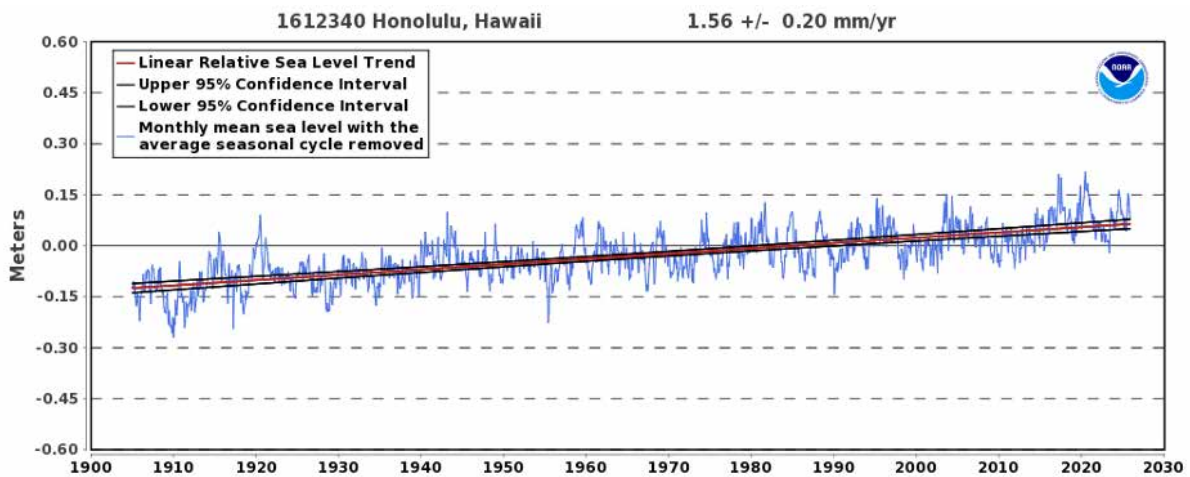
February 23rd: Sea Level Rise in Hawaii Is Not a Looming Catastrophe

O

Claim: *Oceanographic Magazine* (OM) recently published the article "[Most Hawaiians are already feeling the effects of sea level rise](#),"

asserting that Hawaii residents are already experiencing the impacts of rising seas and that it is accelerating. "Over the past three decades, the rate of global sea level rise has doubled, with the best estimate of the rate of global-average rise over the last decade being 3.6 millimeters per year."

Fact-Check: The article's claims are false, , unsupported by local data. According to NOAA's long-running [Honolulu tide gauge record](#), the rate of sea level change is approximately 1/5 mm/year and has not measurably increased during the recent period of modest warming, extending back to 1905. Local RSL, measured by tide gauges, is the only real direct measurement of sea level rise, in contrast to satellite measurements which reflect a calculation based on a model; thus, it is an indirect measurement. Sea level does not "operate" uniformly across the globe.



February 24th: Are Nor'easters Becoming Stronger?

PNAS

Claim: In light of the Blizzard of 2026, a [paper](#) published last July in the *Journal of Earth, Atmospheric, and Planetary Sciences*, has resurfaced in headlines,

claiming that nor'easters along the East Coast of the United States have become measurably stronger in recent decades. "Our analysis of nor'easter characteristics reveals that the strongest nor'easters are becoming stronger..." The report claims that from 1940 to 2025, peak wind speeds of the most intense nor'easters (the top 1%) increased from ~69 mph to ~74 mph, a 6% increase.. These findings were deemed "unquestionable" in a [UPenn press release](#).

Fact-Check: This is misleading. The study used the [gridded ERA5 dataset](#) to perform their analysis. ERA5 is a reanalysis. Reanalyses can be thought of as retrospective weather forecasts, in which historical observations are fed into a computer model to reconstruct the state of the atmosphere at a given point in time. The model is used to fill in gaps where no observations were taken. While this can be useful, it has severe limitations. In 1940, ERA5 consisted of about [17,000 global weather observations](#) per day; it's over 25 million today. When ERA5 was first extended back to 1950, ECMWF cautioned users about [uncertainties in data quality](#) prior to the 1970s (the beginning of the satellite era). A number of [independent studies](#) have found that ERA5 [underestimates 10-meter wind speeds](#) in extratropical cyclones by [10-15%](#), which suggests that the study's "unquestionable" findings are not a real reflection of climate-related trends, but rather biases in data quality.



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