

The Global Ecology, Economic Growth and Pollution: What Humans Are Really Doing to Our Planet...

19 Jaw-Dropping Images

By [Michael McCutcheon](#)

Theme: [Environment](#)

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Last week, Pope Francis and church officials [encouraged everyone](#) to consume less and think more about our impact on the environment.

It's a timely warning because the next six months will be critical to our future.

Ahead of a series of major events later this year, The [Foundation for Deep Ecology](#) and the Population Media Center [released](#) a collection that illustrates the devastating effects of out-of-control growth and waste, and it's breathtaking.

"This is an issue that people care about, and oftentimes it's just not discussed by mainstream media," Missie Thurston, director of marketing and communications at the Population Media Center, told *Mic*.

It's difficult to always know the impacts of our daily choices, like the real effect of buying a bottled water or an extra TV or laptop. With [220,000 more people](#) on the planet every day, and the average person generating over 4 pounds of waste a day — an almost [60% increase since 1960](#) — the impact of that growth and change in behavior is rarely seen like this.



Source: [Peter Essick/Foundation for Deep Ecology](#)

Electronic waste, from around the world, is [shipped to Accra, Ghana](#), where locals break apart the electronics for minerals or burn them.



Source: [Pablo Lopez Luz/Foundation for Deep Ecology](#)

Mexico City, Mexico, one of the [most populous](#) cities in the Western Hemisphere.



Source: [Digital Globe/Foundation for Deep Ecology](#)

New Delhi, India, where many landfills are [reaching](#) a breaking point. The surrounding population of Delhi totals some [25 million people](#).



Source: [Mike Hedge/Foundation for Deep Ecology](#)

Los Angeles, California, which is famous for sometimes having more cars than people.



Source: [Mark Gamba/Corbis/Foundation for Deep Ecology](#)

Kern River Oil Field, California, USA.



Source: [Daniel Dancer/Foundation for Deep Ecology](#)

Former old-growth forest leveled for reservoir development, Willamette National Forest, Oregon, per the [Population Media Center](#).



Source: [Jason Hawkes/Foundation for Deep Ecology](#)

Coal power plant, United Kingdom.



Source: [Cotton Coulson/Keenpress/Foundation for Deep Ecology](#)

North East Land, Svalbard, Norway, where rising global temperatures are fundamentally changing the ecology.



Source: [Digital Globe/Foundation for Deep Ecology](#)

The world's largest diamond mine, Russia.



Source: [Daniel Beltra/Foundation for Deep Ecology](#)

Amazon jungle burns to make room for grazing cattle, Brazil.



Source: [Garth Lentz/Foundation for Deep Ecology](#)

Tar sands and open pit mining in an area so vast, it can be seen from space. Alberta, Canada.



Source: [Daniel Dancer/Foundation for Deep Ecology](#)

Tires discarded in Nevada.



Source: [Garth Lentz/Foundation for Deep Ecology](#)

Vancouver Island, Canada.



Source: [Yann Arthus Bertrand/Foundation for Deep Ecology](#)

Industrial agriculture in Almeria, Spain, stretches for miles.



Source: [Garth Lentz/Foundation for Deep Ecology](#)

Tar sands, Alberta, Canada.



Source: [Lu Guang/Foundation for Deep Ecology](#)

A man turns away from the smell of the Yellow River in China.



Source: [M.R. Hasasn/Foundation for Deep Ecology](#)

Bangladesh, where much of the world's clothing and goods are manufactured.



Source: [Darin Oswald/Idaho Statesman/Foundation for Deep Ecology](#)

Black Friday, Boise, Idaho.



Source: [Zak Noyle/Foundation for Deep Ecology](#)

A remote bay in Java, Indonesia, where local residents, without infrastructure for waste disposal, [discard waste directly](#) into streams and rivers.

The rest of the year [is going to be critical](#). In September, world leaders will try and agree on sustainable development goals that will take us through 2030. In December, in Paris, the United Nations will attempt to finally set binding limits on pollution. 2015 will dictate how we address our degrading planet over the next few decades.

The Population Media Center and partners hope these photos will help generate awareness and action. Because as the word spreads, so does the will to make sure we never have to see images like these again.

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