

Teaching environmental ethics: gate-crashing, star- gazing and mud-wrestling

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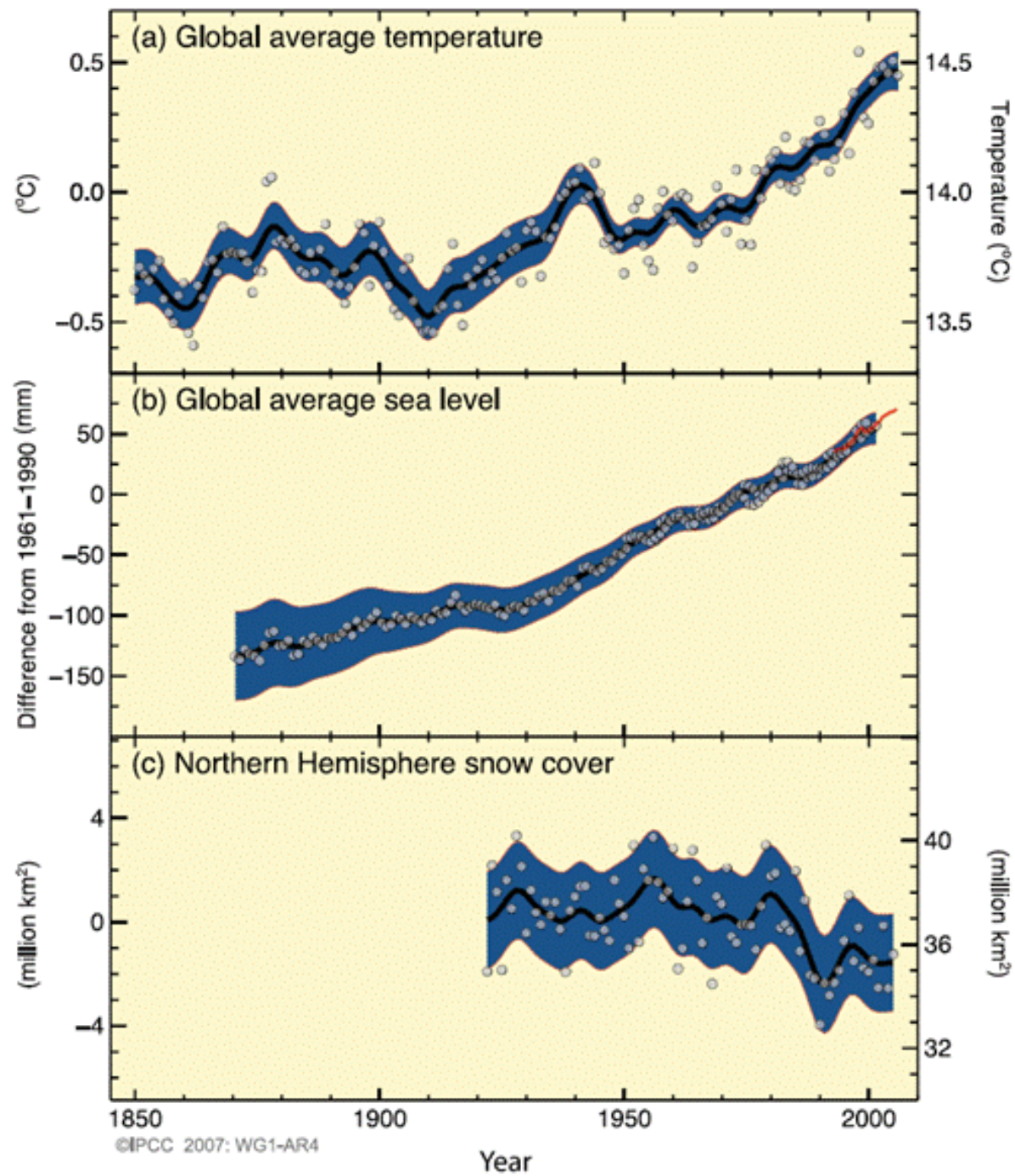
School of Life Sciences

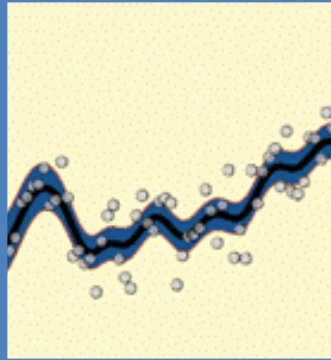
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Methodological values 1: Ronald Fisher and the origins of the alpha value



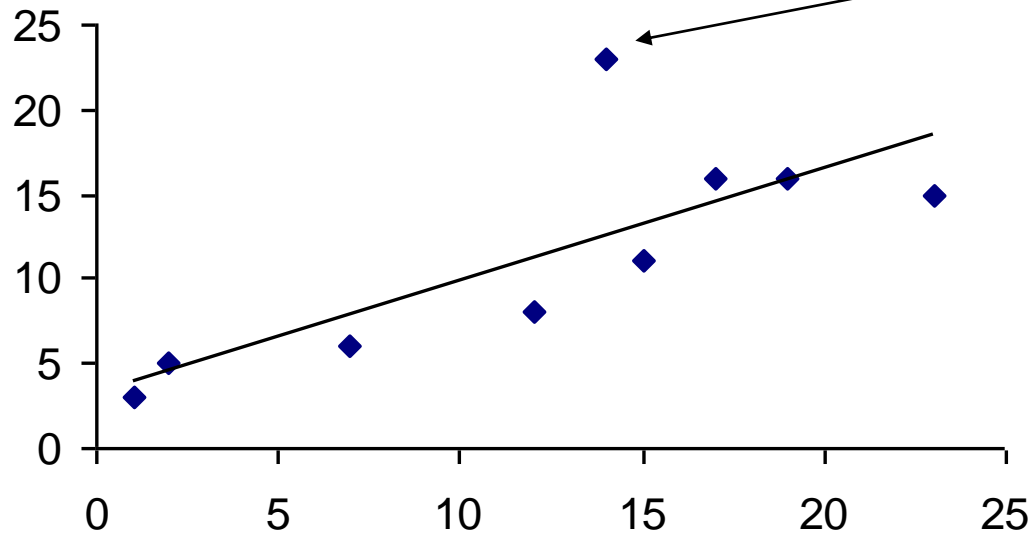
“If one in twenty does not seem high enough odds, we may.. draw the line at one in fifty (the 2% point) or one in a hundred (the 1% point). Personally, the writer prefers to set a low standard of significance at the 5% point, and ignore entirely all results which fail to reach that level.”





Methodological values 2:

**OUT-LYING ?
OR
OUT-STANDING?**



Methodological values 3: scripting science

These effects were observed

I observed these effects







A R I S T A R C H E



You need to decide who to save..

- A homeless alcoholic man of 55
- A 33 year old mother of two young, dependent children
- A profoundly disabled child with two loving parents
- A 12 week old foetus

Or... you can refuse to play the game,
but need to say why

Does the species *Pan troglodytes* (chimpanzee) have the right to exist?



Does the species *Ascaris lumbricoides* (hookworm) have the right to exist?



You are the last human alive on the planet – and you are about to die from the virus that has killed all other humans and sentient organisms. You are sitting next to the button that could unleash all the nuclear warheads left on planet earth. If you push the button, is your action morally wrong?

Mud-wrestling (and sun-bathing)



- I lead a 3rd yr field course in the Algarve.
- There are many benefits, including hoopoes and sunshine.
- But what about the carbon?
- A learning outcome is 'evaluate the ethical issues involved in overseas fieldwork, decide whether carbon offsetting is appropriate and if so make a commitment to a particular method'

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www.carrifran.org.uk



So to conclude...

- Science is full of ‘contextual and methodological values’, many relevant to environmental ethics
- Teaching ‘the stars’ can cause ‘loyalty conflicts’ – but remember Isaiah Berlin
- Mud-wrestling makes it real – but it could be ‘staged’ and might be painful