

# Wildfire

California experienced the deadliest and most destructive wildfires in its history in 2017 and 2018. Fueled by drought, an unprecedented buildup of dry vegetation and extreme winds, the size and intensity of these wildfires caused the loss of more than 100 lives, destroyed thousands of homes and exposed millions of urban and rural Californians to unhealthy air. (<https://www.fire.ca.gov/incidents/2019/>)

Wildfires does not only affect the structures but affect the wildlife, this not only kill most of the animals, but it drives them away from their habitat, putting them in risk and the community around them.

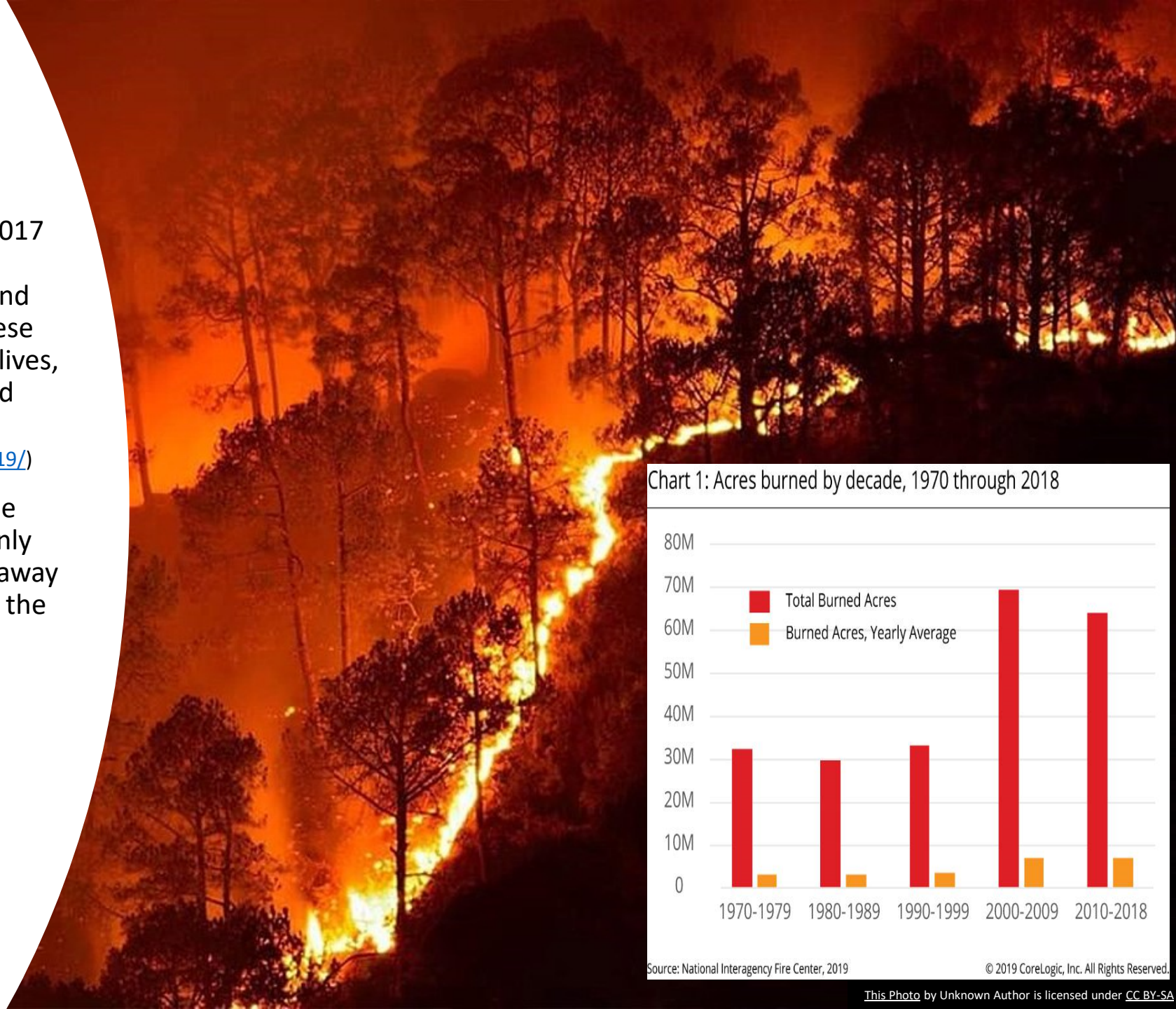
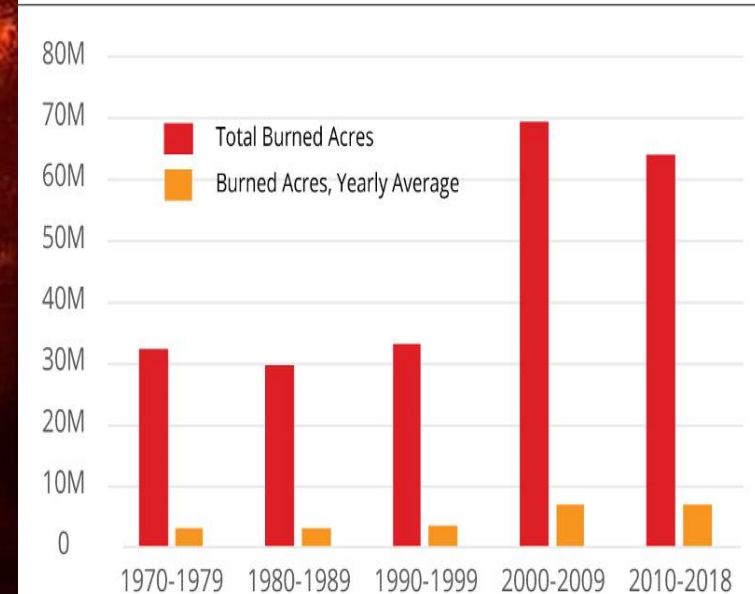


Chart 1: Acres burned by decade, 1970 through 2018



Source: National Interagency Fire Center, 2019

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**Climate change** is considered a key driver of this trend. Warmer spring and summer temperatures, reduced snowpack, and earlier spring snowmelt create longer and more intense dry seasons that increase moisture stress on vegetation and make forests more susceptible to severe wildfire. (<https://www.fire.ca.gov/incidents/>)

Strong offshore winds have very low humidity, which quickly dry vegetation on the ground and spread wildfires when they occur before the onset of winter precipitation.

"Wind increases the supply of oxygen which results in the fire burning more rapidly," Cal Fire spokeswoman Mary Eldridge said. "It also removes the surface fuel moisture which increases the drying of fuel." [CalFire said in its 2019 fire season outlook.](#)

## California's hotter future

Climate change caused by carbon emissions is projected to increase the amount of air conditioning needed in California.

