参考译文

Forests Getting Younger and Shorter

森林年轻化

They give us paper and fuel, as well as vital ecological services—like cleaning the air, storing carbon and providing habitat. We’re talking about trees, of course. But human changes to the environment appear to be causing profound changes to trees around the world.

它们为我们提供纸张和燃料，以及重要的生态服务——比如清洁空气、储存碳和提供栖息地。当然，我们说的是树。但人类对环境的改变似乎正在对世界各地的树木造成重大的变化。

In a new study, scientists reviewed global research on trends in tree seedlings, growth, and death. They combined those data with an analysis deforestation. And they found that worldwide, older trees are dying at a higher rate than in the past, due to factors like rising air temperature, wildfires, drought and pathogens.

在一项新的研究中，科学家评估了关于树苗、生长和死亡趋势的全球研究。他们将这些数据与森林砍伐的分析结合起来。发现，全球范围内，由于气温上升、野火、干旱和病原体等因素，树木的死亡率比过去更高。

“And most of the drivers of that decrease in large, old trees are increasing themselves, such as temperature going up, droughts are more severe, wildfires, windstorms, and deforestation are all—although variable across the globe—they’re generally increasing. And so both the loss has already occurred, but we expect more continued loss of big, old trees.”

“导致大型古树数量减少的主要因素是自身的增长，比如气温上升、干旱更加严重、野火、风暴和森林砍伐等等，尽管全球范围内的情况各不相同，但总体上都在增加。”尽管这两种损失都已经发生了，但是我们预计古老的树木会继续损失。”

Nate McDowell, an earth scientist at Pacific Northwest National Lab, who was one of the study’s authors.

西北太平洋国家实验室的地球科学家内特·麦克道尔是这项研究的作者之一。

“So if we have an increasing rate of death, particularly of the larger, older trees, what’s left are the younger trees. So that’s why on average, through the loss of bigger, older trees, our forests are becoming inherently younger and shorter.”

“因此，如果死亡率不断上升，尤其是较大、较老的树木，那么剩下的就是幼树了。这就是为什么，平均来说，随着古老的树木的减少，我们的森林会变得更年轻、更短。”

This trend is a problem, because old trees are vitally important.

这一趋势是个问题，因为古树非常重要。

“For sure, the increase in death does limit the carbon storage of an ecosystem, and can force the system to become a carbon source to the atmosphere. The second reason we care is from a biodiversity perspective—old growth trees tend to house a higher biodiversity than young forests do. And the third reason is aesthetic: as a society we care about these trees. We have national parks named after these big trees. So there’s a personal reason for people to care about this as well.”

当然，死亡人数的增加确实限制了生态系统的碳储存，并可能迫使该系统成为大气中的碳源。”我们关心的第二个原因是从生物多样性的角度——年老的树木往往比年轻的森林拥有更高的生物多样性。第三个原因是审美:作为一个社会，我们关心这些树木。我们有以这些大树命名的国家公园。所以人们关心这件事也是出于自身考虑。”

听力原文

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