

流利阅读11.26

#英语/流利阅读

The new abnormal: California faces the most destructive fire in its history

“新的反常态”：加州面临史上最严重大火

Part of northern California had become an inferno. A nearby town, Paradise, was incinerated and reduced to ash. Nearly 50 people are confirmed dead and over 200 missing. Six of the ten most destructive fires in California's history have occurred in the past decade. Last year was the most destructive year on record, until this year. Why is the Golden State so flammable?

加州北部部分地区已成人间炼狱。其附近的天堂镇已被焚毁并化为灰烬。将近 50 人被证实死亡，200 多人失踪。加州历史上十个最具破坏性的火灾中，有六个发生在过去的十年里。去年曾是有记录以来最严重的一年，而今年又破纪录了。为什么“金州”如此易燃呢？

There are three reasons why California has been besieged by flames. First, the climate is becoming warmer. This has led to snow melting earlier, drier landscapes and a longer season when fires are likely to ignite. “This is not the new normal. This is the new abnormal,” Jerry Brown, the state's governor, said recently.

加州总被大火围困的原因有三。首先，气候正在变暖。这导致了积雪融化得更早，地貌变得干旱，且易燃季节延长。加州州长杰瑞·布朗最近说：“这不是新常态，而是新的反常态。”

A second reason is that more people live in combustible places. Since 1990 60% of new homes in California, Washington and Oregon have been built in spaces abutting nature. These areas, which environmentalists call the “wildland-urban interface”, are at higher risk of wildfire.

第二个原因是有更多的人生活在容易着火的地带。自 1990 年以来，加州、华盛顿州和俄勒冈州 60% 的新住宅都建在大自然的周边地区。这些被环保主义者称为“荒地与城市的交界处”的区域，面临着更高的野火风险。

A third reason is that there is more fuel. Before western settlers arrived, fires used to happen often and naturally, which made less fuel available for future fires. For the past century fires have tended to be quickly suppressed. This has led to a build-up of dry brush, and makes the average wildfire much likelier to turn into a raging mega-fire.

第三个原因是燃料更多。在西方殖民者到来之前，火灾往往自然发生，这就减少了未来火灾的所需燃料。而在过去一个世纪里，火势一般很快得到控制。这导致了干灌木丛的堆积，使得寻常野火更有可能变成燎原的熊熊烈火。

Putting out the blazes is the most immediate task for California, but not the last. Many survivors will want to rebuild their homes exactly where they were. Californians will also want to ensure that utility companies are acting and investing responsibly. Investigations into what caused the fire are still going on, but some reports suggest it may have begun with sparks from lines owned by an electricity company.

扑灭大火是加州最紧迫的任务，但绝不是最后一项。许多幸存者希望能在原址重建他们的家园。加州人还希望确保公用事业公司以负责任的方式行事和投资。对火灾原因的调查仍在继续，但一些报道表明，火灾可能是由一家电力公司旗下的线路产生的电火花引发的。

----- 文章来源 / 经济学人

重点词汇

inferno/In'fɜ:nou/

- n. 人间炼狱；火海

incinerate/In'sInəreIt/

- v. 焚毁

reduce (sth.) to ash/ashes

- 化为灰烬

on record

- 记录在案的，有记录的

flammable/'flæməbl/

- adj. 易燃的

besiege/br'si:dʒ/

- v. 围攻，围困；包围
- e.g.

- Our programme has been besieged. _
- Kris is besieged by his fans. _

ignite/ɪg'naɪt/

- v. 点燃
e.g.
- The fires ignited the trees. _
- ignite your spirit/imagination
- ignite a war
- ignite your anger

combustible/kəm'bʌstəbl/

- adj. 易燃的；易挑起争端的 (combust v.)
e.g.
- Britain's domestic politics are combustible. _

abut/ə'bʌt/

- v. 邻接；毗连
e.g.
- My house abuts the company. _

interface/'Intərfeɪs/

- n. 接口；相互联系

settler/'setlər/

- n. (尤指来自别国的) 移居者，定居者；殖民者

suppress/sə'pres/

- v. 压制，制止
e.g.
- The uprising was suppressed. _

build-up

- n. 加强；增大
e.g.
- the build-up of heat

brush/brʌʃ/

- n. 灌木丛

raging/'reɪdʒɪŋ/

- adj. 剧烈的；猛烈的 (rage n./v.)
e.g.
- I was in a rage and raged at her. _
- a raging toothache
- a raging temper

mega-fire

- n. 大火，烈火
e.g.
- mega-city

put out

- 扑灭；使熄灭

blaze/bleɪz/

- n. 大火，烈火

utility/juː'tɪlɪti/

- n. (电、煤气、铁路等) 公用事业

spark/spɑːrk/

- n. 火花，火星；电火花