

## Fireworks – The Most Unnecessary Spectacle

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### A Happy New Year!

2023 is coming to an end! Time to reflect, time to look forward, and time to hope for a better time ahead. And with the same procedure as every year, we will start 2024 with a great firework all over the world. A great spectacle to watch, a moment of awe and joy with a glass of champagne maybe.

The economics behind are impressive: At the end of 2022, the sale of New Year's Eve fireworks in Germany generated revenue amounting to approximately 180 million €. A lot compared to the promise of Germany to contribute 100 Mio. € to the Loss and Damage climate fund. In the USA these numbers are far bigger: The data indicates that Americans are now investing three times the amount they spent in 2012, which was \$645 million in consumer sales. It is anticipated that sales could surpass \$3.3 billion by the year 2028. One can imagine how much money is spent worldwide each year on this beautiful (but maybe not essential?) show. Imagine how all this money could contribute to a sustainable shift of our economies, restoration of natural ecosystems etc. But let's not ruin the fun for everybody, enjoy the spectacle and let's party!



### The After Show

Happy New Year! What a great and beautiful show! After some more hours after midnight, you go to bed and sleep into the new year.

The aftermath of the fireworks is not over though. The explosions and bright lights have irritated if not frightened the animal kingdom. If you have pets you know that what we perceive as a beautiful and loud spectacle, are just surprising, scary, and probably dangerous explosions. It won't be much different for all the poor beasts we do not see or think about this evening.

However, it doesn't stop there: With the explosion, the fireworks release numerous pollutants such as carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, nitrogen, sulphur dioxide, and particulate matter. Additionally, it should be noted that New Year's Eve fireworks contain various other substances. The dyes in rockets are often caused by heavy metals. What does not fall back to the ground stays in the air and is breathed in by you, your family, friends, neighbours, and everyone, including the animals (which, as we established before, do not enjoy the show).

Crucial for how quickly the fine particulate matter pollution diminishes after New Year's Eve is primarily the weather conditions. Strong winds can swiftly disperse the fine particles. If the air is stagnant, pollution can persist for several days.

The effects on our bodies should not be underestimated. Healthy individuals can generally tolerate temporary high levels of fine particulate

matter, such as those caused by New Year's Eve fireworks, quite well. However, especially people who already have lung or cardiovascular diseases experience increased discomfort that for some individuals can turn even dangerous.

When looking at Germany, where everyone can buy (certified) explosives many people get seriously hurt every year, losing fingers or other body parts due to wrong usage (often influenced by alcohol). Recently people started to use the chaos to attack the police or firemen – yes something is seriously wrong with these people.

Next to the significant impacts on air quality and people's health, we have another hideous aftermath of fireworks: tonnes and tonnes of waste. In Germany, there are about 10,000 tonnes of plastic and hazardous waste caused by fireworks left lying around after New Year's Eve every year.<sup>1</sup> One can imagine the challenges for waste management worldwide, including all the non-covered waste, ending up in lakes and rivers and consequently in the oceans.

### But it's so beautiful!

Yes, fireworks are quite a beautiful spectacle and it's fun to light one up. But is it really worth it, considering all the mess it causes? How much money is literally blown up instead of contributing to something meaningful? On a personal level, does it really make sense to buy fireworks with your hard-earned money when you can simply watch your neighbours firing them up for free?

I for myself have decided long ago that it is not worth it. I will watch it, but I will not contribute with any

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<sup>1</sup> Find out more on the impacts of fireworks in Germany [here](#)

money. Instead, I decided to buy the first [Impact Bundle of Ecosia](#) with 25 trees. If you like to join in, feel free to buy one yourself or participate with a donation on my blog: <https://climatecurrents.blog/> (scroll to the end), where I collect donations to buy more impact bundles. It certainly is a better investment than spending money on fireworks and you can start the new year with a good impact on the environment and the climate instead of adding up to the problems.

Anyway, enjoy New Year's and let's hope for a better year to come! One of my good New Year's Resolution is to be more consistent with writing articles on my blog. You can help to make it easier, by leaving a like or comment on my posts. 😊

Till then, a happy new year!

The graphic is a promotional poster for Ecosia's 'Impact Bundle'. At the top, it features the Ecosia logo on the left, the website 'ClimateCurrents.Blog' in the center, and a small tree icon on the right. The main text reads 'With your contribution, Ecosia will plant 25 trees for the planet'. Below this, there are three stylized trees in blue, green, and red. A central text box states: 'With the **impact bundle**, you help support **local communities**, protect **wildlife** and mitigate **climate change**.' A larger text box below that says: 'Ecosia **plants trees** together with **local communities** in over **35 countries**. We grow over **500 different species** of trees where they are **needed the most** by the planet.' At the bottom left is the 'trees for a greener planet' logo, and at the bottom right is the signature of Pieter Van Midwoud, Chief Tree Planting Officer, with the text 'Keep planting with ecosia.org'.

To be found on: [climatecurrents.blog](https://climatecurrents.blog)