

## Andrew Revkin on the spectacular rise of humans: Journey into the Anthropocene

It's been only a few decades since science began building a picture of the [backstory](#) to [humankind's] spectacular ascent. It's a story about how humans became such a potent environmental influence that a signature of our doings, for good or ill, will be measurable in layered rock for millions of years to come. By altering climate, landscapes, and seascapes as well as flows of species, genes, energy, and materials, we are sealing the fates of myriad other species. And, without a big shift from business-as-usual, we will undermine our own long-term welfare as well.

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After 16 years of percolation and debate, anthropocene has become the closest thing there is to common shorthand for this turbulent, momentous, unpredictable, hopeless, hopeful time....

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Many scientists and others pressing for a more sustainable human relationship with the environment had latched onto the word and idea as a rallying point...[Paul J. Crutzen, who won a Nobel Prize for helping identify the threat certain synthetic chemicals posed to the planet's protective ozone layer,] put it plainly: "What I hope...is that the term 'Anthropocene' will be a warning to the world."

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And now the revolutionary genetic editing tool CRISPR is poised to imprint humans' ambitions on that tree at least as profoundly as fossil fuels have changed the physical world.

**The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [An Anthropocene Journey](#)**