

Human extinction could come within 5,100 years

Every day, it seems, brings with it fresh new horrors. [Mass murder](#). [Catastrophic climate change](#). [Nuclear annihilation](#). It's all enough to make a reasonable person ask: How much longer can things go on this way? A Princeton University astrophysicist named J. Richard Gott has a surprisingly precise answer to that question.

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Assuming that you and I are not so special as to be born at either the dawn of a very long-lasting human civilization or the twilight years of a short-lived one, we can apply Gott's 95 percent confidence formula to arrive at an estimate of when the human race will go extinct: between 5,100 and 7.8 million years from now.

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But for either of those scenarios to be true we must be observing humanity's existence from a highly privileged point in time: either at the dawn of a technologically advanced, galaxy-hopping supercivilization, or at the end of days for an Earthbound civilization on the brink of extinguishing itself.

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Gott's Copernican estimate for human life is in line with what we know of species' life spans from the fossil record. Mammalian species typically last around [1 million](#) years before going extinct. You could argue that our species' intelligence gives us a survival edge over say, a mastodon or a rabbit, which could make us more likely to beat those odds.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [We have a pretty good idea of when humans will go extinct](#)