

Forest Fires in Australia



Hot and dry weather leads to terrible fires

Points for Reading

- ・2019年、オーストラリアではどのような気候でしたか。
- ・森林火災はどのような条件のときに発生しますか。

■オーストラリアの大規模森林火災

2019年9月頃から発生したオーストラリアの森林火災は、2020年2月14日の大雨によって鎮火しました。

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The year 2019 was a very dry year for Australia. According to the country's weather service, average temperatures were 1.52 degrees higher and rainfall was 40% less than normal. These weather conditions caused major forest fires all over the country. The fires lasted for a long time. Most of the fires

NOTES

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| 03. weather service 気象局 | 20. national park 国立公園 |
| 04. degrees [diɡri] (温度の単位) 度 | 21. koala [kouá:lə] コアラ |
| 04. rainfall [reɪnfɔ:l] 降雨、雨量 | 37. global warming 地球温暖化 |
| 05. normal [nɔ:ml] 通常 | 40. greenhouse gas 温室効果ガス |
| 12. hectare [hek'teə] ヘクタール | |
| 17. Kangaroo Island カンガルー島 | |



■世界とオーストラリアの平均気温の推移

欧米圏の研究チームは、世界の平均気温が現在より1度上昇すれば、森林火災の発生確率は4倍高くなると発表しています。温暖化が原因の森林火災は、今後世界中で起こる可能性があることも指摘されています。

出典：オーストラリア気象局

were put out by heavy rains in February 2020, but the damage from the fires was very bad.

More than 12,000,000 hectares of forest were destroyed by the fires. That is about one-third of the area of Japan. About one billion animals have died because of the fires. The damage was especially bad on Kangaroo Island, a home to many wild animals. Almost half of the island was burned, and almost all of its national parks were lost. Many koalas and kangaroos that lived in the forests were killed. Some burned their feet when they walked on the hot ground. Others died after breathing the hot smoke from the fires. What is more, animals that did not die in the fires will

have trouble finding food and places to live. The impact from these fires will be felt for a long time.

Australia has been getting hotter over the last few decades. Because of the high temperatures and the dry weather, fires can start easily in the forests. These conditions will be in many parts of the world in the future. Fires like the ones in Australia could happen anywhere. Experts believe global warming is the reason for these fires. They say that the world must reduce CO₂ and other greenhouse gases. The dangers of global warming are not far away. What do you think people should do?



■森林火災でやけどを負ったコアラ

多くのコアラが火の手から逃れようと木の上に避難し、その後下りてくるときに焼け焦げた木の幹や地面に落ちてやけどを負いました。今回の森林火災で死亡した動物は1億匹という推計もあります。

REUTERS/APLO

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

Website オーストラリア気象局 (英語) - <http://www.bom.gov.au/>

Website オーストラリア政府観光局 - <https://www.australia.com/ja-jp>

Book 「タイム」編集部編『地球温暖化 自然災害の恐怖 地すべり・山火事・砂嵐』ゆまに書房

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