

## Italy's largest river experiencing drought

20th June, 2022



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Large swathes of Europe are experiencing droughts and water shortages. One region is experiencing its worst drought for 70 years. The area, in northern Italy, has had hardly any rainfall in the past four months. This year's snowfall was 70 per cent lower. This

has caused the River Po, Italy's largest, to be three metres lower than average. A lot of the riverbed has dried up and people can walk across the mud. In one part, the declining water level has fully exposed a World War II shipwreck. Authorities are concerned that if it doesn't rain soon, there'll be a serious water shortage. This means water will be rationed for drinking. Farmers will also have problems finding water to irrigate their crops.

A spokesperson from Italy's Po Basin Authority said the water shortages are unprecedented. The river gets much of its water from Lake Maggiore in the Italian Alps. The lake is seeing its lowest water level since 1946. Problems are being exacerbated by higher-than-average temperatures and a mini heat wave. A farmer from the tiny rural town of Guastalla, 150 km southeast of Milan, said she is expecting a "disastrous year". She said: "With such high temperatures and with no rain...the situation is catastrophic." She added: "We believe that there will be a drop in wheat productivity by at least 20 per cent due to the lack of rain." The Po Valley will see a 30 to 40% reduction in fruit and vegetable production.

Sources: [cbsnews.com](https://www.cbsnews.com) / [theguardian.com](https://www.theguardian.com) / [euronews.com](https://www.euronews.com)

### Writing

Everyone in the world should reduce the amount of water they use. Discuss.

### Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

swathes / drought / water shortage / the past four months / mud / riverbeds / crops / river / lake / water level / temperatures / heat wave / catastrophic / wheat / fruit

### True / False

- 1) All of Europe is experiencing water shortages. T / F
- 2) All of Italy is experiencing its worst drought in seven decades. T / F
- 3) Lower water levels revealed a sunken World War II shipwreck. T / F
- 4) Farmers have no problems irrigating their crops. T / F
- 5) A huge lake in Switzerland feeds the River Po. T / F
- 6) A mini heat wave is making the water shortage worse. T / F
- 7) A farmer said she is expecting a disastrous year. T / F
- 8) Fruit production in the Po Valley is expected to rise. T / F

### Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- |                         |                 |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. <b>experiencing</b>  | a. shortage     |
| 2. <b>hardly</b>        | b. water        |
| 3. <b>exposed</b>       | c. made worse   |
| 4. <b>rationed</b>      | d. barely       |
| 5. <b>irrigate</b>      | e. countryside  |
| 6. <b>unprecedented</b> | f. revealed     |
| 7. <b>exacerbated</b>   | g. undergoing   |
| 8. <b>rural</b>         | h. disastrous   |
| 9. <b>catastrophic</b>  | i. limited      |
| 10. <b>lack</b>         | j. unparalleled |

### Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) How would you feel if rivers near you dried up?
- c) What's the best way to deal with a heat wave?
- d) Have weather events changed the prices of things?
- e) What will the weather be like in 50 years from now?
- f) What will you do if food prices rise a lot?
- g) What three words best describe this story?
- h) What questions would you like to ask the farmers?

## Phrase Match

- |                                   |                            |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Large swathes of Europe are    | a. wave                    |
| 2. hardly any rainfall            | b. unprecedented           |
| 3. fully exposed a                | c. irrigate their crops    |
| 4. water will be                  | d. of rain                 |
| 5. have problems finding water to | e. World War II shipwreck  |
| 6. the water shortages are        | f. rationed for drinking   |
| 7. Problems are being             | g. productivity            |
| 8. a mini heat                    | h. experiencing droughts   |
| 9. a drop in wheat                | i. exacerbated             |
| 10. due to the lack               | j. in the past four months |

## Discussion – Student B

- What do you think of hot weather?
- Have you ever experienced water shortages?
- What's the best way to deal with a drought?
- What strange weather have you experienced?
- What is causing these extreme weather events?
- What would you do if water was rationed?
- How difficult is it to be a farmer?
- How can we help farmers to irrigate their crops?

## Spelling

- Large twaeshs of Europe
- experiencing its worst tughodr for 70 years
- exposed a World War II krpsheiw
- there'll be a serious water grhaoest
- water will be eindrtoa for drinking
- finding water to etrariqi their crops
- Problems are being tebdxacerae
- A farmer from the tiny arurl town
- she is expecting a odtissaur year
- the situation is acpothrtisac
- a drop in wheat iytvudtpoir
- a 30 to 40% idcrtoun

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. d	3. f	4. i	5. b
6. j	7. c	8. e	9. h	10. a

## Role Play

### Role A – Droughts

You think droughts are the worst natural disasters. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their disasters aren't as bad. Also, tell the others which is the least damaging of these (and why): blizzards, earthquakes or volcanoes.

### Role B – Blizzards

You think blizzards are the worst natural disasters. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their disasters aren't as bad. Also, tell the others which is the least damaging of these (and why): droughts, earthquakes or volcanoes.

### Role C – Earthquakes

You think earthquakes are the worst natural disasters. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their disasters aren't as bad. Also, tell the others which is the least damaging of these (and why): blizzards, droughts or volcanoes.

### Role D – Volcanoes

You think volcanoes are the worst natural disasters. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their disasters aren't as bad. Also, tell the others which is the least damaging of these (and why): blizzards, earthquakes or droughts.

## Speaking – Natural disasters

Rank these with your partner. Put the most damaging at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- |             |               |
|-------------|---------------|
| • Droughts  | • Earthquakes |
| • Typhoons  | • Heat waves  |
| • Blizzards | • Tornadoes   |
| • Floods    | • Volcanoes   |

### Answers – True False

1 F	2 F	3 T	4 F	5 F	6 T	7 T	8 F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.