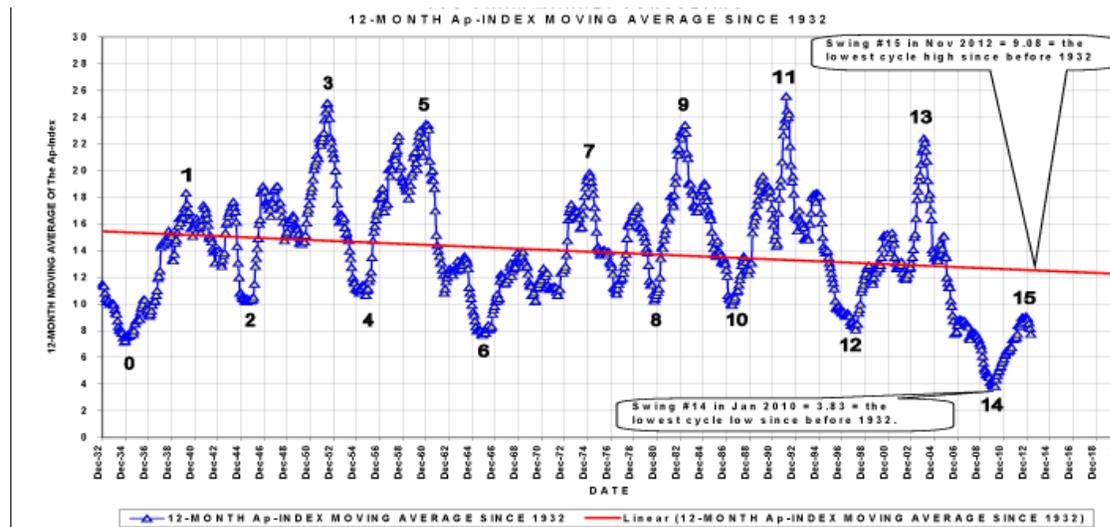


Current Status of the Sun

Since the sun has finally entered solar cycle 24 (SC24) with the resurgence of sunspots, most people have turned away from tracking the strength of the rebound. Had they looked, they would have found that the surge into this next solar cycle so far has been rather weak.

The Average Magnetic Planetary Index (*Ap index*) is a proxy measurement for the intensity of solar magnetic activity as it alters the geomagnetic field on Earth. It has been referred to as the common yardstick for solar magnetic activity. *Ap index* measurements began in January 1932. The quieter the sun is magnetically, the smaller the *Ap index*.

The graph below depicts a 12-month moving average of the *Ap index*. The graph was produced by William C. Fordham of C&S Grain Marketing Consulting.



The current solar cycle looks eerily similar the Dalton Minimum (approximate years 1790 to 1830). Note that the current peak of solar cycle 24 (#15) is smaller than most solar minimums (#'s 2, 4, 8 and 10) and just slightly higher than the rest (#'s 0, 6 and 12). This is foreboding precursor for the next solar minimum (#16). Are we looking at the beginning of another Little Ice Age?