



Scientists: Global Warming Will Bring Rain To The Deserts

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Global warming will bring rain to the driest places on earth, according to a study published online Monday in the peer-reviewed journal *Nature Climate Change*.

“We found a strong relationship between global warming and an increase in rainfall, particularly in areas outside of the tropics,” Dr. Markus Donat, [the study’s](#) lead author of the University of New South Wales, [told Phys.org](#). The study was also authored by a scientist from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Increasing global temperatures means the air has more capacity to hold moisture from the oceans, leading to more rains in arid regions of the world. This is even true in the Earth’s driest regions, such as the Sahara desert. The research concludes that arid areas and deserts in Australia, California, Central Asia, Sinai and Southwestern Africa can all expect more rain.

“If you could pick a climate change that would be the most beneficial, having generally more precipitation would be at (or very near) the top of the list, especially as the human population continues to expand,” Chip Knappenberger, climate scientist at the CATO Institute, told The Daily Caller News Foundation. “Couple the increased precipitation with carbon-dioxide induced increases in the water use efficiency of plants, and you have a rapidly improving situation for the world drylands. With ‘water wars’ being pitched as a potential outcome from climate change, the findings of the Donat et al. study should come as a welcome result.”

“As far as extreme precipitation amounts increasing—this is a general characteristic of rainfall. The more it rains, the more rains come from heavy events,” Knappenberger said. “In fact, several years back, we demonstrated that this is indeed the case over the USA. Places which are getting more rain are also getting more rain on the wettest days of the years. But—our main finding was that this was not occurring disproportionately to expectations—instead it is a general characteristic of the way the climate works.”

The Donat study found that average annual rainfall had increased by between 1 to 2 percent per decade since 1950, in wet and dry areas alike.

“I have always been very skeptical of the wet-gets-wetter, dry-gets-drier hypothesis, and its corollary that extreme precipitation disproportionately increases in both regions getting wetter and regions getting drier,” Knappenberger concluded. “The new Donat et al. study finds that precipitation generally increases over both wet and dry land areas, casting doubt on the dry-gets-drier hypothesis. To this end, I don’t find the new Donat et al. results at all surprising. In fact, I find them encouraging.”