



Study Claims 9-Year US ‘Hurricane Drought’ Doesn’t Prove Alarmism Wrong

Michael Bastasch

May 4, 2015

It has been nearly a decade since a major hurricane made landfall in the U.S., contradicting claims that global warming would drive more hurricanes and cause billions of dollars in damage.

But a new study claims it’s essentially really good luck that’s kept a big hurricane from hitting U.S. shores these past nine years. Scientists found there’s been no major weather shift protecting the U.S. from hurricane landfalls.

For the past couple years, scientists and researchers have pointed out that the U.S. is in the midst of a “hurricane drought” as it’s been more than nine years since a Category 3 or higher hurricane has hit U.S. shores. This has flown in the face of predictions made by environmentalists that storms will become worse as the climate warms.

Major hurricanes have still been forming over the ocean — they just haven’t hit the U.S. for some reason. A new study says it’s basically just pure luck the country has avoided them.

“When we looked qualitatively at the nine-year drought, they aren’t inactive seasons,” lead author Timothy Hall with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration’s Goddard Institute for Space Studies said in a [statement](#). “I don’t believe there is a major regime shift that’s protecting the U.S.”

The study, [published](#) in the journal Geophysical Research Letters, found the odds of a major hurricane making landfall in the U.S. and ending the “drought” is about one-in-three in any given year, and that the average “wait time for a nine-year drought is 177 years.”

The last major hurricane to make landfall in the U.S. was Hurricane Wilma in 2005 — more than nine years ago. In that time, however, several major storms have hit Cuba.

“A hurricane-climate shift protecting the US during active years, even while ravaging nearby Caribbean nations, would require creativity to formulate,” Hall’s study found. “We conclude instead that the admittedly unusual 9-year US Cat3+ landfall drought is a matter of luck.”

The study, however, avoids linking the major hurricane drought to claims made about man-made global warming. Scientists and activists have claimed storms will become more frequent and extreme as the climate warms because of man-made carbon dioxide emissions.

It wasn’t so long ago that scientists were blaming global warming for the string of seven major hurricanes that hit the U.S. in 2004 and 2005. Now, somehow, it’s only because of chance that no major hurricanes have made landfall since 2005.

“What struck us as odd about the Hall and Hereid paper is the lack of speculation as to how the ongoing record ‘drought’ of major hurricane landfalls in the United States could be tied in with anthropogenic climate change,” [wrote](#) climate scientists Patrick Michaels and Chip Knappenberger with the libertarian Cato Institute.

“You can rest assured—and history will confirm—that if we had been experiencing a record run of hurricane landfalls, researchers would be falling all over themselves to draw a connection to human-caused global warming,” the scientists wrote.

“But the lack of anything bad happening? No way anyone wants to suggest that is ‘consistent with’ expectations,” the Cato scientists added.