

## Environmental Report Predicts Global Warming Will Bring More Days of Extreme Heat

Elizabeth Lee | Washington13 August 2010

The U.S. space agency NASA says this year has been the warmest for the earth in 131 years. And a new study of hot weather in the U.S. released by the National Wildlife Federation predicts that extreme heat will be the norm by 2050. The private environmental organization says as the planet warms, there will also be heavier rainfall and drought around the globe. But not all scientists agree on the impact of global warming or a solution to its effects.

From the record setting heat in Russia to the heavy rains in Pakistan and the devastating mudslides in rain soaked China, many climate scientists predict extreme weather will become more common as the earth gets warmer.

"As the planet warms the atmosphere can actually hold more water and so when it does rain, we're getting more heavy rainfall events and that's going to be really devastating," said climate scientist Amanda Staudt of the U.S. based National Wildlife Federation. She co-authored the private organization's 2010 report on extreme heat in the U.S. She found many of the cities along the East Coast of the U.S., when compared to average temperatures, have twice as many days that have reached over 32 degrees Celsius.



She predicts this extreme heat will soon become the norm. "What surprised me was that 2010 may actually be considered a mild year in 2050, or at least an average or typical year, depending on the global warming pollution emissions that we have going forward," she said.

Staudt and many other scientists say pollution increases carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, and that traps heat and causes global warming.

But climatologist Patrick Michaels of the Cato Institute says that exaggerates the problem. "These cities are going to get, and have been getting, warmer with or without carbon dioxide going in the atmosphere," he said.

Michaels says the concrete and bricks in a city trap more heat than carbon dioxide. He blames much of the extreme heat in the eastern U.S. this year to a weather cycle called La Nina.

Amanda Staudt says long term extreme weather can have negative impacts - health problems from more allergy causing plants - food shortages from crops under stress. This summer, severe drought and wildfires in Russia sharply reduced the world's wheat supply. Staudt says a long term solution is to use other forms of energy. "We need to start moving away from a reliance on fossil fuels like coal, oil and gas and transitioning our energy use on cleaner sources like solar and wind and looking for ways to be more efficient in our energy use," she said.

But Patrick Michaels says these are not realistic solutions. "Solar is wildly inefficient and has to be subsidized massively. Wind is never going to produce enough dense energy," he said.

Michaels says humans have always adapted to changing environments, and will continue to do so. "This issue is no different than many of the other apocalyptic threats that have been brandished over society from time immemorial and for all of those other threats we adapted," he said.

Aside from the debate on climate change, scientists do agree, cities will continue to get hotter as they grow and add more buildings and roads.

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