Why was October so warm?

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If you think news reports on last month's record warmth seem to be repeating the same information, you are not alone. Even so, not everyone is concerned.

The Associated Press says that even in a record-breaking hot year for Earth, October stood out as "absurdly warm." Actually, the headline for the story refers to it as an "absurdly hot October," coming in at 1.76 degrees Fahrenheit above the 20th century average.

But according to Chip Knappenberger, former Virginia State Climatology Office researcher and current assistant director of the Center for the Study of Science at the Cato Institute, "This is a repeating news story this year."

"There is a big El Nino taking place out in the Pacific Ocean, and El Ninos tend to have global consequences not only in regional weather patterns across the globe, but also in raising the average global temperature," he explains. "The last big El Nino was 1998, and lo and behold, we set a global temperature record in 1998 by a whole lot, because that's what big El Ninos do."

NOAA climate scientist Jessica Blunden tells the AP that 2015 will be the hottest year on record, and she blames a potent El Nino on top of accelerating man-made global warming.

Knappenberger, however, takes issue with the word "accelerating."

"It is not accelerating," he asserts. "There is no sign of acceleration in anything; over the past 15 to 20 years, the warming has slowed down a bit. But you have … humans emitting greenhouse gases into the atmosphere and doing other things to the planet -- that adds a warming pressure to the atmosphere. So all else being equal, you would think the surface temperatures would go up a bit. On top of that, there is natural variability that is going that includes El Ninos, for example."

"So when you have a human pressure to warm, and then you have a natural-occurring event that is a warm event, the two add up to a record temperature, and that's what's happening," the researcher concludes.