

2005 may set record as warmest year

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Two major meteorological organizations agree: 2005 was a very warm year, and if it didn't set a record for high temperatures, it came close to it.

The U.N. World Meteorological Organization in Geneva, Switzerland, last week reported the Earth's 2005 global mean surface temperature is estimated at 58.06 F (14.48 C) -- 0.86 degrees Fahrenheit (0.48°C) warmer than the average between 1961 and 1990, National Geographic News reported.

Official figures will be released in February, but 2005 is likely to be one of the hottest four years since record-keeping began in 1861.

The U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration also expects a much warmer than average mean temperature for the United States.

Jay Lawrimore, chief of NOAA's climate monitoring branch, believes 2005 will be very close to 1998, the warmest year on record for the nation.

"In fact it's likely to only be second warmest according to the data set we are currently using as our operational version," he told National Geographic. "(But) an improved data set for global analyses currently undergoing final evaluation will likely show 2005 slightly warmer than 1998.

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