

Study shows clouds don't cause climate change

September 6 2011

Clouds only amplify climate change, says a Texas A&M University professor in a study that rebuts recent claims that clouds are actually the root cause of climate change.

Andrew Dessler, a Texas A&M atmospheric sciences professor considered one of the nation's experts on climate variations, says decades of data support the mainstream and long-held view that [clouds](#) are primarily acting as a so-called "feedback" that amplifies warming from human activity. His work is published today in the American Geophysical Union's peer-reviewed journal *Geophysical Research Letters*.

Dessler studied El Niño and La Niña cycles over the past 10 years and calculated the Earth's "energy budget" over this time. El Niño and La Niña are cyclical events, roughly every five years, when waters in the central Pacific Ocean tend to get warmer or colder. These changes have a huge impact on much of the world's weather systems for months or even years.

Dessler found that clouds played a very small role in initiating these climate variations — in agreement, he says, with mainstream climate science and in direct opposition to some previous claims.

"The bottom line is that clouds have not replaced humans as the cause of the recent warming the Earth is experiencing," Dessler says.

Texas is currently in one of the worst droughts in the state's history, and most scientists believe it is a direct result of La Niña conditions that have lingered in the Pacific Ocean for many months.

Dessler adds, "Over a century, however, clouds can indeed play an important role amplifying [climate change](#)."

"I hope my analysis puts an end to this claim that clouds are causing climate change," he adds.

Provided by Texas A&M University

Citation: Study shows clouds don't cause climate change (2011, September 6) retrieved 18 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-09-clouds-dont-climate.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--