

2014 smashes temperature records in Europe

January 5 2015



People enjoying warm temperatures on the beach in the French Riviera city of Nice on March 7, 2014

The year 2014 broke a series of heat records in France, Britain, Germany and Belgium, weather agencies reported Monday.

In France, "2014 was the hottest year since 1900," the Meteo-France weather agency said in a statement.

The country's average annual temperature in 2014 was 1.2 degrees

Celsius (2.2 degrees Fahrenheit) higher than normal, defined by the long-term average for 1981-2010.

The year 2014 dethroned 2011 as the previous warmest year, which was an average 1.1 C higher than the benchmark.

Meteo-France also pointed to records in Germany and Belgium, saying in both countries the average annual temperature in 2014 was 1.4 C higher than normal.

In Britain, provisional data showed 2014 was the country's warmest year since 1910, according to the Met Office.

The mean temperature in 2014 was 9.9 C, 1.1 C above the 1981-2010 average or 0.2 degrees higher than the previous record of 2006, it said.

Eight of Britain's top 10 warmest years have happened since 2002.

Fifteen of the hottest years in France since the start of the 20th century have been in the last 25 years, Meteo-France said.

"In Paris, the thermometer went below 0 C only on two days, compared to the usual 25-odd days of sub-zero temperatures per year," it added.

The Met Office said 2014, which began with flooding across much of Britain, was also the nation's fourth wettest year since 1910, with 1,297.1 millimetres (51 inches) of rainfall.

Five of Britain's top six wettest years have happened since 2000.

The UN's World Meteorological Organisation last month said 2014 was set to be the hottest worldwide since record began, in step with a global warming trend.

UN nations have agreed to ink a global pact in Paris in December in an attempt to brake climate change through curbs of Earth-warming greenhouse gas emissions.

The goal is to limit overall global warming to 2 C over pre-Industrial Revolution levels, but scientists warn that on current trends Earth is heading for potentially devastating levels of 4 C or more.

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Citation: 2014 smashes temperature records in Europe (2015, January 5) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2015-01-temperature-europe.html>

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