

Winter is off to late start in normally frigid rural Alaska

January 19 2018, by Rachel D'oro



This January, 2018 photo provided by Bethel Search and Rescue shows a truck on a well-used track on a portion of the Kuskokwim River near Bethel, Alaska. The river is not covered by as much ice as it usually is this time of year. Months of higher-than-normal temperatures have opened dangerous holes in frozen rivers that rural Alaskans use as roads. One troublesome ice highway is the Kuskokwim River, where a man died New Year's Eve after driving his snowmobile into a hole. (Bethel Search and Rescue via AP)

Winter is off to a late start in parts of rural Alaska.

Months of higher-than-normal temperatures have opened dangerous holes in frozen rivers that rural Alaskans use as roads.

One troublesome ice highway is the Kuskokwim River, where a man died New Year's Eve after driving his snowmobile into a hole.

Search and rescue teams in the southwest Alaska commercial hub of Bethel have been marking open holes on the Kuskokwim, but there were so many they ran out of reflective tape.

Climatologists say the unseasonable warmth in parts of Alaska is a factor in making last month the warmest December on record for the entire state. Experts say the sustained warmth speaks to the continuing effects of [global warming](#).

The state is shifting to a cooler trend this week.



This January, 2018 photo provided by Bethel Search and Rescue shows a portion of the Kuskokwim River near Bethel, Alaska, that is not covered by as much ice as it usually is this time of year. Months of higher-than-normal temperatures have opened dangerous holes in frozen rivers that rural Alaskans use as roads. One troublesome ice highway is the Kuskokwim River, where a man died New Year's Eve after driving his snowmobile into a hole. (Bethel Search and Rescue via AP)



This January, 2018 photo provided by Bethel Search and Rescue shows a makeshift roadblock - workers had run out of the \$300-a-roll reflective tape they use - on a track that leads to a hole in the ice portion of the Kuskokwim River near Bethel, Alaska, that is not covered by as much ice as it usually is this time of year. Months of higher-than-normal temperatures have opened dangerous holes in frozen rivers that rural Alaskans use as roads. One troublesome ice highway is the Kuskokwim River, where a man died New Year's Eve after driving his snowmobile into a hole. (Bethel Search and Rescue via AP)



This January, 2018 photo provided by Bethel Search and Rescue shows people and objects on a portion of the Kuskokwim River near Bethel, Alaska, that is partly covered by ice, not as much as usual this time of year. Months of higher-than-normal temperatures have opened dangerous holes in frozen rivers that rural Alaskans use as roads. One troublesome ice highway is the Kuskokwim River, where a man died New Year's Eve after driving his snowmobile into a hole. (Bethel Search and Rescue via AP)



This January, 2018 photo provided by Bethel Search and Rescue shows vehicle tracks on a portion of the Kuskokwim River near Bethel, Alaska, part of which is not covered by as much ice as it usually is this time of year. Months of higher-than-normal temperatures have opened dangerous holes in frozen rivers that rural Alaskans use as roads. One troublesome ice highway is the Kuskokwim River, where a man died New Year's Eve after driving his snowmobile into a hole. (Bethel Search and Rescue via AP)



This January, 2018 photo provided by Bethel Search and Rescue shows tracks near a portion of the Kuskokwim River near Bethel, Alaska. The river is not covered by as much ice as it usually is this time of year. Months of higher-than-normal temperatures have opened dangerous holes in frozen rivers that rural Alaskans use as roads. One troublesome ice highway is the Kuskokwim River, where a man died New Year's Eve after driving his snowmobile into a hole. (Bethel Search and Rescue via AP)



This January, 2018 photo provided by Bethel Search and Rescue shows team members helping a person suffering from hypothermia on a portion of the Kuskokwim River near Bethel, Alaska. The river is not covered by as much ice as it usually is this time of year. Months of higher-than-normal temperatures have opened dangerous holes in frozen rivers that rural Alaskans use as roads. One troublesome ice highway is the Kuskokwim River, where a man died New Year's Eve after driving his snowmobile into a hole. (Bethel Search and Rescue via AP)

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