

Southern France set to sizzle due to climate change

February 1 2021, by Marlowe Hood



If carbon pollution continues unabated, average annual temperatures across France will, by century's end, soar 4.5C above pre-industrial levels

That dream house in southern France that so many fantasise about is going to become uncomfortably hot in coming decades, according to

new climate change projections Monday by the country's national weather service.

Even if humanity manages to modestly reduce greenhouse gas emissions—which so far has only happened during a raging pandemic or a [global recession](#)—France as a whole is on track to heat up nearly three degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels by about 2070, Meteo France said in a report.

And if carbon pollution continues unabated, average annual temperatures across the nation will, by century's end, soar 4.5C beyond that benchmark.

That is verging on an unliveable world, a raft of climate studies have shown.

With just over 1C of warming so far, the planet has seen a sharp crescendo in deadly extreme weather, including heatwaves and megastorms made more destructive by rising seas.

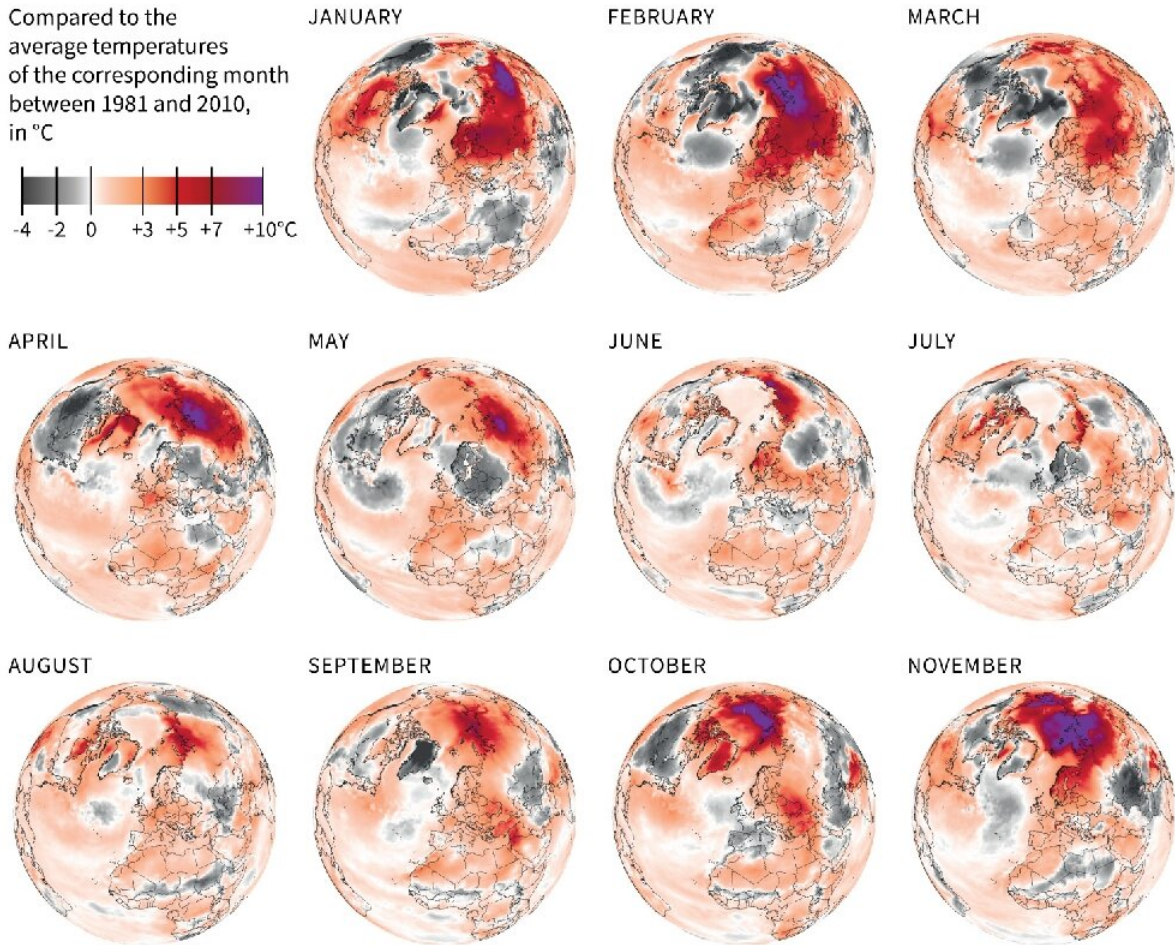
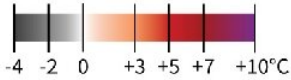
The 2015 Paris climate treaty set a goal of capping global warming at below 2C, and 1.5C if possible.

Earlier climate models have predicted that France and the Mediterranean basin will be hit especially hard by heatwaves along with declining rainfall, and that reality has begun to bite.

In the summer of 2019, temperatures in picturesque wine country north of the coastal city of Montpellier reached a sizzling 46C, a national record. Paris was only a few degrees cooler.

Temperature anomalies in 2020

Compared to the average temperatures of the corresponding month between 1981 and 2010, in °C



Source: Copernicus CBS/ECMWF



Global warming is going to hit the Mediterranean Rim especially hard, including southern France, according to climate projections

More heatwaves, less snow

This and other heatwaves "were a direct consequence of climate change," said Meteo France CEO Virginie Schwarz in a statement.

"All observations made across the planet confirm an unprecedented acceleration of climate change."

The 100-page report looked at how three different carbon pollution scenarios could shape France's climate future: a drastic reduction in [carbon pollution](#) coupled with the large-scale removal of CO₂ from the air; a reckless ramping up of the fossil fuel use which caused the problem to begin with; and a path somewhere between these increasingly unlikely extremes.

Meteo France climatologists, on the frontlines of global climate science, also zoomed in with an unprecedented resolution of 10 square kilometres, making it possible to distinguish [climate](#) micro-regions.

Global projections, by contrast, divvy up the planet into pieces 10 to 15 times that size.

The middle-of-the-road [greenhouse gas emissions](#) scenario, known as RCP4.5, will see an additional 10 to 15 days of extreme heat per year towards the end of the century. Periods of drought will expand by about 30 percent.

In the worst-case scenario—which scientists cannot exclude—southern France could experience one or two months of continuous heatwaves by 2100.

Eight consecutive days of above 40C weather in 2003 caused at least 15,000 heat-related deaths France, especially among the elderly.

The new report said high mountain regions will see the most dramatic hike in temperatures, up to 6C or 7C above levels at the start of this century.

Even in the less dire RCP4.5 projections, the number of days with at least half-a-metre of fresh snow will drop by half in the Pyrenees and southern Alps, shortening ski seasons in both mountain ranges.

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