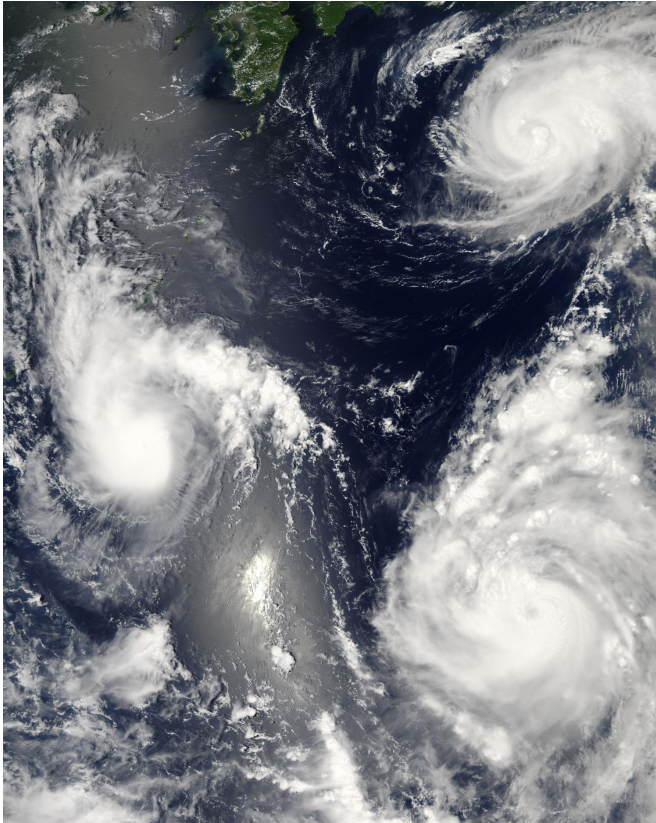


Climate change spells worse typhoons for China, Japan: study

5 September 2016



Three different tropical cyclones spinning over the western Pacific Ocean on August 7, 2006. The cyclone on the lower right has intensified into a typhoon. Credit: NASA

China, Taiwan, Japan and the Koreas will experience more violent typhoons under climate change, said researchers Monday, presenting evidence for a recent rise in storm intensity caused by ocean warming.

Scientists have struggled to identify changes in the intensity and frequency of [typhoons](#) over the northwest Pacific ocean—never mind trying to pinpoint a role for [global warming](#).

Contradictory trends emerge from records such as the Joint Typhoon Warning Center and the Japan Meteorological Agency—the two most widely-used data sets in typhoon research, according to the US-based study authors Wei Mei and Shang-Ping Xie.

They have now corrected the available data for differences in methodology and discovered a single, clear trend.

"Over the past 37 years, typhoons that strike east and southeast Asia have intensified by 12-15 percent," they wrote in the journal *Nature Geoscience*.

And the data showed this intensification, in turn, was linked to ocean surface warming—possibly caused by climate change, though this is yet to be proven.

Projections for [ocean warming](#) if humans continue to emit planet-harming greenhouse gases, said the team, "suggest that typhoons striking eastern mainland China, Taiwan, Korea and Japan will intensify further.

"Given disproportionate damages by intense typhoons, this represents a heightened threat to people and properties in the region."

The human population in these coastal areas was growing fast, they pointed out, and sea levels were rising.

The world's nations concluded a pact in Paris last December to halt the march of [climate change](#), which threatens stronger storms, longer droughts and land-gobbling sea-level rise.

This would be achieved by curbing the emission of heat-trapping gases from the use of fossil fuels.

More information: *Nature Geoscience*, nature.com/articles/doi:10.1038/ngeo2792

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