



Breaking Records in 2005 Climate Change

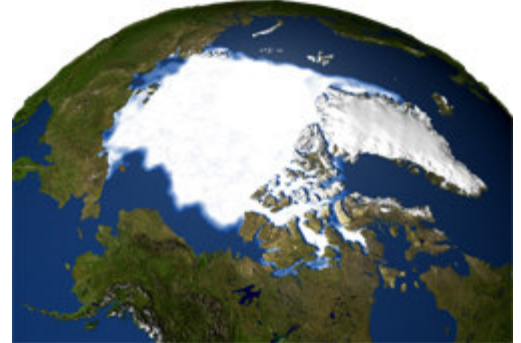
One for the record books, that was 2005, with big happenings all around the globe.

Hottest ever! Record Heat: 2005 is on track to be the warmest year on record, surpass the record set in the 1998 ENSO year. By October of this year NASA was reporting the global average temperature was already 0.1°F warmer than 1998.

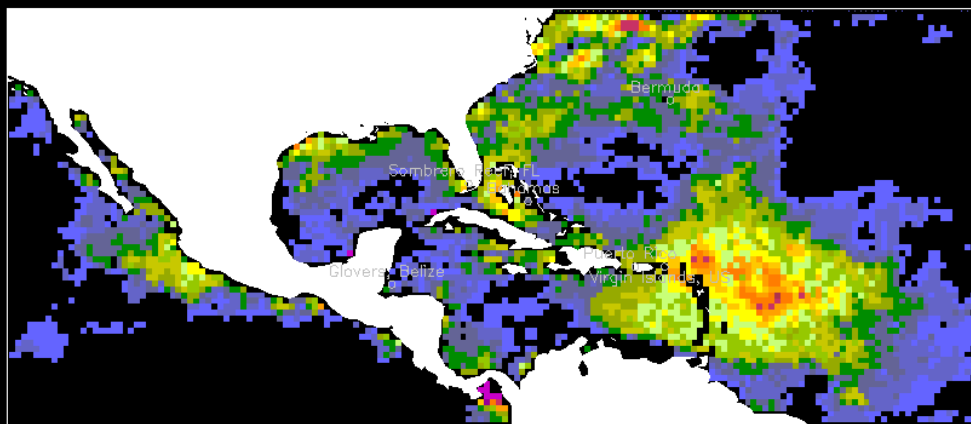
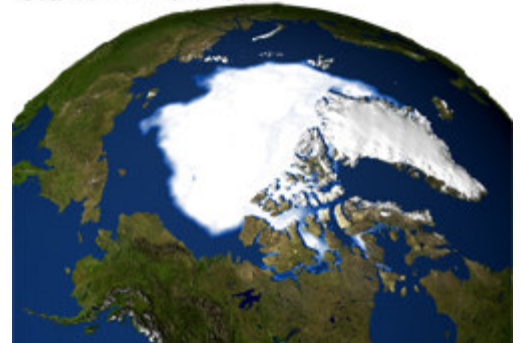
Least Icy Arctic Ever: In September of 2005 the Arctic sea ice extent (area covered) was the least ever recorded by satellites. Continuing a 9.8% per decade decline of perennial sea ice cover (the thicker ice which normally does not disappear in the summer). Making it 500,000 square miles (roughly the size of Peru, 1.3 million km²) smaller than the historic average (1979 and 2000).

Caribbean Waters Hottest on Record: Waters in the Caribbean were hotter for longer than ever before measured by regional monitoring systems This resulted in extensive bleaching throughout the region, from Colombia to the Florida Keys. Only this year's record breaking hurricane activity limited additional bleaching.

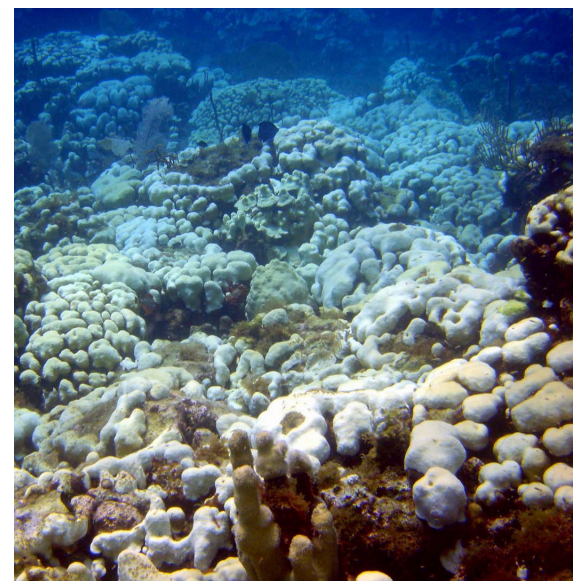
Sea Ice Minimum 1979



Sea Ice Minimum 2005



NOAA/NESDIS Degree Heating Weeks for 12 weeks ending 23 September 2005 (Values > 4 are considered damaging to corals, >10 generally means bleaching)



USVI Bleaching, September 2005



Breaking Records (con't)

FIVE Records Broken by 2005 Atlantic Hurricane Season:

In fact, although hurricane season officially ended five days ago (last day of November), Hurricane Epsilon is still blowing in the Atlantic.

Most Named Storms:

26 named storms, exceeding the official name list and moving through the first five letters of the Greek alphabet. The United States National Hurricane Center predicted a large year but estimated 18-21.

Most Hurricanes:

14 became hurricanes, meaning that winds exceeded 74 miles per hour (past record was 12)

Most Category Five Storms:

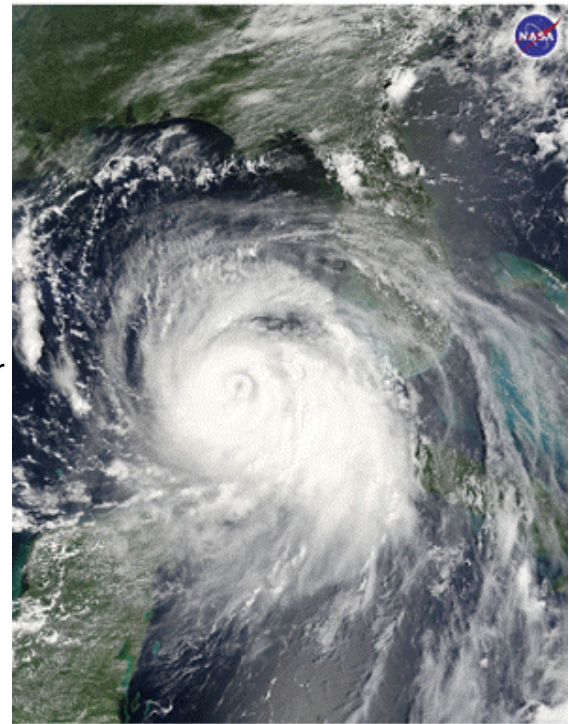
This year had five storms with winds over 155 mph

Most Storms Hitting the United States:

Four storms made landfall

Most Expensive Hurricane Damage:

Figures are still not final for the season or even most individual storms, however Katrina alone is already estimated at "over US\$100 Billion total losses"^[1]



Hurricane Katrina



Drought in the Western United States

Record Droughts Around the Planet:

A drought in the Amazon this year is a multidecadal if not century record, and a multiyear drought lingers in the western United States.

Time to Take Action! Events like these, overlayed on the recent dramatic findings that the thermohaline circulation is slowing^[2], focuses more attention on our need to take decisive action on climate change. Limiting climate change to less than a 2°C global average increase is key to limiting dangerous climate responses such as these which punctuated 2005.

[1] Insurance Industry Institute

[2] Bryden et al. 2005 Slowing of the Atlantic meridional overturning circulation at 25° N. *Nature* **438**: 655-657

For More information

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