

UK saw hottest year on record in 2022

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London, January 7 (RHC)-- Last year was the hottest year on record in the United Kingdom, the national meteorological service reported Thursday, emphasizing that the human-caused climate emergency was what drove the country to see record-breaking heat last summer and an annual average temperature of 50°F, or 10.03°C.

Experts at the Met Office expect to see average yearly temperatures above 10°C as frequently as every three to four years as fossil fuel extraction and carbon emissions persist, while "in a natural climate" without human-induced planetary heating, such temperatures "would occur around once every 500 years," according to climate attribution scientist Nikos Christidis. "It reinforces what scientists have been saying for decades now, that climate change is real and is happening."

Signs that the U.K. was experiencing an unusually hot year were evident last summer, when the country experienced temperatures above 104°F (40°C) for the first time ever. "Human-caused climate change explains the unprecedented nature of the summer heatwave in the U.K. as well as the sustained warmth seen throughout most of 2022," Richard Allan, professor of climate science at the University of Reading, said in a statement.

Christidis said the Met Office used "climate models to compare the likelihood of a U.K. mean temperature of 10°C in both the current climate and with historical human climate influences removed." "Climate change made this around 160 times more likely," the Met Office said of the unusually high average temperature.

Stephan Harrison, professor of climate and environmental change at the University of Exeter, called the Met Office's report "extremely significant." "It reinforces what scientists have been saying for decades now, that climate change is real and is happening, and it supports the arguments that change is likely to be faster over the land masses of the Northern Hemisphere than almost anywhere else," said Harrison. "The impacts of continued warming on agriculture and ecosystems will be profound."

The Met Office released its findings for 2022 as countries across Europe reported unusually warm winter weather, with ski resorts across the Alps shutting down during what's normally the height of skiing season.

"Climate change is at work," Laurent Reynaud, managing director of Domaines Skiabiles de France, the national body representing ski resorts, told CNN Wednesday as he explained that about half of France's 7,500 ski slopes are closed due to "a lack of snow and a lot of rain."

Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, and Poland are among the European countries that reported record warm temperatures on the first day of the new year this week. Countries across the continent faced numerous extreme weather events last year that scientists said were made far more likely by fossil fuel emissions and their effects on the planet.

Extreme heat across Western Europe was blamed for more than 20,000 excess deaths, while heavy rains triggered a landslide that killed at least a dozen people on Italy's island of Ischia.

"Higher temperatures in the U.K. are contributing to more severe heatwaves, droughts, and wildfires but also more intense rainfall events and associated flooding," said Allan, "and these impacts will become progressively worse until global temperatures are stabilized by cutting global carbon emissions to net zero."

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