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## Global warming

### 2006 estimated to be the sixth warmest year on record

The WMO statement on the status of the global climate in 2006 underlines several other alarming facts in the weather pattern this year:

- strong regional temperature anomalies with extreme heat in Australia, heat waves in Brazil, Europe and the USA, the **mildest winter and spring on record in Canada**;
- prolonged drought in some regions, like in the Greater Horn of Africa, or very dry conditions in Australia and also **exceptional drought in the USA** contributing to a **record wildfire season** there;
- heavy precipitation and flooding, like along the river Danube in April;
- deadly typhoons in south-east Asia, which made 2006 the severest year in a decade;
- **Arctic sea-ice decline** continues: including 2006, the September rate of **sea ice decline is now about -8.59% per decade**. The sea ice could almost **completely disappear in the Arctic in summer by 2040**, says a study published in the Geophysical Research Letters

Since the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the **global average surface temperature has risen approximately 0.7°C**. But **this rise** has not been continuous. Since 1976, the global average temperature has risen sharply, at 0.18°C per decade. In the northern and southern hemispheres, the **period 1997-2006 averaged 0.53°C and 0.27°C above the 1961-1990 mean**, respectively.

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