



## Going to Extremes

A new NOAA report says that climate change may be a cause of extreme weather

JUL 11, 2012 | By Julien Hawthorne



JACQUELYN MARTIN—AP

Hot enough for you? Everyone knows that the weather gets hot during the summer, but does it always get this hot? According to a new report from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), climate change may play a role in extreme weather events.

NOAA's 2011 *State of the Climate* report was put together by 378 scientists from 48 countries. They looked at a number of extreme weather events that happened around the world last year. "2011 will be remembered as a year of extreme events, both in the United States and around the world," said NOAA's Kathryn D. Sullivan.



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Indiana has been hit hard by heat and drought. In Idaville, the corn harvest will be smaller than usual this month.

The scientists noted that determining the causes of extreme weather is complicated. They can't blame any single event on global warming. Rather, the purpose of the NOAA study is to help scientists understand how the probability of extreme weather changes in response to global warming.

According to the report, 2011 was the coolest year since 2008. But it was still one of the 15 warmest years since records began in the late 1800s. Among the extreme weather events, scientists looked at was a record heat wave in Texas. Last year Texas had the driest seven-month drought ever recorded. NOAA found that the Texas heat wave was 20 times more likely to occur today than 50 years ago.

### It's Hot, Hot, Hot Again

This year, the U.S. is experiencing extreme weather once again. Last month, 3,215 daily high temperature records were set nationwide. The 12 months ending in May were the warmest 12 continuous months on record in the U.S. At the end of June, more than 110 million people were living under extreme heat and more than two-thirds of the country was experiencing drought.

"The frequency of hot days and hot periods has already increased and will increase further," Michael Oppenheimer, a climate expert and a professor at Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School told TIME's Bryan Walsh. "What we see now is what global warming really looks like."

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