FEELIN' HOT HOT HOT

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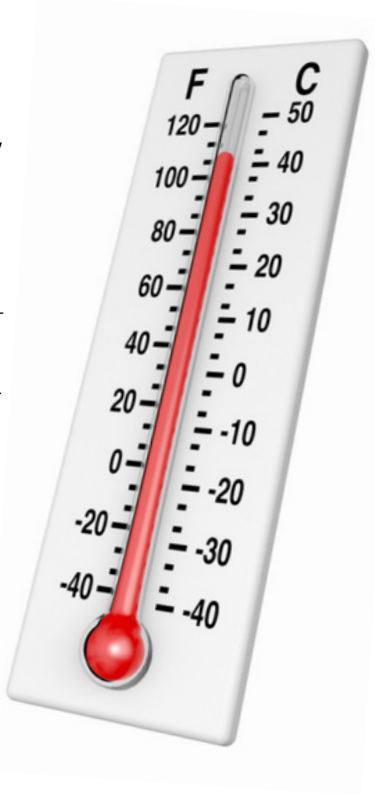


It's become so common, perhaps you've stopped noticing how often your local weather forecast is "above normal." It's noted during extreme heat in the summer, when mild temperatures persist through the winter, or when nights don't cool down like they used to.

But on May 4, the hotter Earth officially became the new normal.

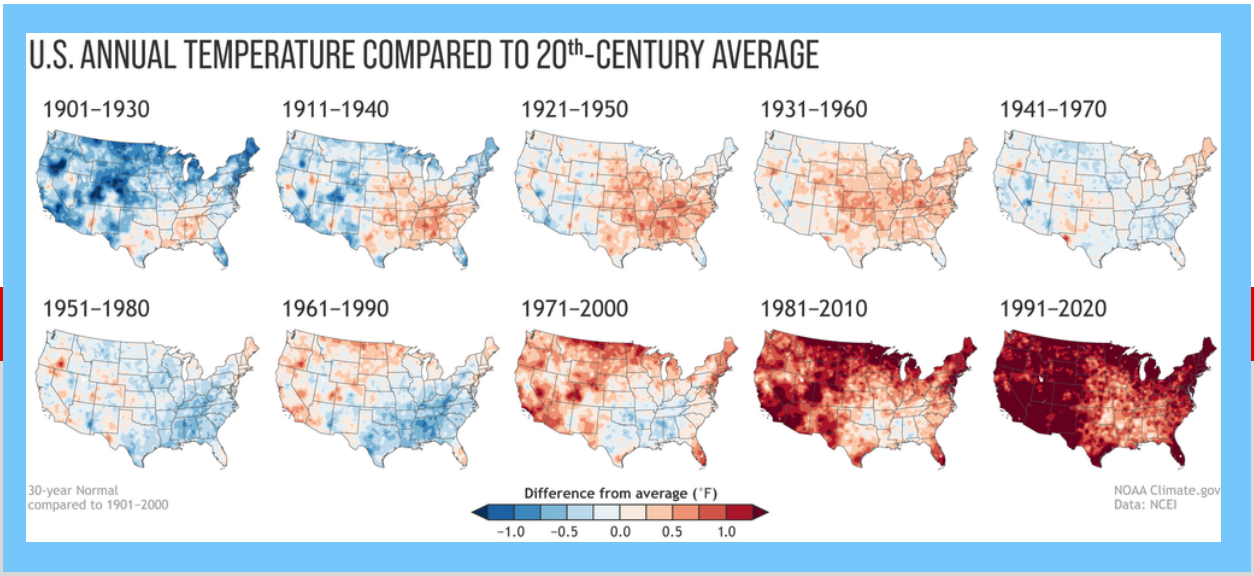
The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) released its once-a-decade update to "climate normals." They are the 30-year averages for temperature and precipitation that local meteorologists rely on as the baseline for their forecasts. To be sure, some updates will be minuscule. But the fastest-warming places will see a real bump in their averages that could make some forecasts seem confusing and pose a challenge to meteorologists.

The current "normals" are from 1981-2010, based on data collected by thousands of monitoring stations around the country operated by the National Weather Service. The NOAA update will shift the time frame for those averages later, to the period from 1991 to 2020. The decade from 2011-2020 is one of the hottest on record in the U.S.

The USA's normal is not just hotter, but also wetter in the eastern and central parts of the nation and considerably drier in the West than just a decade earlier.

According to NOAA, at least some of that wetness in the central and eastern U.S. is linked to the overall climate warming and “wetting” of the atmosphere that’s occurred as rising temperatures cause more water to evaporate from the ocean and land surface.

However, precipitation – regardless of human-caused climate change – varies a lot from place to place across the United States, NOAA said.



Annual U.S. temperature compared to the 20th-century average for each U.S. Climate Normals period from 1901-1930 (upper left) to 1991-2020 (lower right). Places where the normal annual temperature was 1.25 degrees or more colder than the 20th-century average are darkest blue; places where normal annual temperature was 1.25 degrees or more warmer than the 20th-century average are darkest red. Maps by NOAA Climate.gov, based on analysis by Jared Rennie, North Carolina Institute for Climate Studies/NCEI.

https://www.climate.gov/news-features/understanding-climate/climate-change-and-1991-2020-us-climate-normals