



Our Changing Climate

Warming At The North Pole

The world's temperature is reaching a level that has not been seen in thousands of years. The Earth is now reaching and passing through the warmest levels in nearly 12 000 years, and the rapid warming trend over the past 30 years is partly to be blamed. Data reveal that the Earth has been warming at the rate of approximately 0.2° Celsius (0.36° Fahrenheit) per decade for the past 30 years. The warming in recent decades has brought global temperature to a level within about one degree Celsius (1.8° F) of the maximum temperature of the past million years.

Satellite data of Arctic regions show warming is taking place there at an accelerating rate. These maps show temperature anomalies in the Arctic in 1981 and in 2003. The anomalies range from 7°C (12.6°F) below normal to 7°C (12.6°F) above normal. Shades of orange and red show areas of warming; shades of blue show areas of cooling; white represents little or no change. The data reveal that some regions are warming faster than 2.5°C (4.5°F) per decade. Globally 2005 was the warmest year in the past century.