

SCOTTISH CLIMATE UPDATE

Embargoed Until: 00:01hrs 10 Jan 2009

One of a series of Climate Updates from WWF Scotland based on data from the Met Office.

DECEMBER 2008

**TOP LINE: 2008 was the 20th warmest and 2nd wettest year on record since 1914
 December was the joint 3rd sunniest December ever but more than half a degree colder than the long-term average**

Measure	Dec 2008	Comparison*	Rating	Records start
Temperature	2.3°C	-0.6°C	-	1914
Rainfall	133.5mm	-14%	-	1914
Sunshine	38.9hrs	+31%	++	1929

*compared to 1961-1990 average, +++ exceptionally above average; ++ well above average; + above average;

~ close to average; - below average; -- well below average

THE YEAR IN SUMMARY:

2008 was the 20th warmest and 2nd wettest year since records began in 1914. Two months were cooler than the long-term average, four months were more than a degree warmer than that average and May was the warmest May ever recorded. The year saw a total of 1737mm of rain, second only to 1990 with 1819mm, and January was the wettest month of 2008 with 276mm of rain.

December was the joint 3rd sunniest December ever but more than half a degree colder than the long-term average. November temperatures were close to the long-term average. October was the 4th wettest October ever recorded in Scotland. September was very low on sunshine but still a bit above average temperature. August saw major floods in Fife, Ayrshire, Dundee, Edinburgh and Renfrewshire and a major landslip near Stonehaven. July was very warm and a bit wetter and less sunny than average. June was slightly warmer and quite a bit wetter than average. May was the warmest May ever in the Scottish records, which go back to 1914. It was also the 4th driest ever with only 34% of the usual rain for May. March and April were both average, apart from very wet conditions in April in eastern Scotland. February was more than two degrees centigrade warmer than the long-term average. This January was more than a degree centigrade warmer than the long-term average and the 3rd wettest January ever recorded.

COMMENT:

Dr Richard Dixon, Director of WWF Scotland, said:

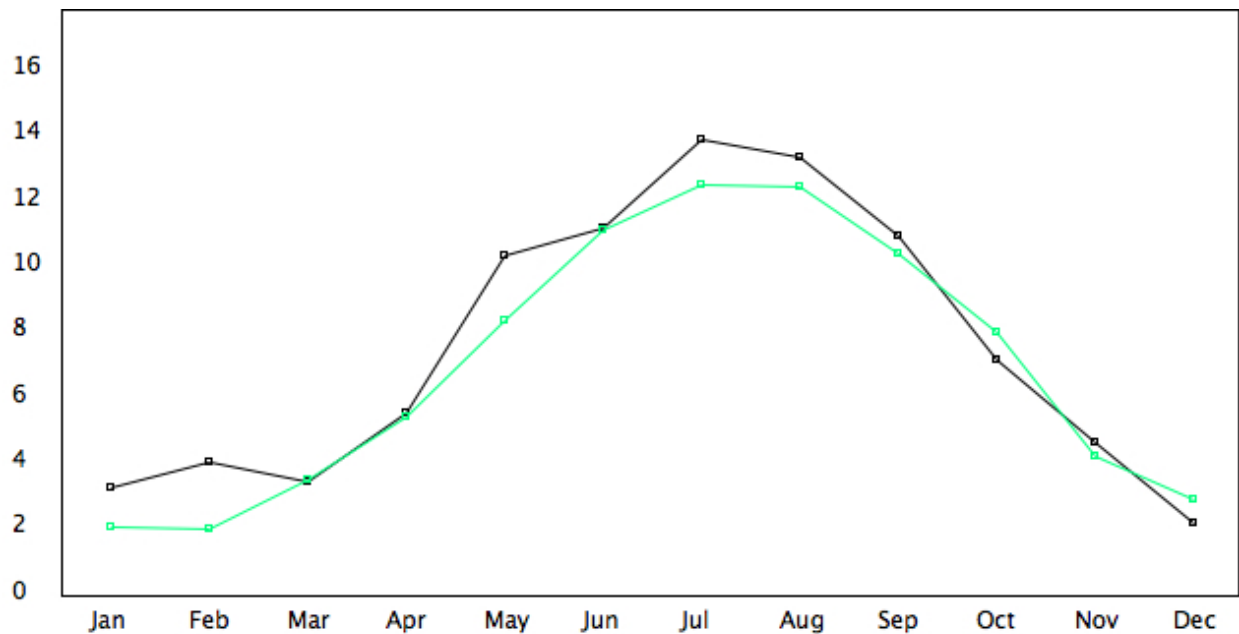
"December bucked the trend of the rest of the year by being colder than the long-term average temperature. Some people have been surprised by some of the recent cold weather but in reality it is just a taste of what winter used to be like. Even with recent cold temperatures 10 of the 12 months this year

have been warmer than average and 2008 has ended up as the 20th warmest and the 2nd wettest year on record. A warmer, wetter Scotland is exactly what the computer climate models predict.

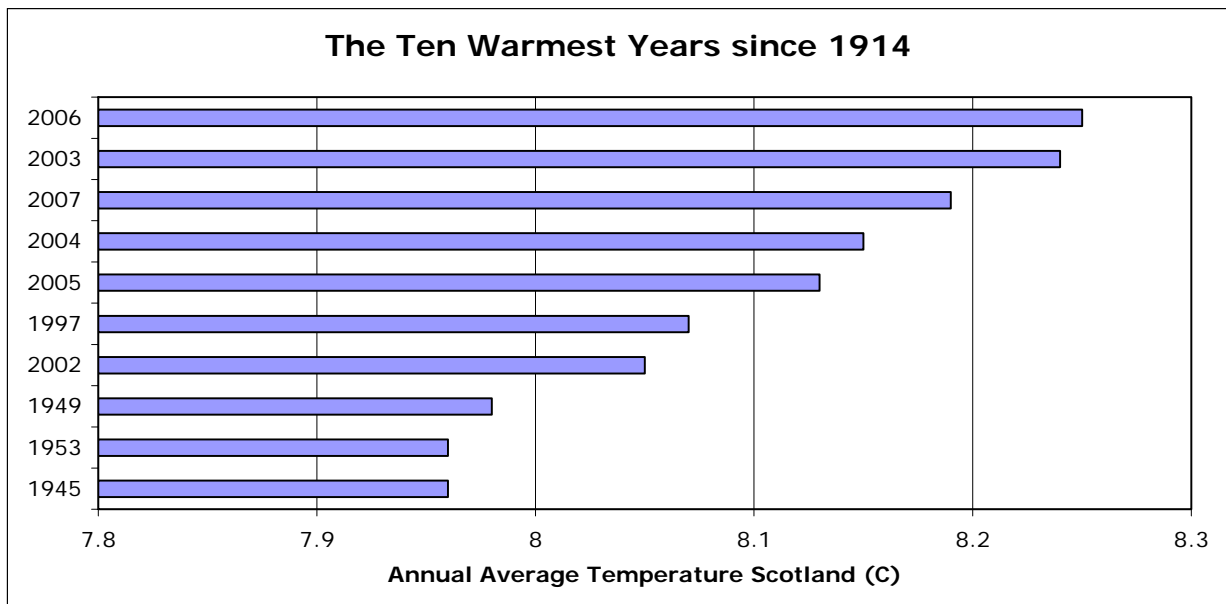
“Globally the ten warmest years have all occurred since 1997 and the average for the 2000s is almost 0.2°C warmer than the 1990s. The La Niña cooling in the Pacific has partly masked the usual global warming trend in 2008 but scientists are already predicting that 2009 will be one of the top-five warmest years around the world and La Niña is replaced by her brother El Niño.[4]

“2008 saw the introduction of the Scottish Climate Change Bill, probably the most important bit of legislation in our lifetime. With tough targets for 2050 and potentially including emissions from international aviation and shipping for the first time anywhere in the world, the Bill could set an international benchmark for climate legislation. There is still work to be done to sharpen up the bill, but this is already a big success for our campaigners, who have so far sent over 25,000 messages of support from all over Scotland and from countries around the world.”

-ends-



2008 compared to the average temperatures of the years 1961-1990 (green line)



Editor's notes

1. Data from the Met Office <http://www.metoffice.com/climate/uk/2008/december.html> with further analysis by WWF Scotland.
2. The five warmest years since records began are 2006, 2003, 2007, 2004, 2005 (warmest first).
3. WWF Scotland is part of Stop Climate Chaos Scotland, an alliance of development, environment and civil society groups aiming for tougher action to reduce emissions. WWF Scotland is supporting the SCCS Climate Change Spring Rally to lobby MSPs outside the Scottish Parliament on 22 April 2009. For more information on SCCS and the Rally visit: <http://stopclimatechaosscotland.org>
4. <http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/corporate/pressoffice/2008/pr20081230.html>
5. WWF's Earth Hour - 8pm, Saturday 29 March 2009

Sign up and switch off to show you want action on climate change.

WWF's Earth Hour lights-out initiative began in Sydney, Australia in 2007 as an awareness-raising exercise. In 2008, it went spectacularly global when more than 50 million people in more than 270 cities in over 35 countries turned off their lights for one hour in March. This year Earth Hour will be even bigger with towns and cities signing up across Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland. For more information visit: <http://www.wwfscotland.org.uk/earthhour>

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