Climate Change in the Great Lakes Region

Starting a Public Discussion

Global Warming Is Unequivocal

Kevin Trenberth

Senior Scientist, National Center for Atmospheric Research

Sea Grant
University of Wisconsin

Wisconsin Coastal Management Program

NOAA

Global Warming is unequivocal

- The recent IPCC report has clearly stated that "Warming of the climate system is unequivocal" and it is "very likely" caused by human activities.

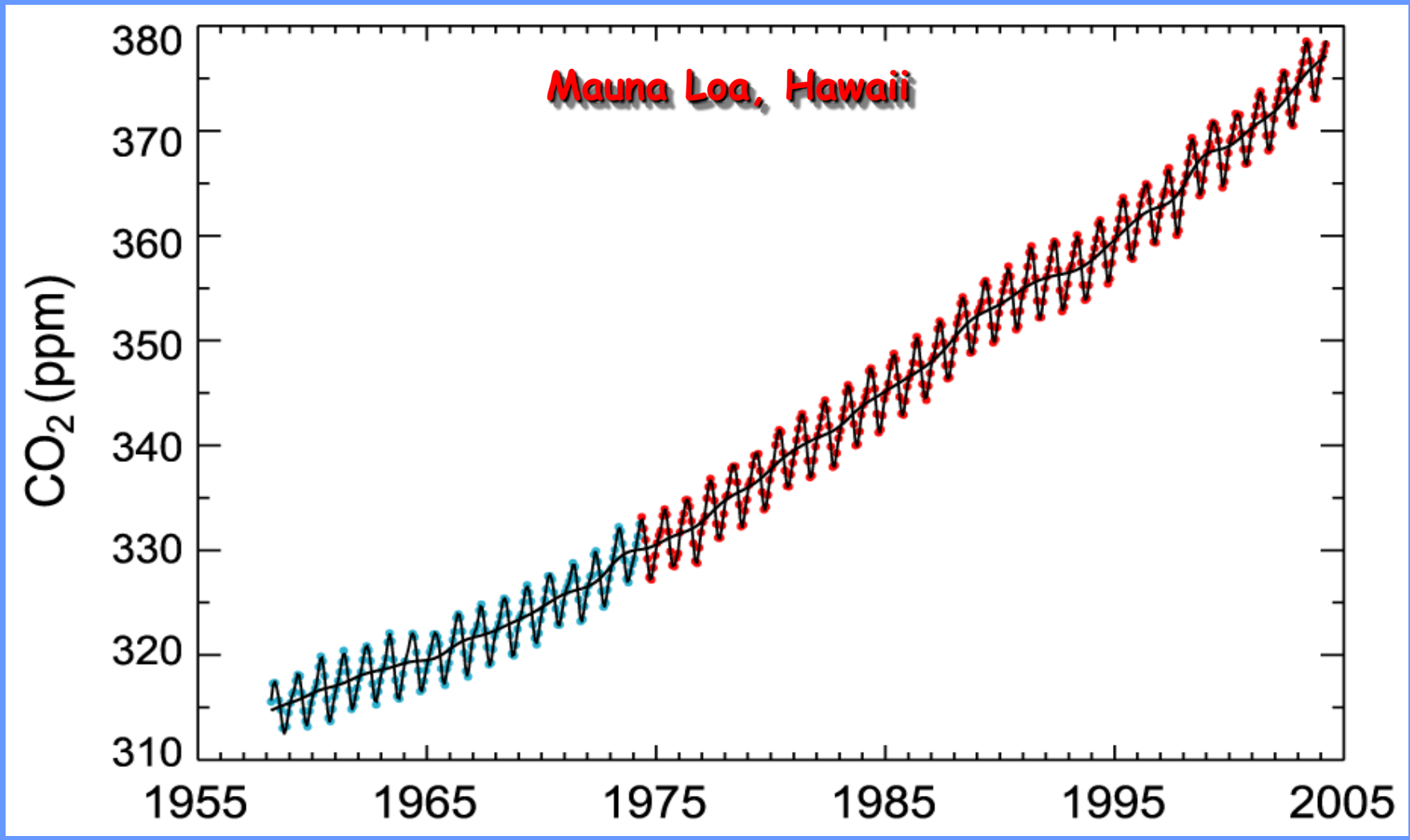
- Moreover, most of the observed changes are now simulated by models over the past 50 years adding confidence to future projections.

Climate

The atmosphere is a "global commons." Air over one place is typically half way round the world a week later, as shown by manned balloon flights.

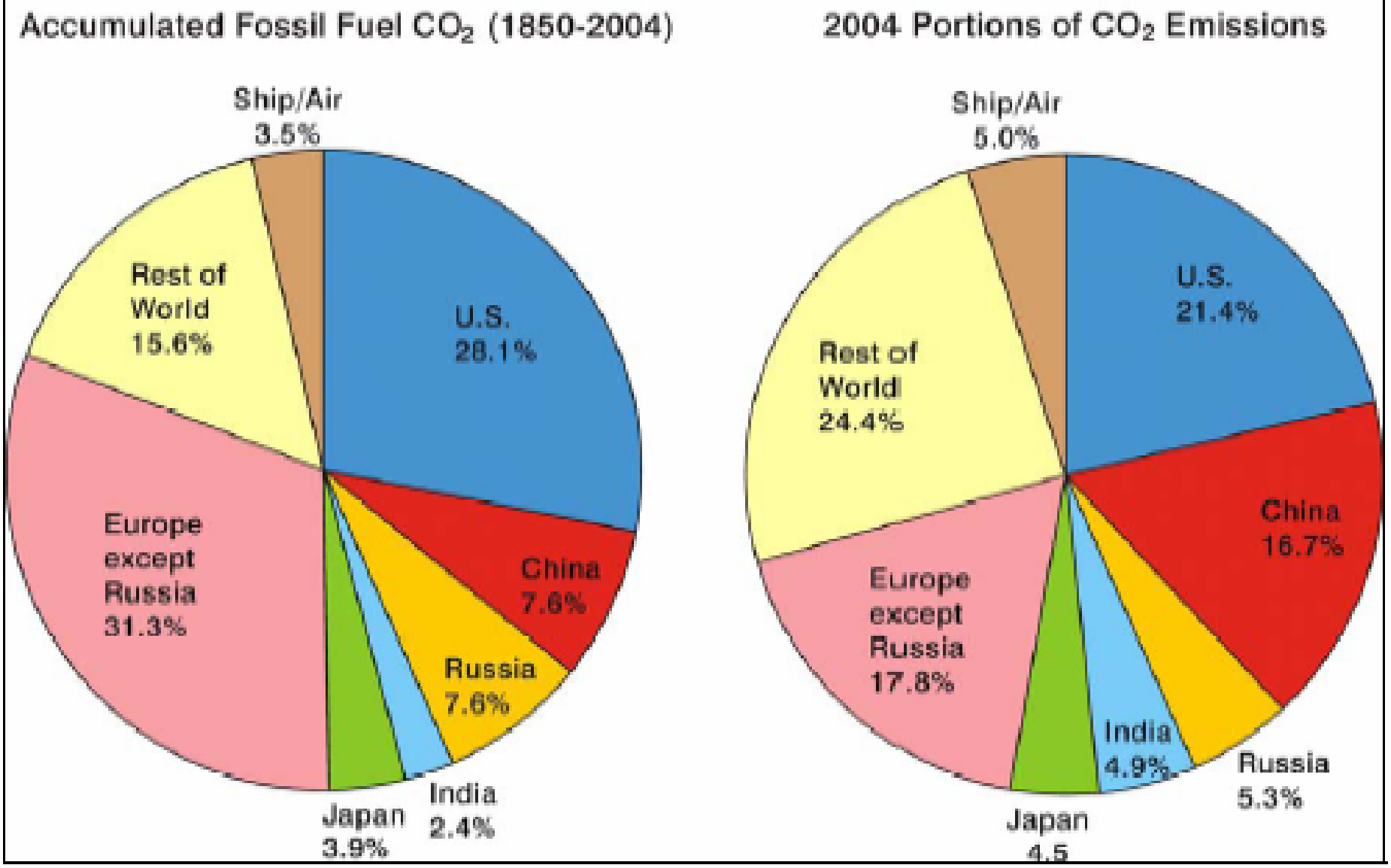
The atmosphere is a dumping ground for all nations for pollution of all sorts. Some lasts a long time and is shared with all. **One consequence is global warming!**

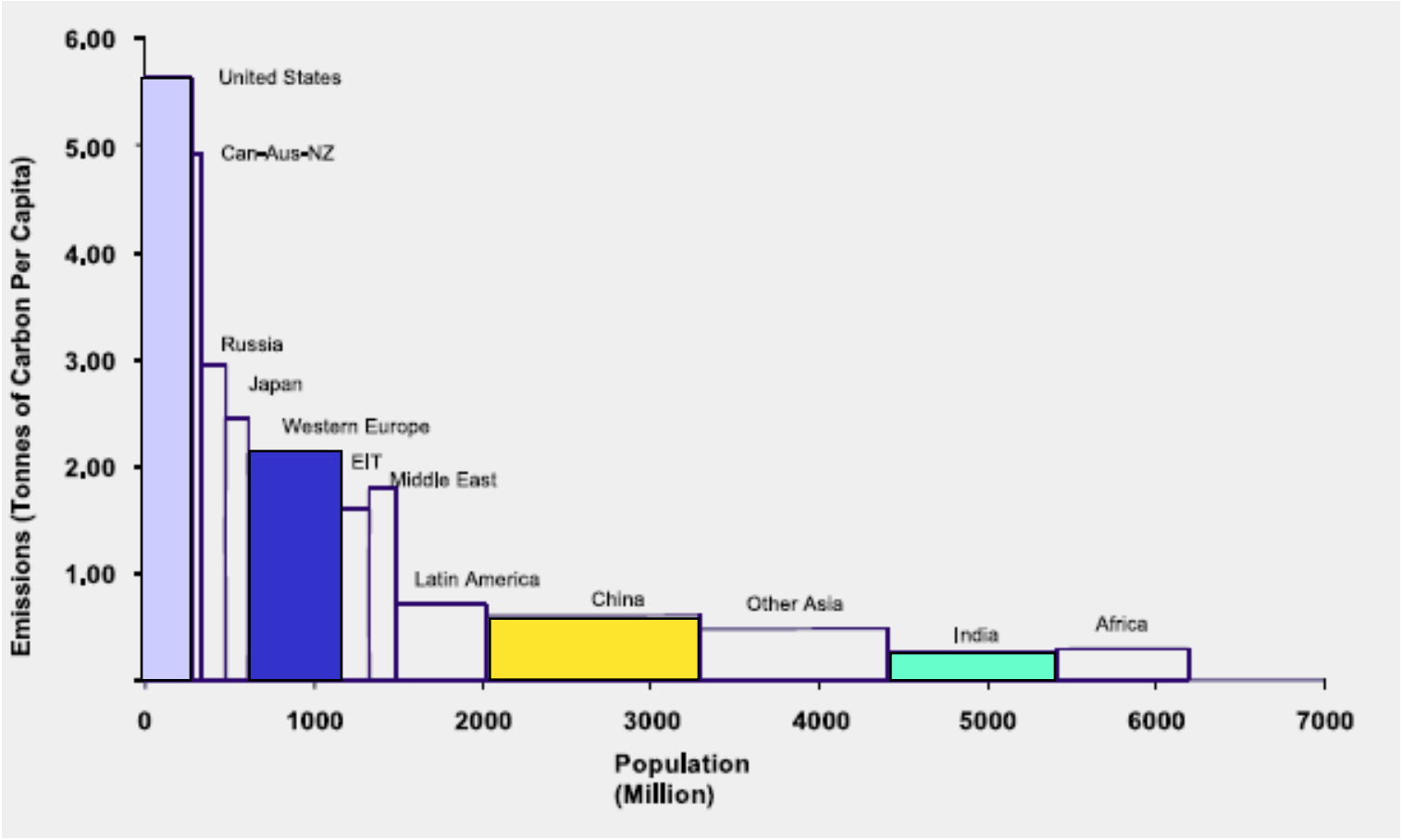
Changing atmospheric composition: CO_2



Data from Climate Monitoring and Diagnostics Lab., NOAA.
Data prior to 1973 from C. Keeling, Scripps Inst. Oceanogr.

Fossil Fuel CO_2 Emissions

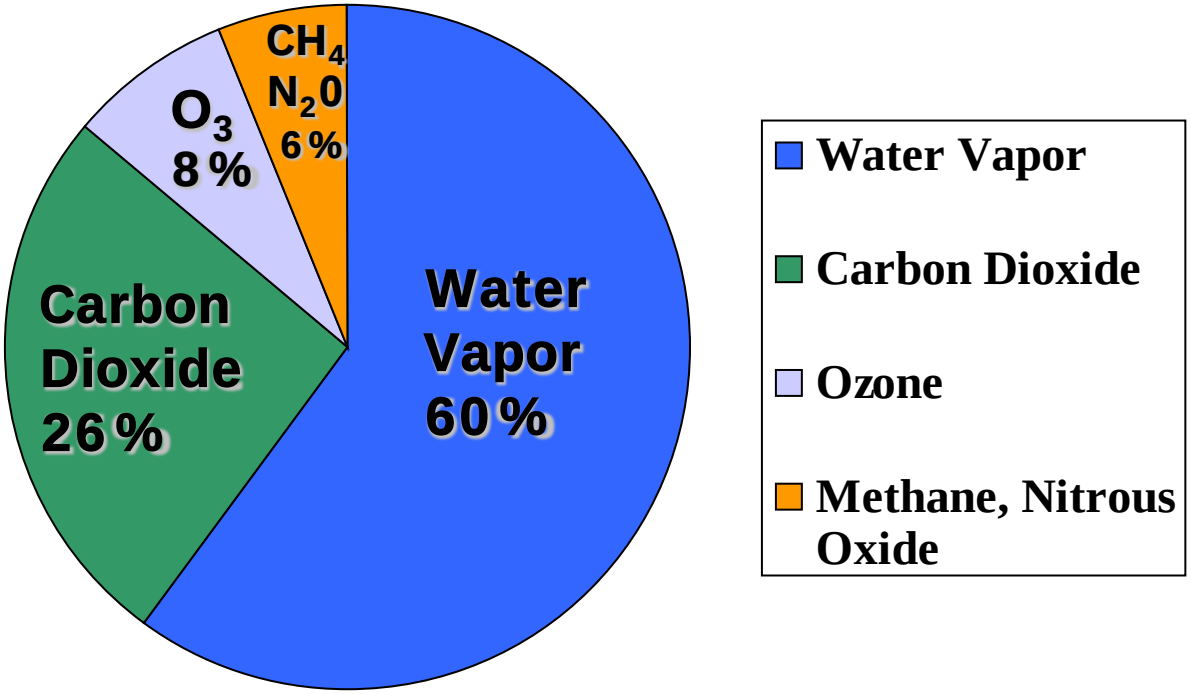




CO2 emissions in different regions in 2000 in terms of emissions per capita (height of each block); population (width of each block); and total emissions (product of population and emissions per capita = area of block).

Source: M. Grubb, http://www.eia.doe.gov/iea/

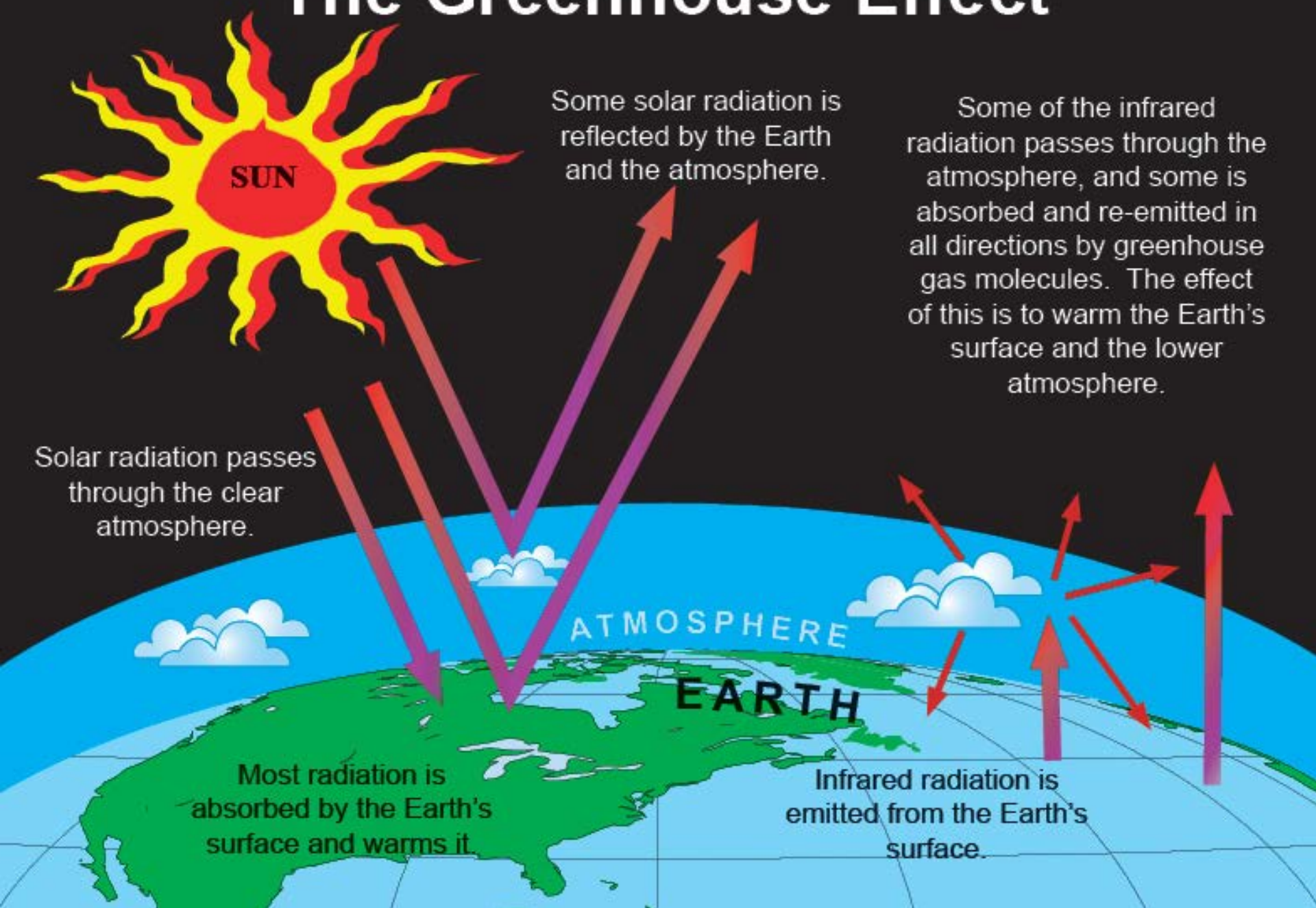
The Natural Greenhouse Effect: clear sky



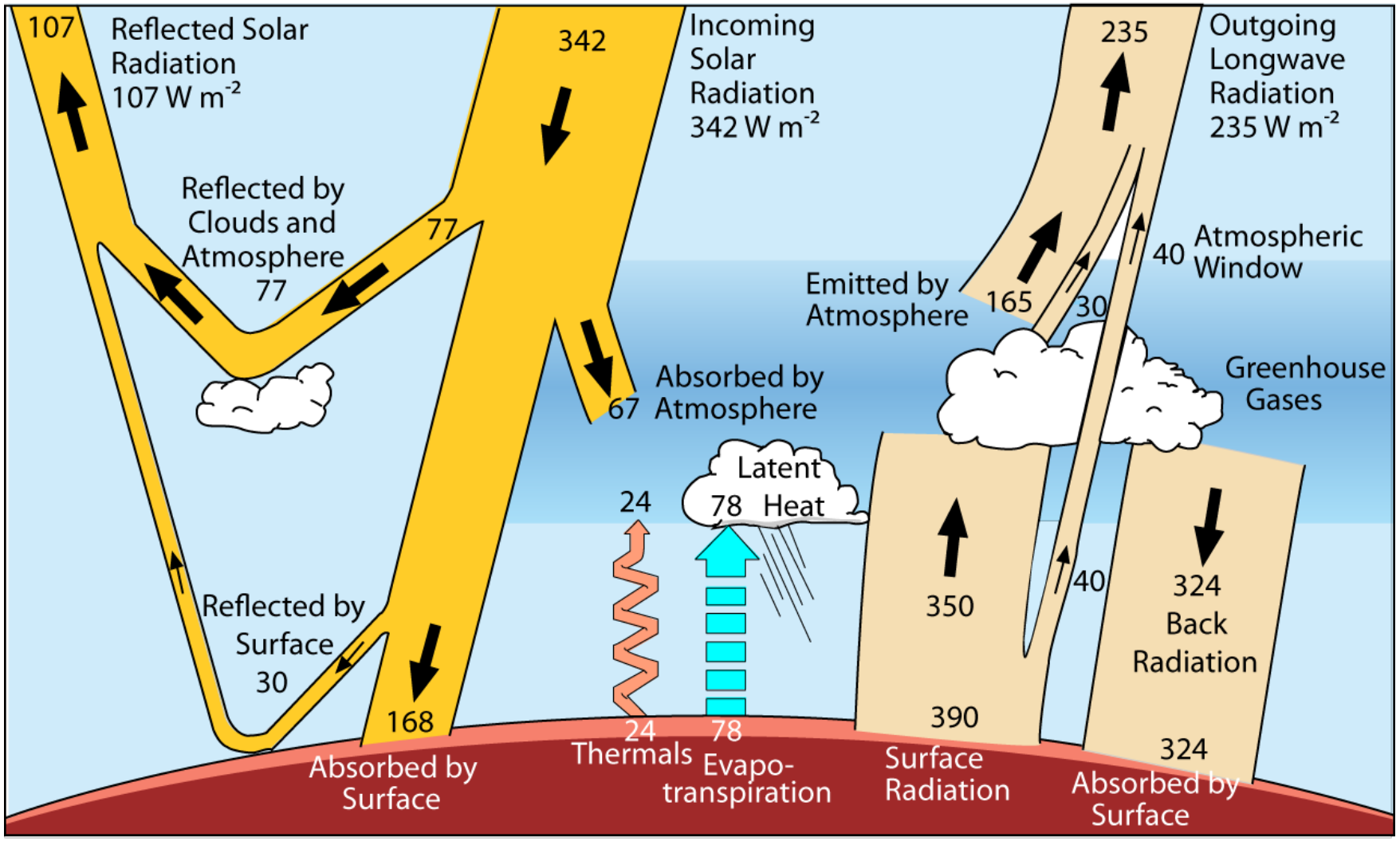
Clouds also have a greenhouse effect

Kiehl and Trenberth 1997

The Greenhouse Effect

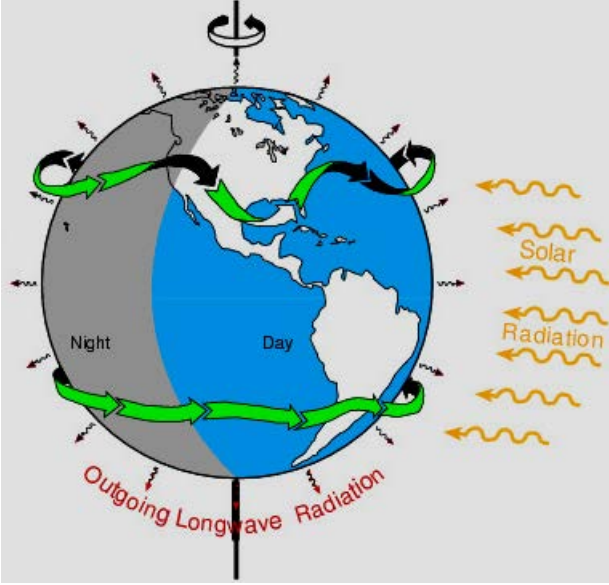


Global Heat Flows



Kiehl and Trenberth 1997

The incoming energy from the sun is 342 W m^{-2}: annual global mean:
It amounts to 175 PetaWatts
=175,000,000 billion Watts.
About 120 PW is absorbed.



The biggest power plants in existence are 1000 MegaWatts and we normally think of units of 1 KiloWatt (= 1 bar heater), or a 100 W light bulb.

So the energy from the sun is 120 million of these power stations. It shows:

1) **Direct human influences are tiny vs nature.**
2) **The main way human activities can affect climate is through interference with the natural flows of energy such as by changing the composition of the atmosphere**

Global Warming is unequivocal

Since 1970, rise in:

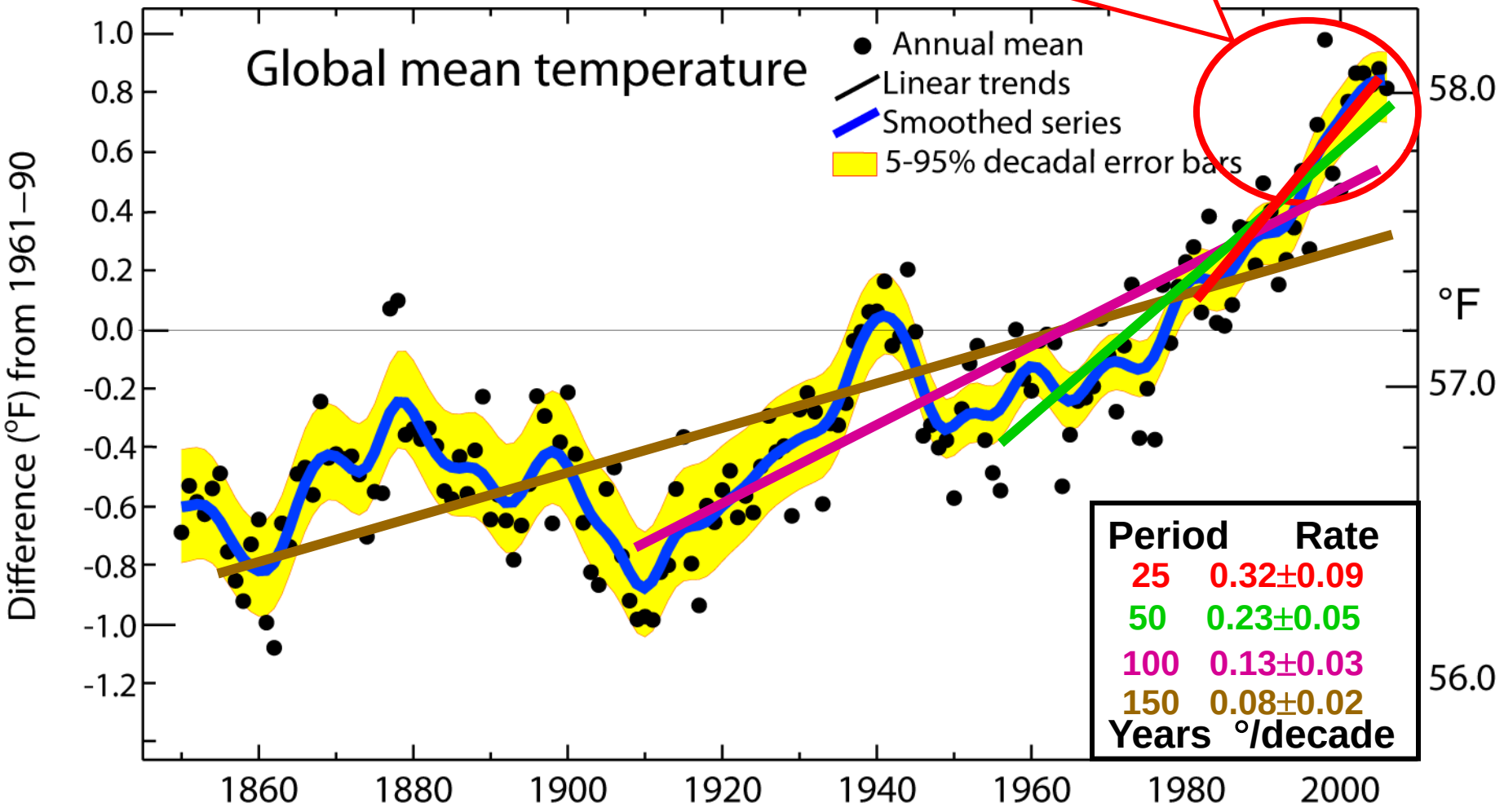
- Global surface temperatures
- Tropospheric temperatures
- Global SSTs, ocean Ts
- Global sea level
- Water vapor
- Rainfall intensity
- Precipitation extratropics
- Hurricane intensity
- Drought
- Extreme high temperatures
- Heat waves

Decrease in:

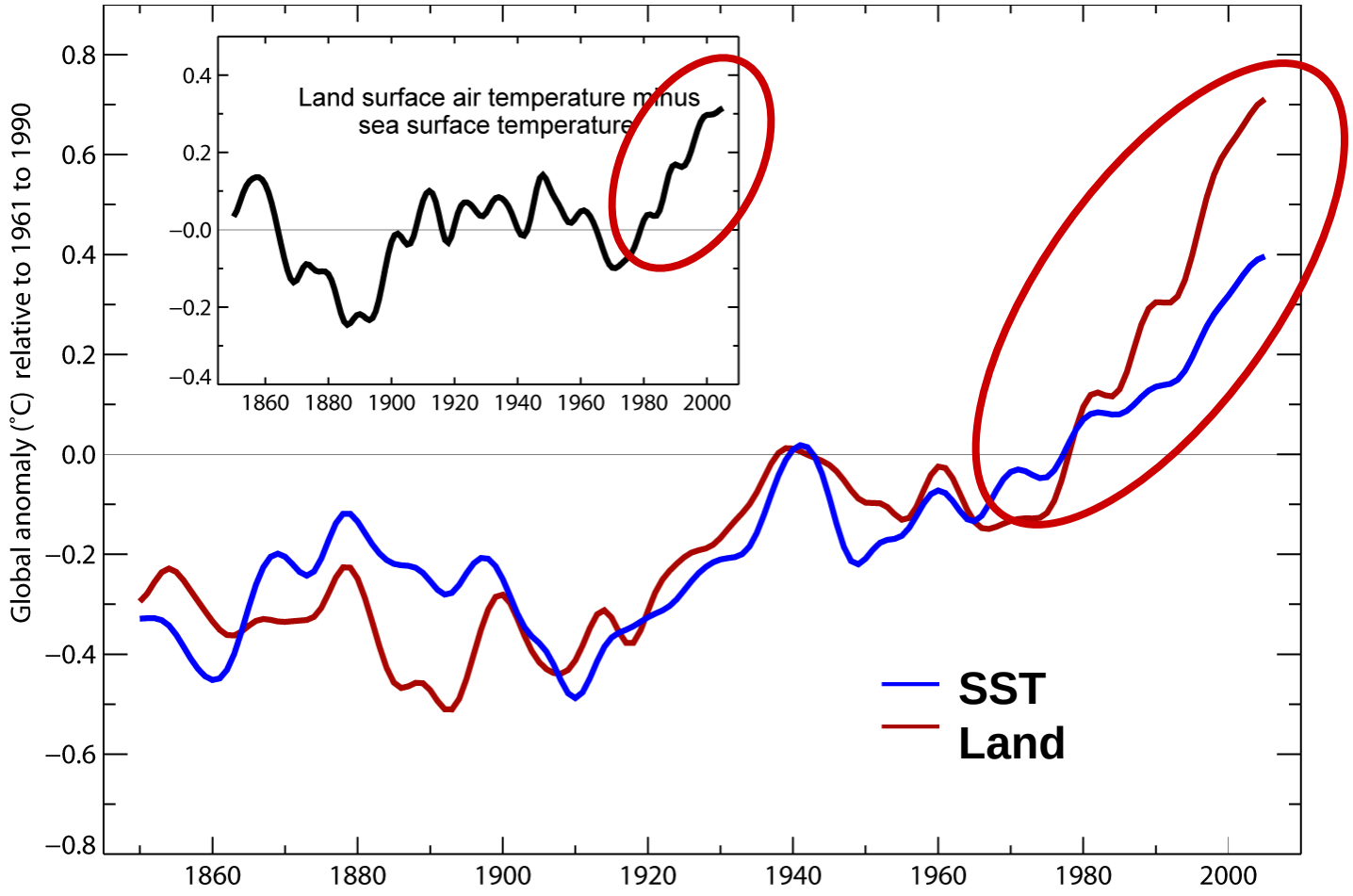
- NH Snow extent
- Arctic sea ice
- Glaciers
- Cold temperatures

Global mean temper…ime

Warmest 12 years:
1998,2005,2003,2002,2004,2006,
2001,1997,1995,1999,1990,2000



Land surface temperatures are rising faster than SSTs



Annual anomalies of global average SST and land surface air temperature

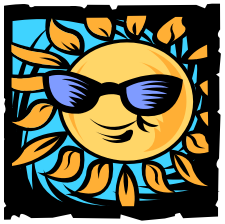
Controlling Heat

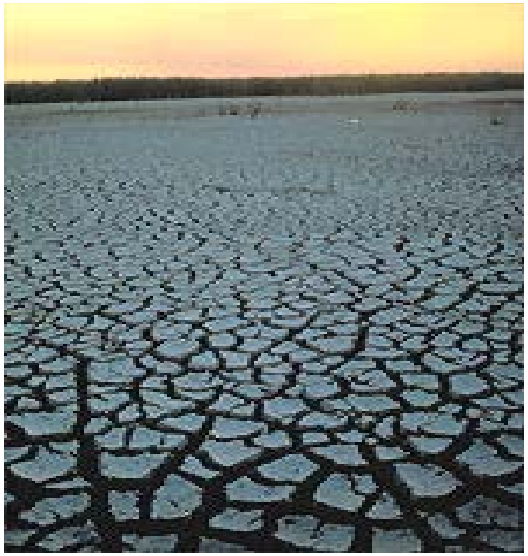
Human body: sweats

Homes: Evaporative coolers (swamp coolers)

Planet Earth: Evaporation (if moisture available)

e.g., When sun comes out after showers,





the first thing that happens is that the puddles dry up: before temperature increases.

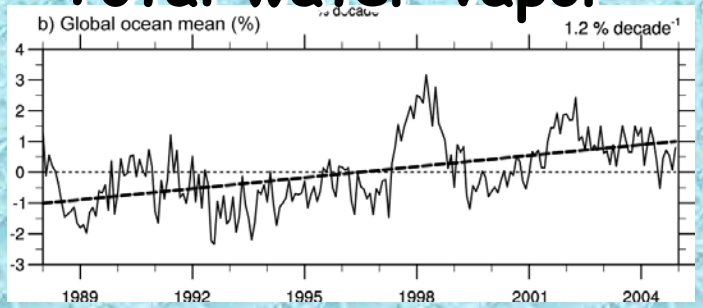
Air holds more water vapor at higher temperatures

A basic physical law tells us that the water holding capacity of the atmosphere goes up at about 4% per degree Fahrenheit increase in temperature.

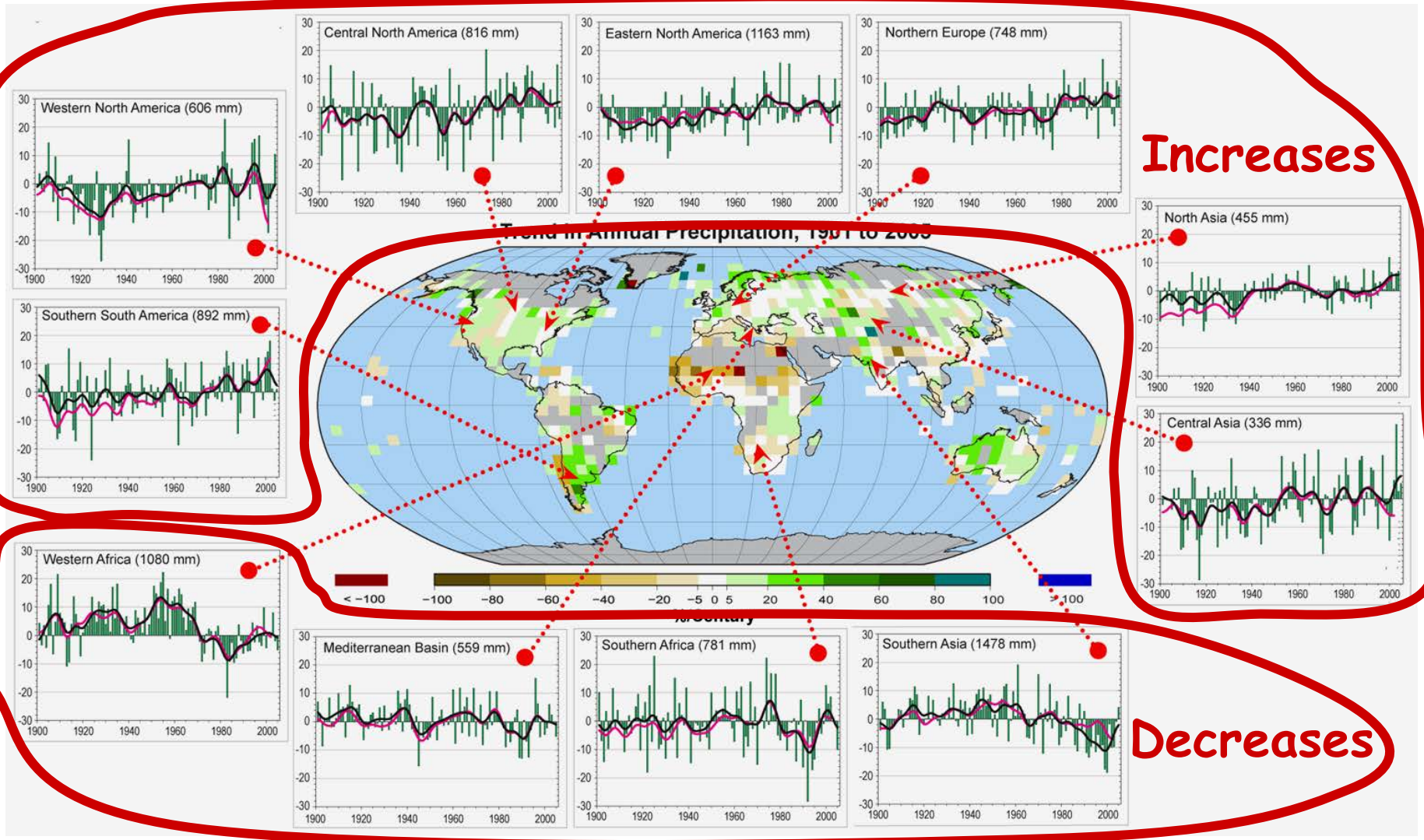
Observations show that this is happening at the surface and in lower atmosphere: 1.0°F since 1970 over global oceans and 4% more water vapor.

This means more moisture available for storms and an enhanced greenhouse effect.

Total water vapor

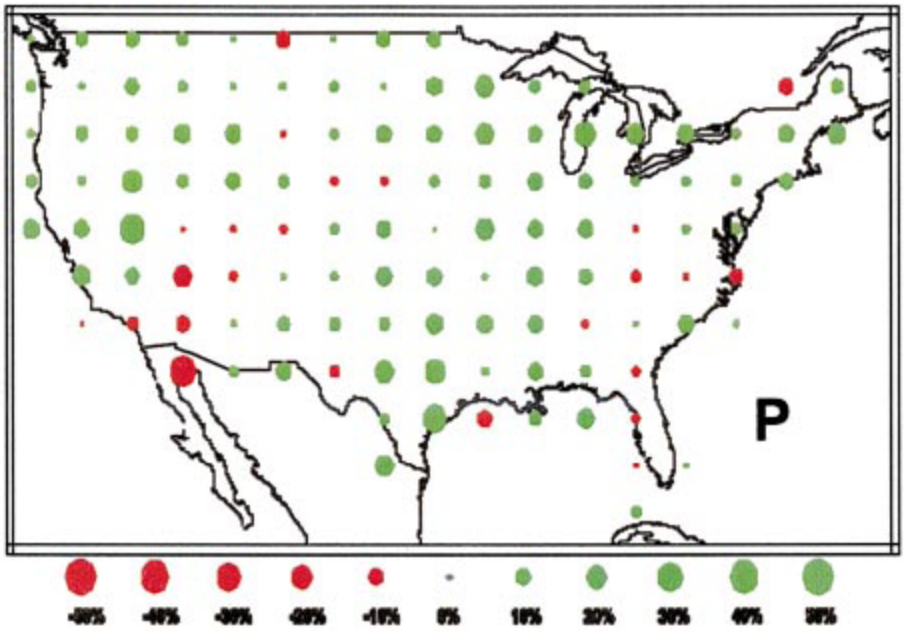


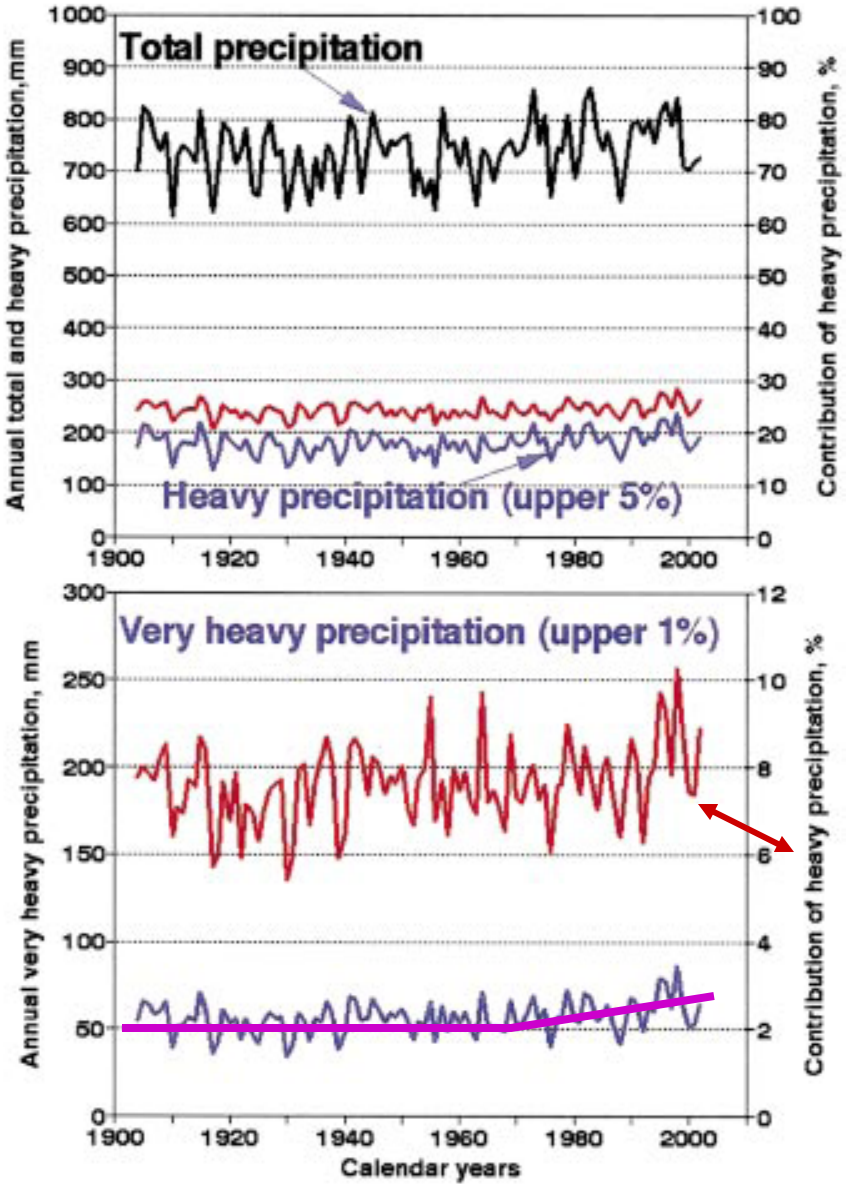
Land precipitation is changing significantly over broad areas



Smoothed annual anomalies for precipitation (%) over land from 1900 to 2005; other regions are dominated by variability.

Changes in U.S. precipitation 1900 to 2002



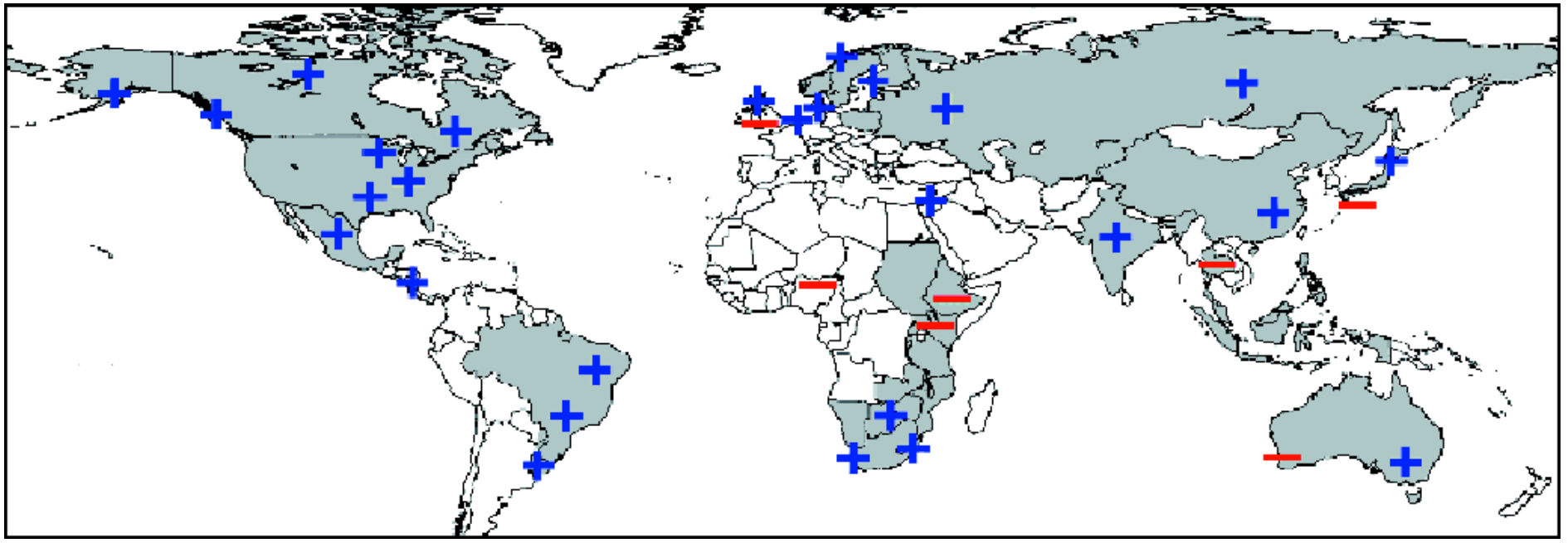


Changes in **total, heavy, and very heavy** precipitation over contiguous U.S.

Linear trends are up and significant*: 7, 14, 20% /century

*at 1 %: Groisman et al 2004

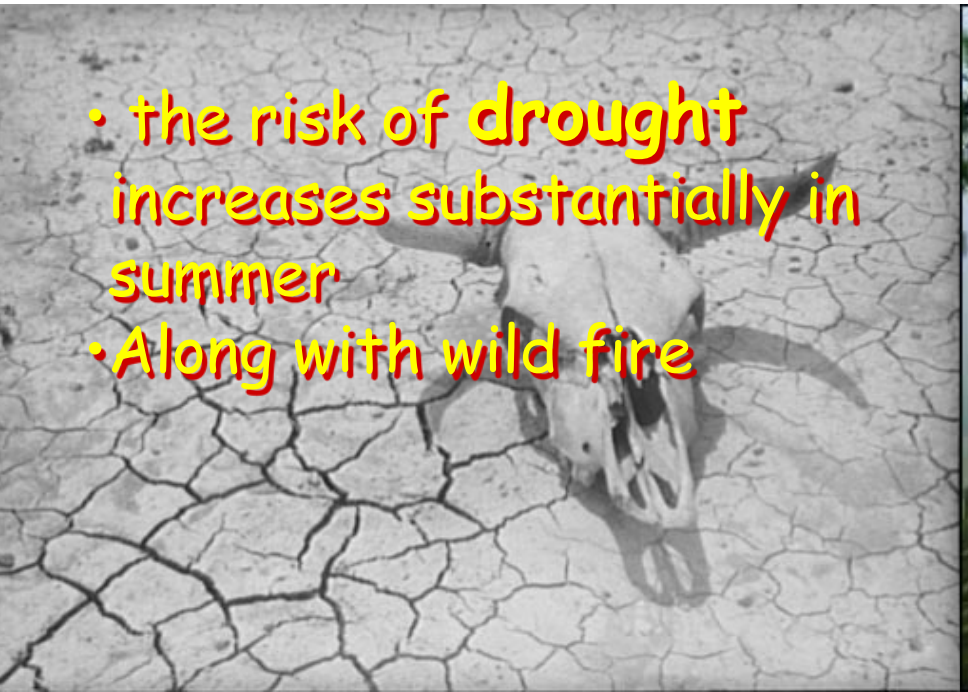
Proportion of heavy rainfalls: increasing in most land areas

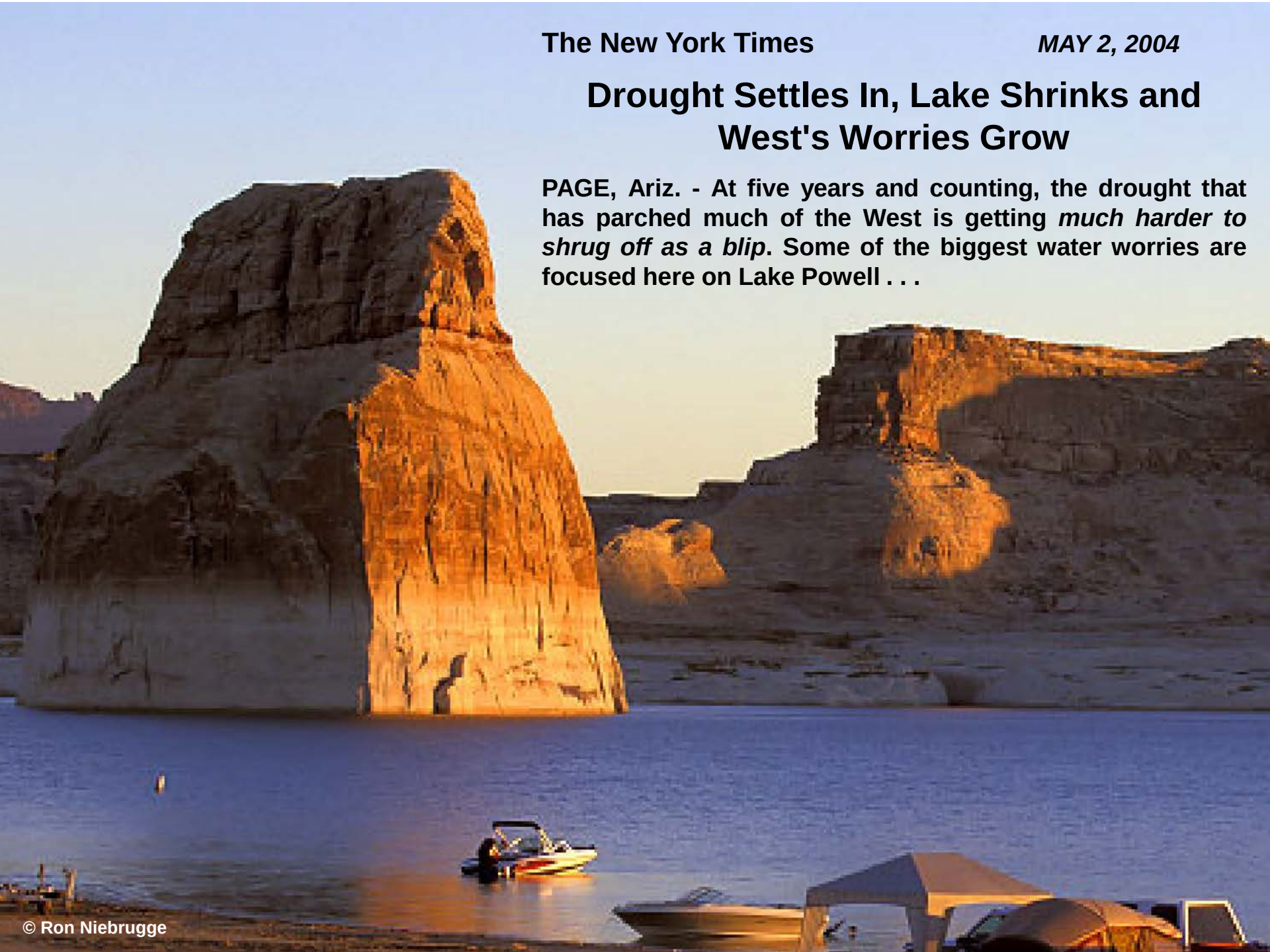


Regions of disproportionate changes in heavy (95^{th}) and very heavy (99^{th}) precipitation

Declining Snow Pack in many mountain and continental areas contributes to drought

- more **precipitation** falls as **rain** rather than **snow**, especially in the fall and spring.
- **snow melt** occurs faster and sooner in the spring
- **snow pack** is therefore less
- **soil moisture** is less as summer arrives



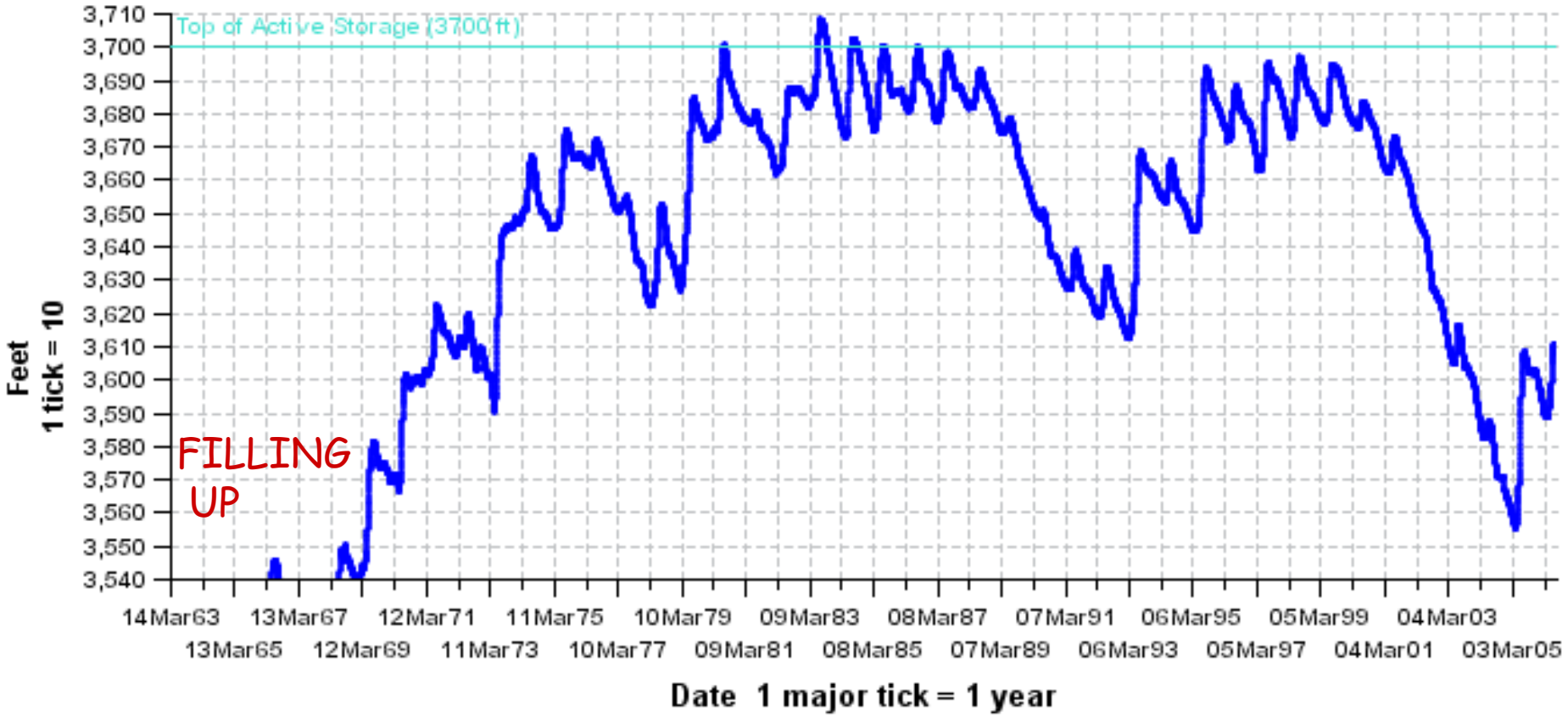


The New York Times ***MAY 2, 2004***

Drought Settles In, Lake Shrinks and West's Worries Grow

PAGE, Ariz. - At five years and counting, the drought that has parched much of the West is getting *much harder to shrug off as a blip*. Some of the biggest water worries are focused here on Lake Powell . . .

Lake Powell Elevation Through July 26, 2006



Inflows since 2000: est 73 %

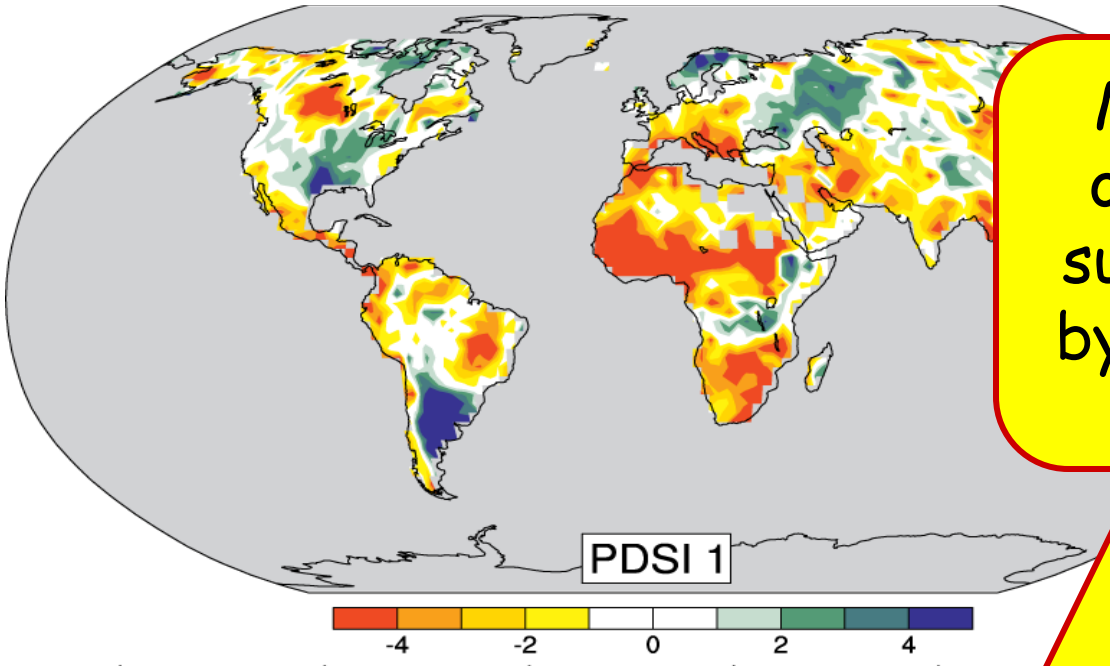
July 26, 2006: -92', 3607.7'

Min 2005 0408
3555.1' -144.9'

www.usbr.gov/uc/water/index.html

Now –2.0 inches per day

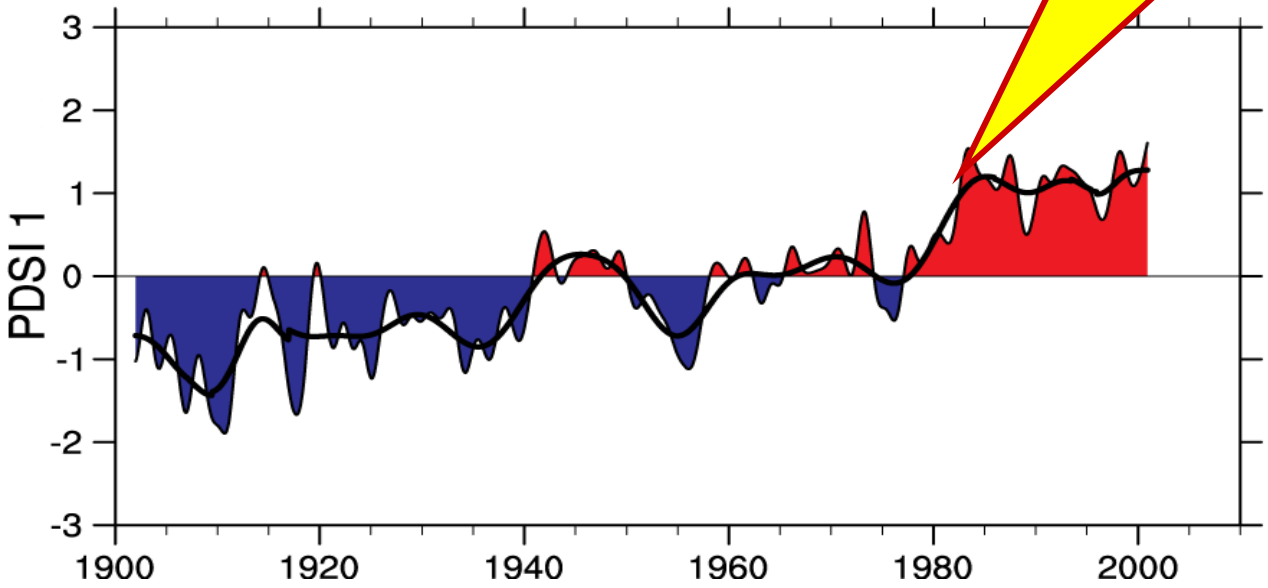
Drought is increasing most places

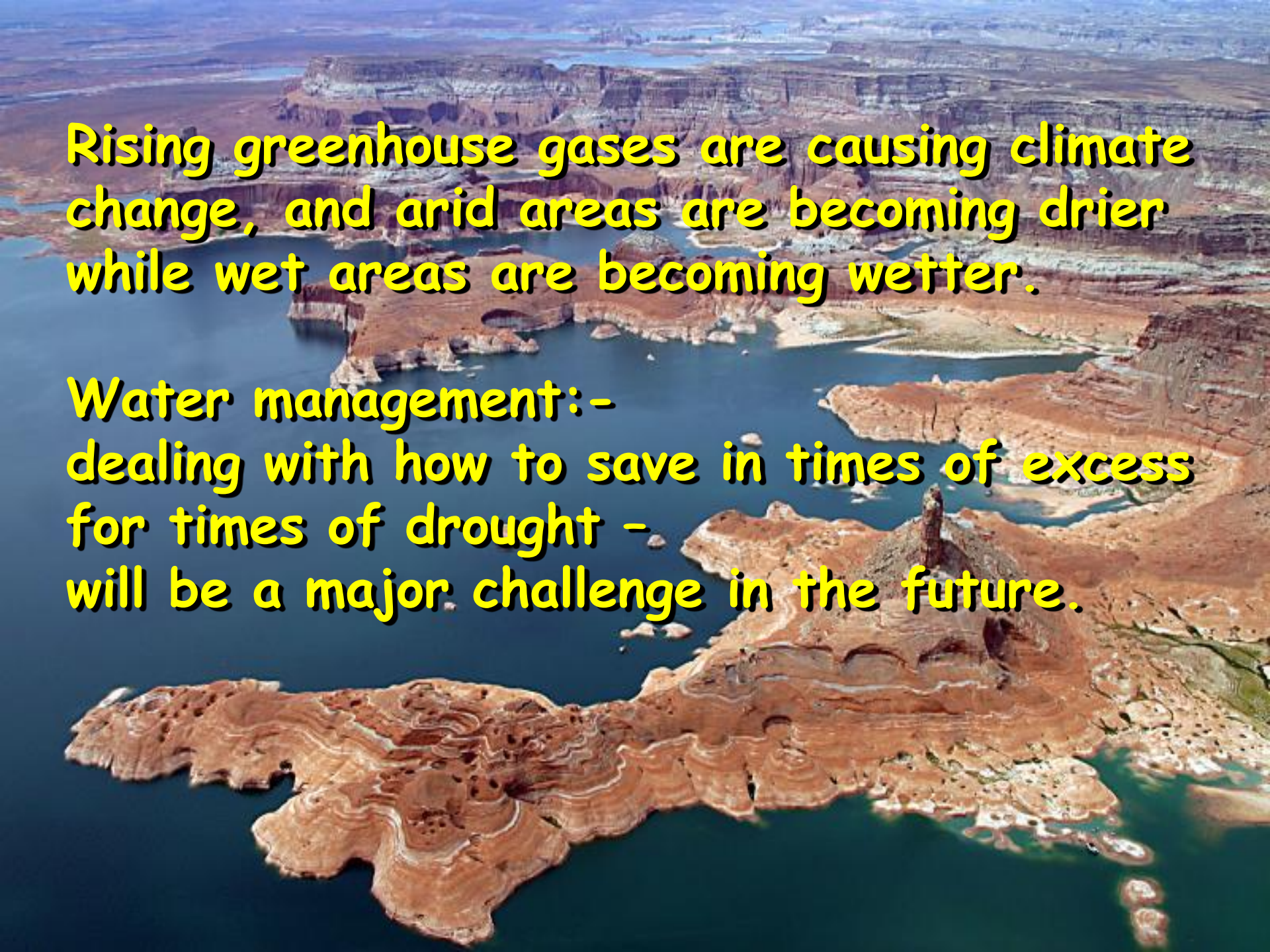


Mainly decrease in rain over land in tropics and subtropics, but enhanced by increased atmospheric demand with warming

Severity Index (PDSI) for 1900 to 2002.

The time series (below) accounts for most of the trend in PDSI.



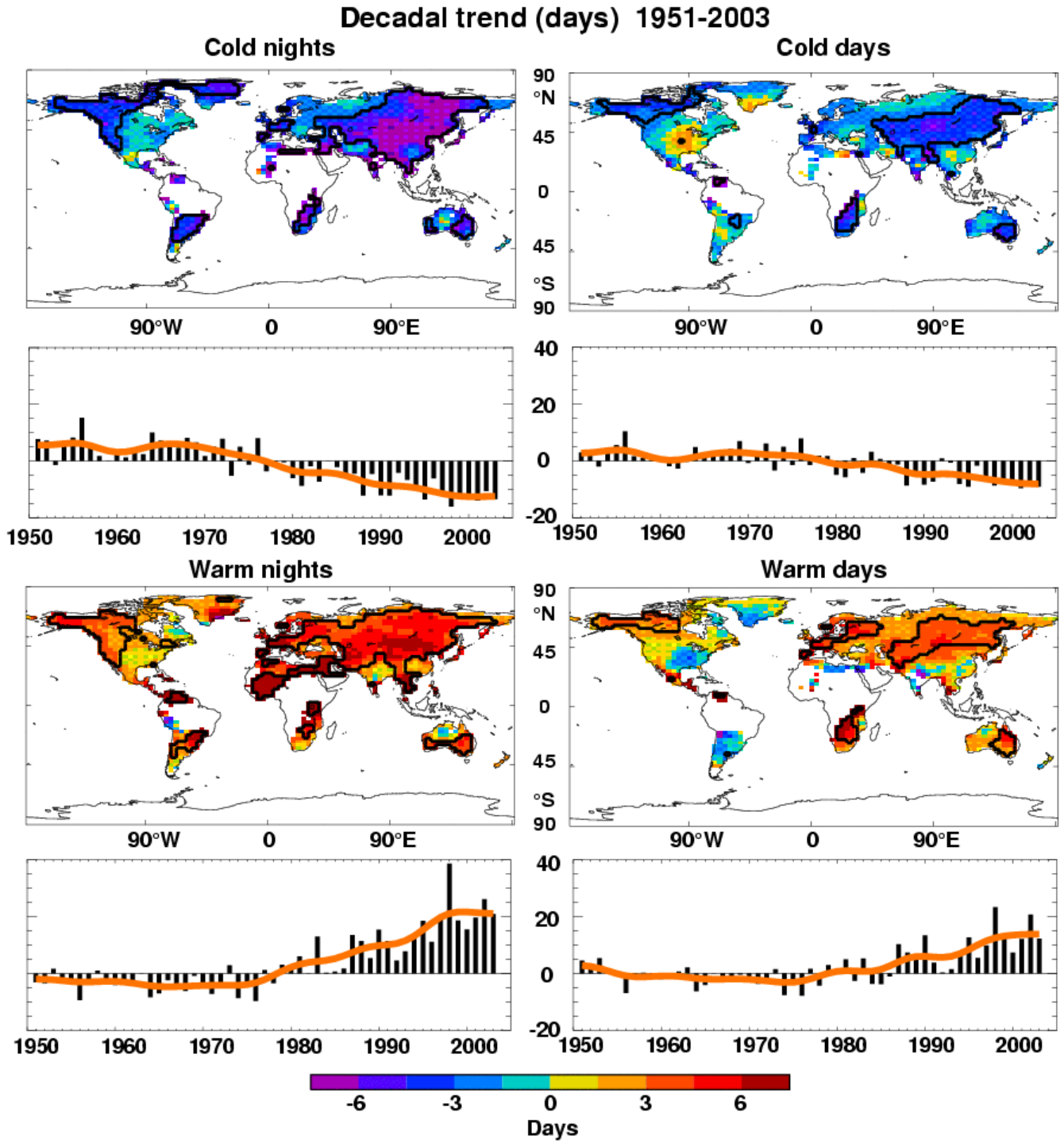


Rising greenhouse gases are causing climate change, and arid areas are becoming drier while wet areas are becoming wetter.

Water management:-
dealing with how to save in times of excess for times of drought –
will be a major challenge in the future.

Heat waves and wild fires

Impacts on human health and mortality, economic impacts, ecosystem and wildlife impacts



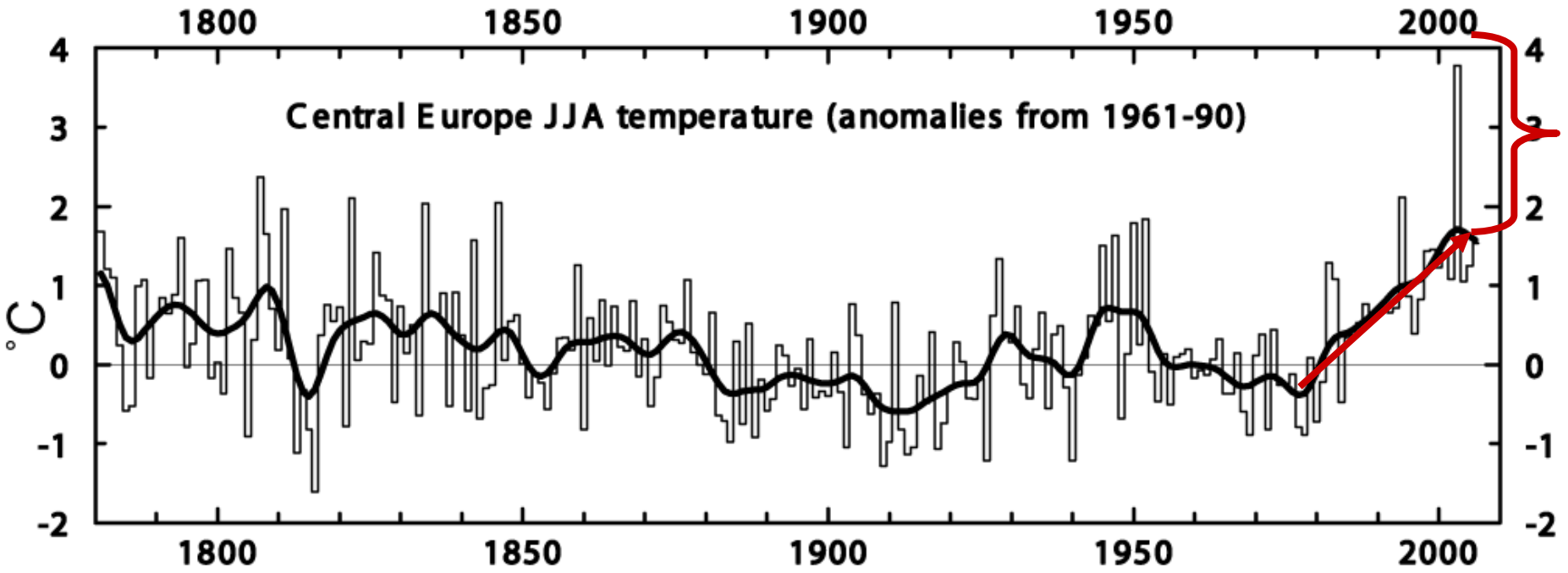
Extremes of temperature are changing!

Observed trends (days) per decade for 1951 to 2003:

5th or 95th percentiles

From Alexander et al. (2006)

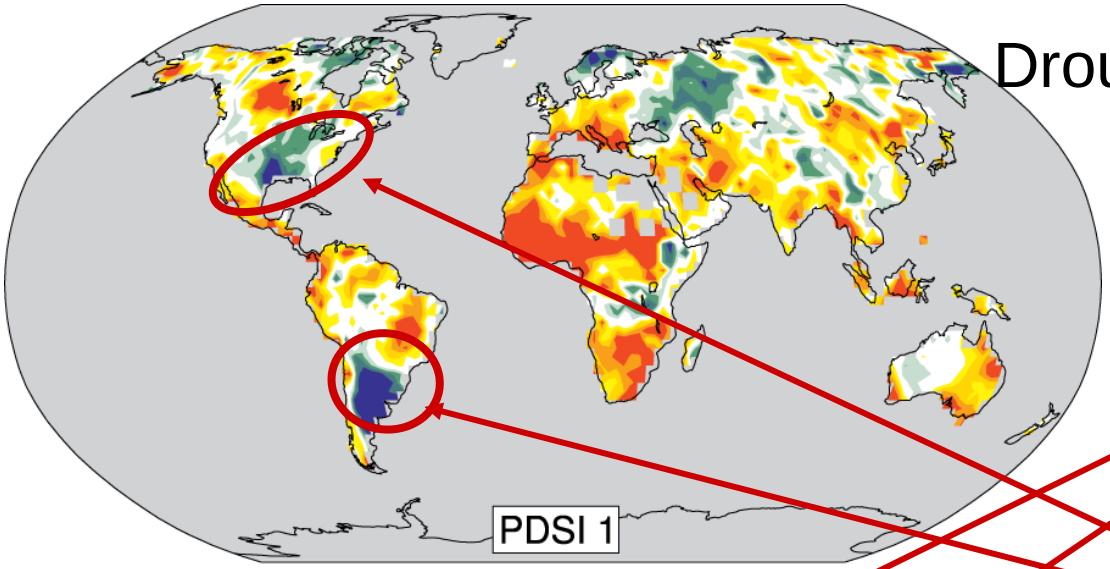
Heat waves are increasing: an example



Extreme Heat Wave
Summer 2003
Europe
30,000 deaths

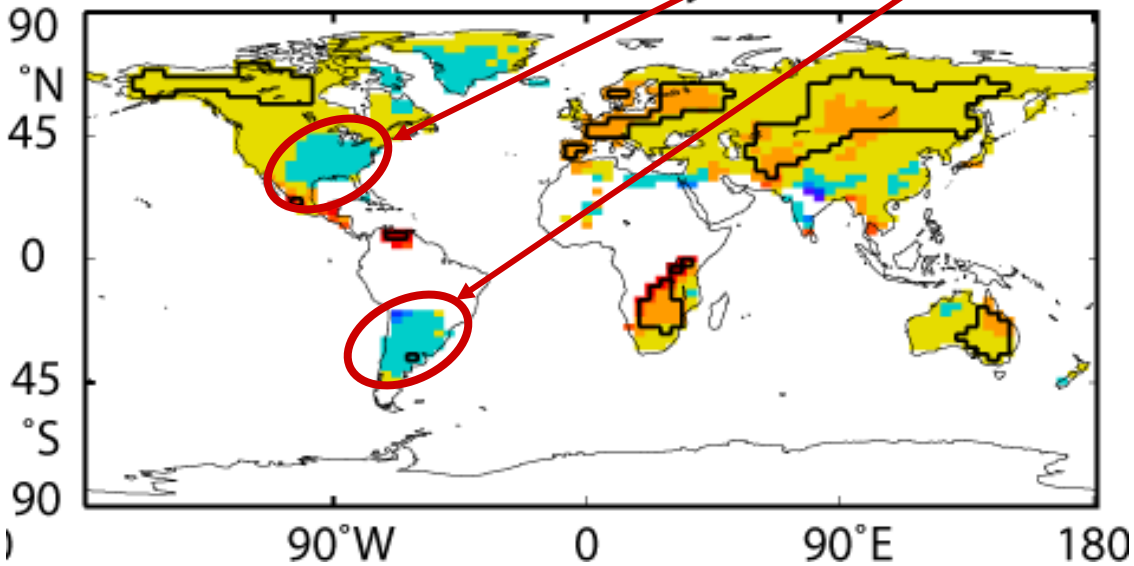
Trend plus variability?

Increases in rainfall and cloud counter warming



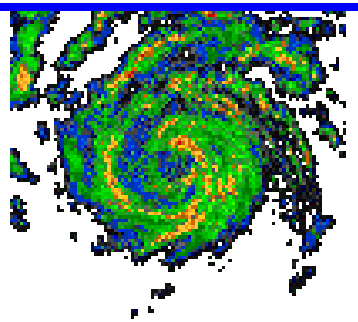
Drought

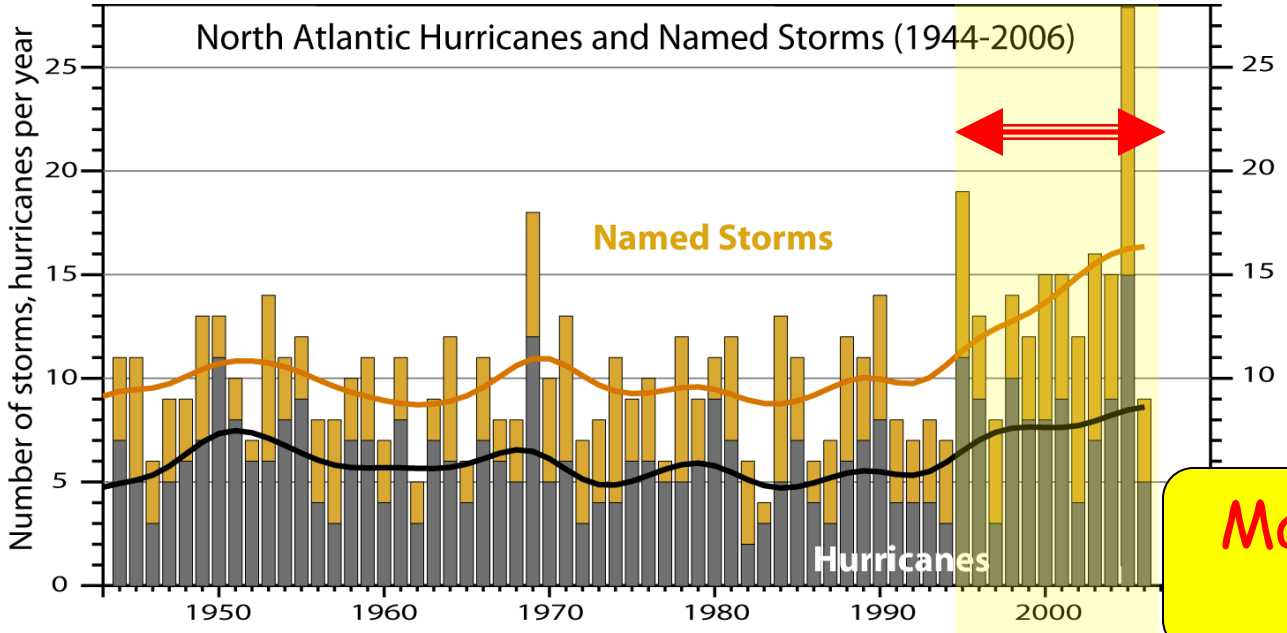
Trend in Warm Days 1951-2003



Absence of warming by day coincides with wetter and cloudier conditions

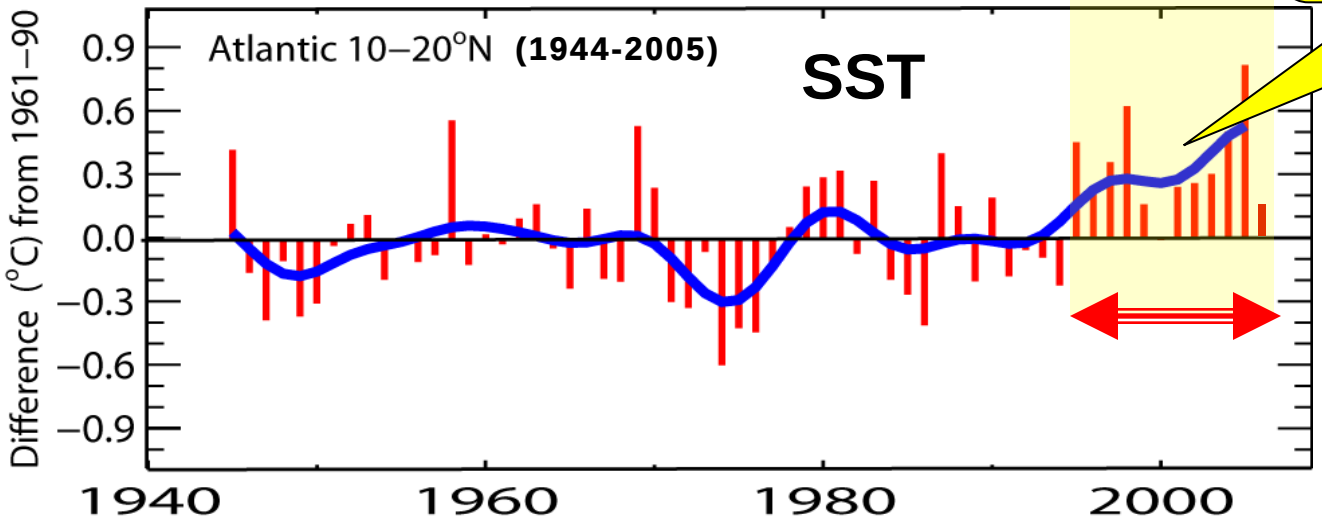
North Atlantic hurricanes have increased with SSTs





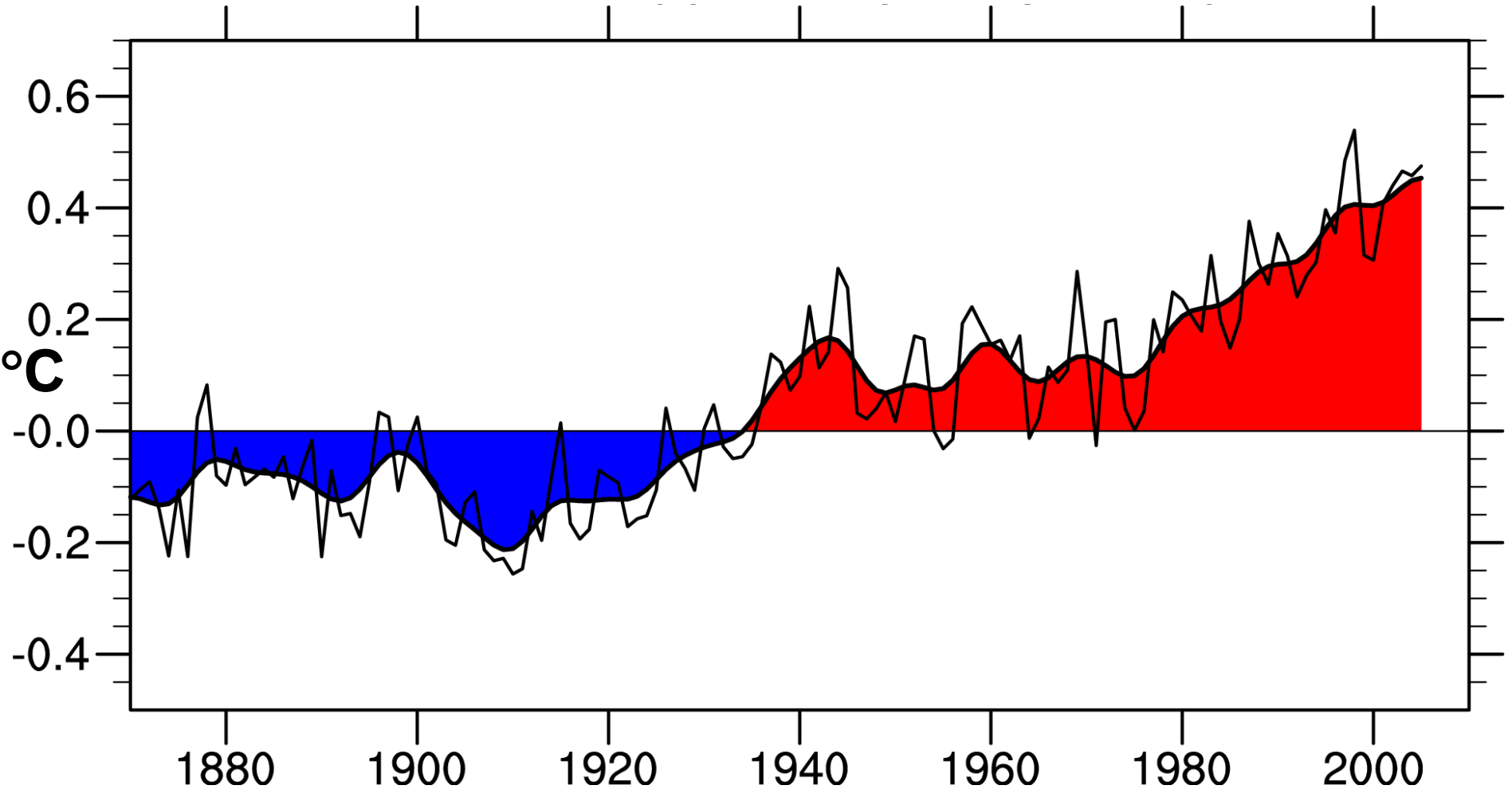
N. Atlantic hurricane record best

Marked increase after 1994

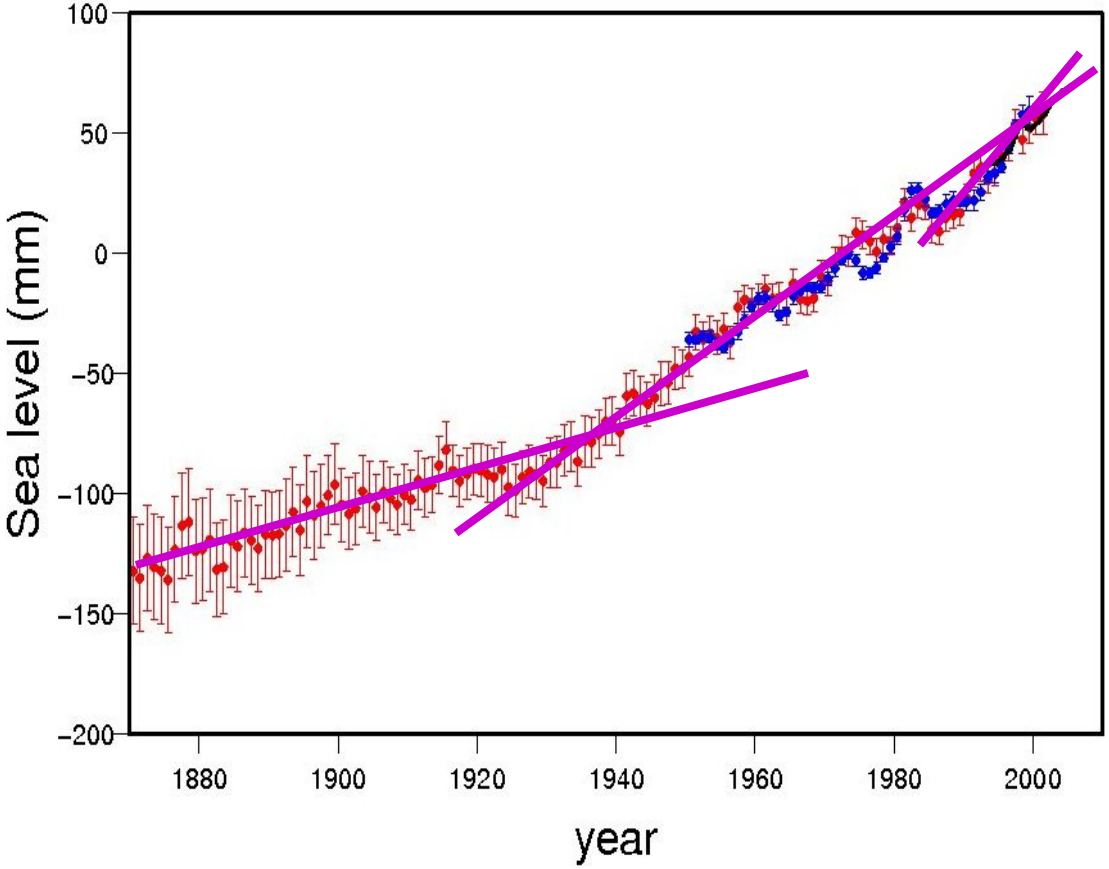


Global number and percentage of intense hurricanes is increasing

Global SST: base period 1901-70



Sea level is rising in 20th century



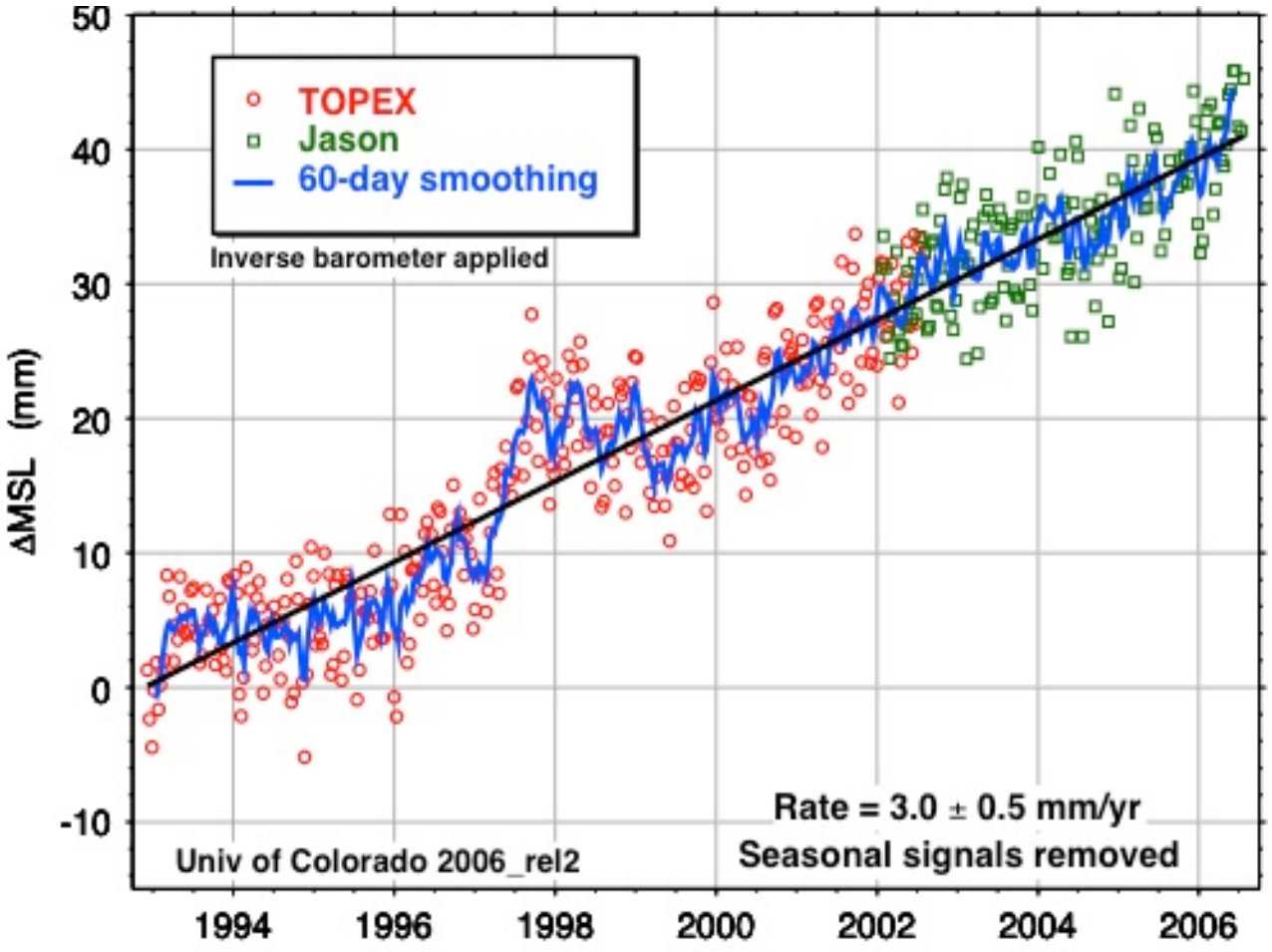
Rates of sea level rise:

- 1.8 ± 0.5 mm yr^{-1}, 1961-2003
- 1.7 ± 0.5 mm yr^{-1}, 20th Century
- 3.1 ± 0.7 mm yr^{-1}, 1993-2003

Sea level rise:

- 0.17m ± 0.05 m 20th Century

Sea level is rising:
from ocean expansion and melting glaciers



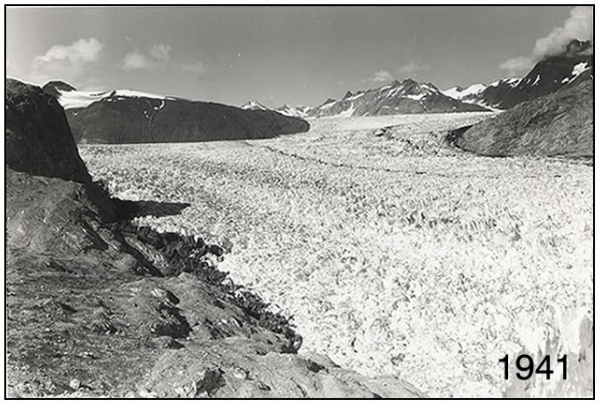
Since 1993 Global sea level has risen 41 mm (1.6 inches)

- 60% from expansion as ocean temperatures rise,
- 40% from melting glaciers

Steve Nerem

Evidence for reality of climate change

Glaciers melting



Muir Glacier, Alaska

1909

Toboggan Glacier Alaska

2000

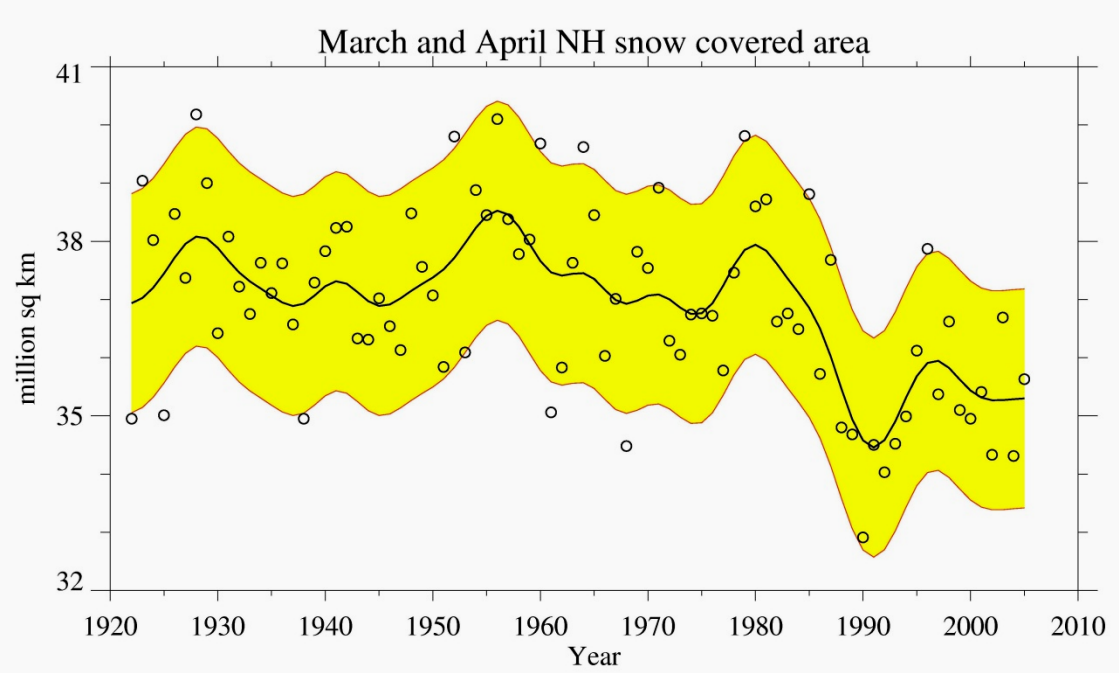
A. Circa 1900
Photo Source: Munich Society for Environmental Research

B. Recent

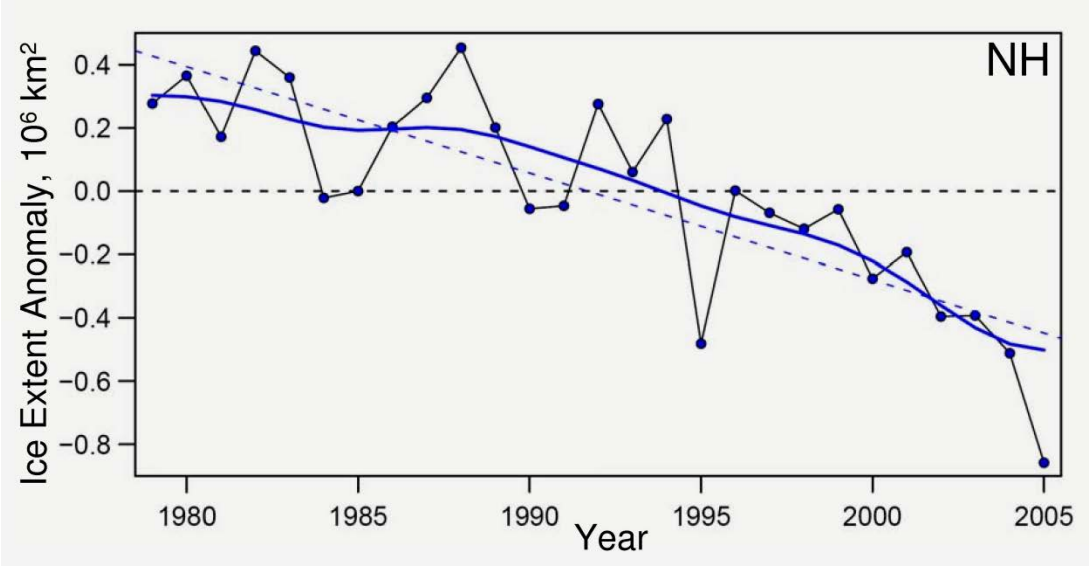
1900 2003

Alpine glacier, Austria

Snow cover and Arctic sea ice are decreasing

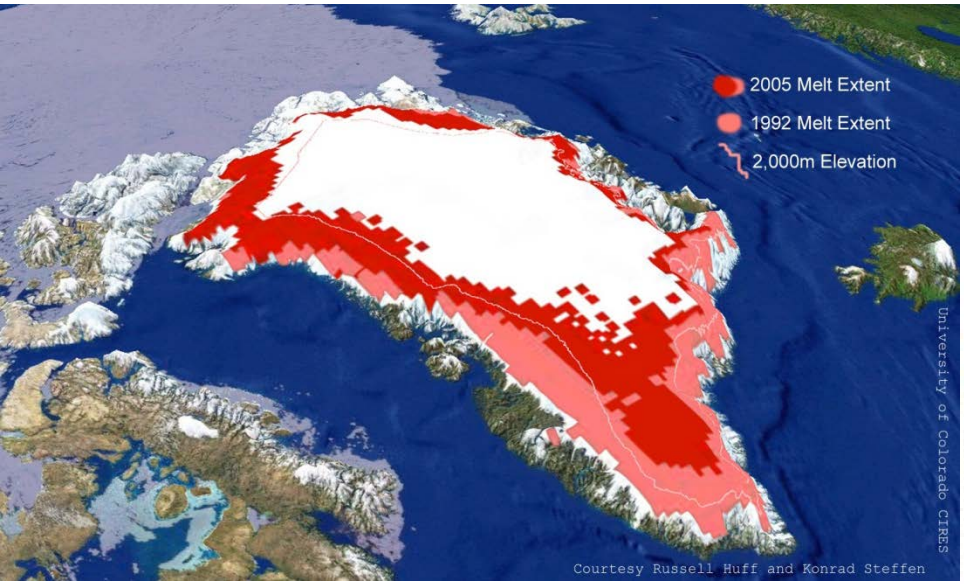


Spring snow cover shows 5% stepwise drop during 1980s



Arctic sea ice area decreased by 2.7% per decade (Summer: -7.4%/decade)

Surface melt on Greenland

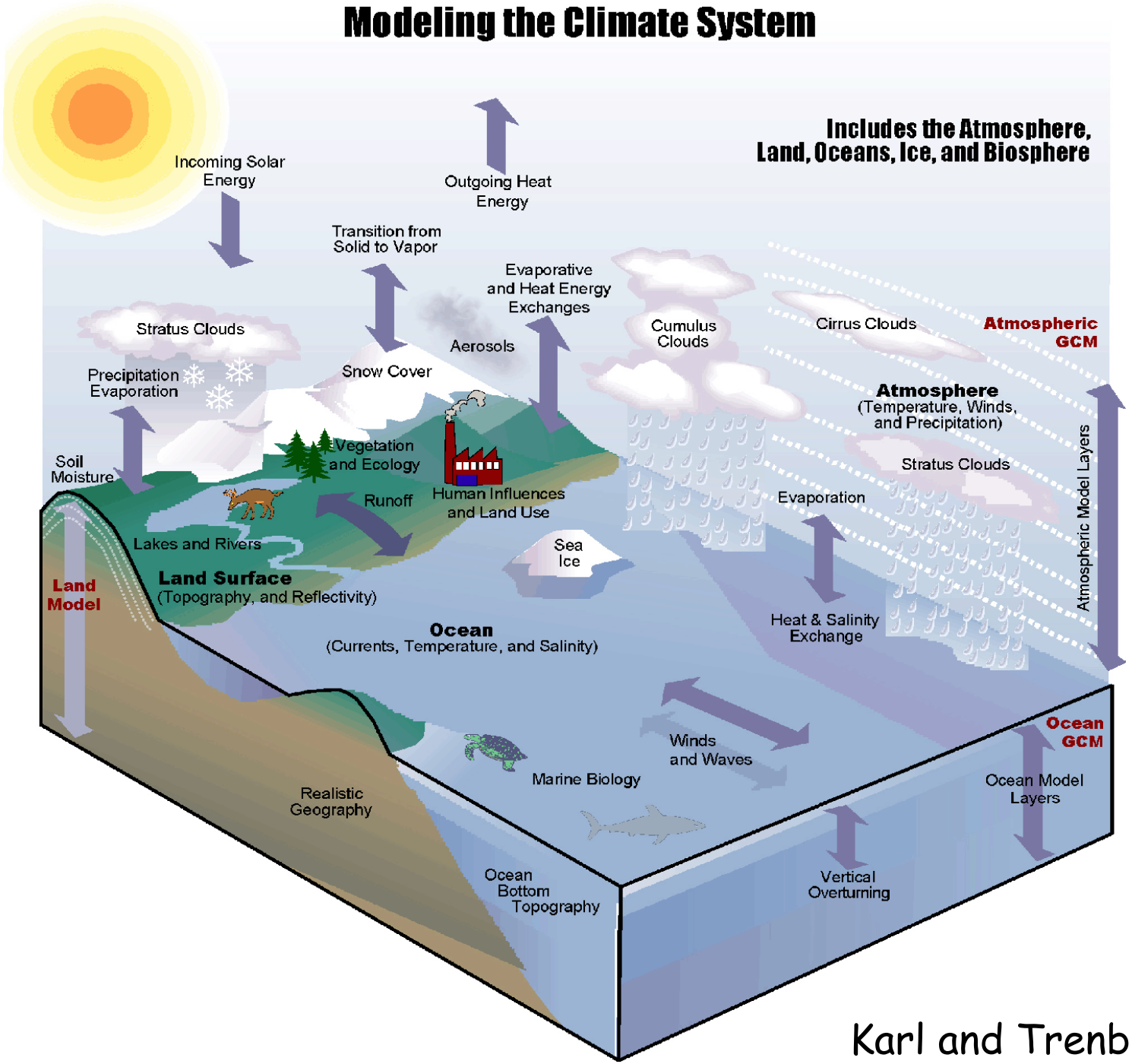


Increasing melt zones.

Melt descending into a moulin: a vertical shaft carrying water to the base of the ice sheet.

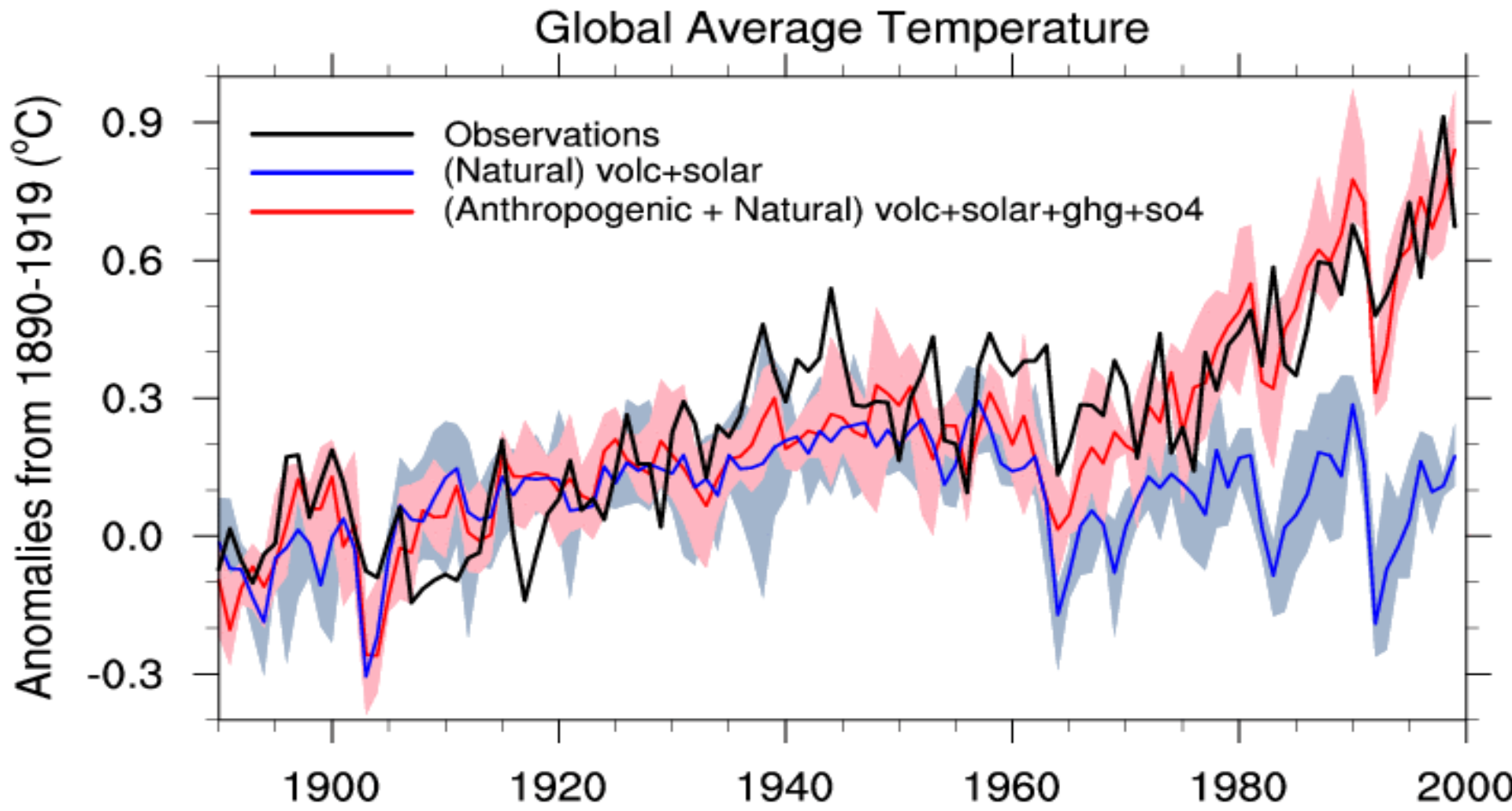
NSIDC (above)
Braithwaite: Univ. Manchester

Modeling the Climate System

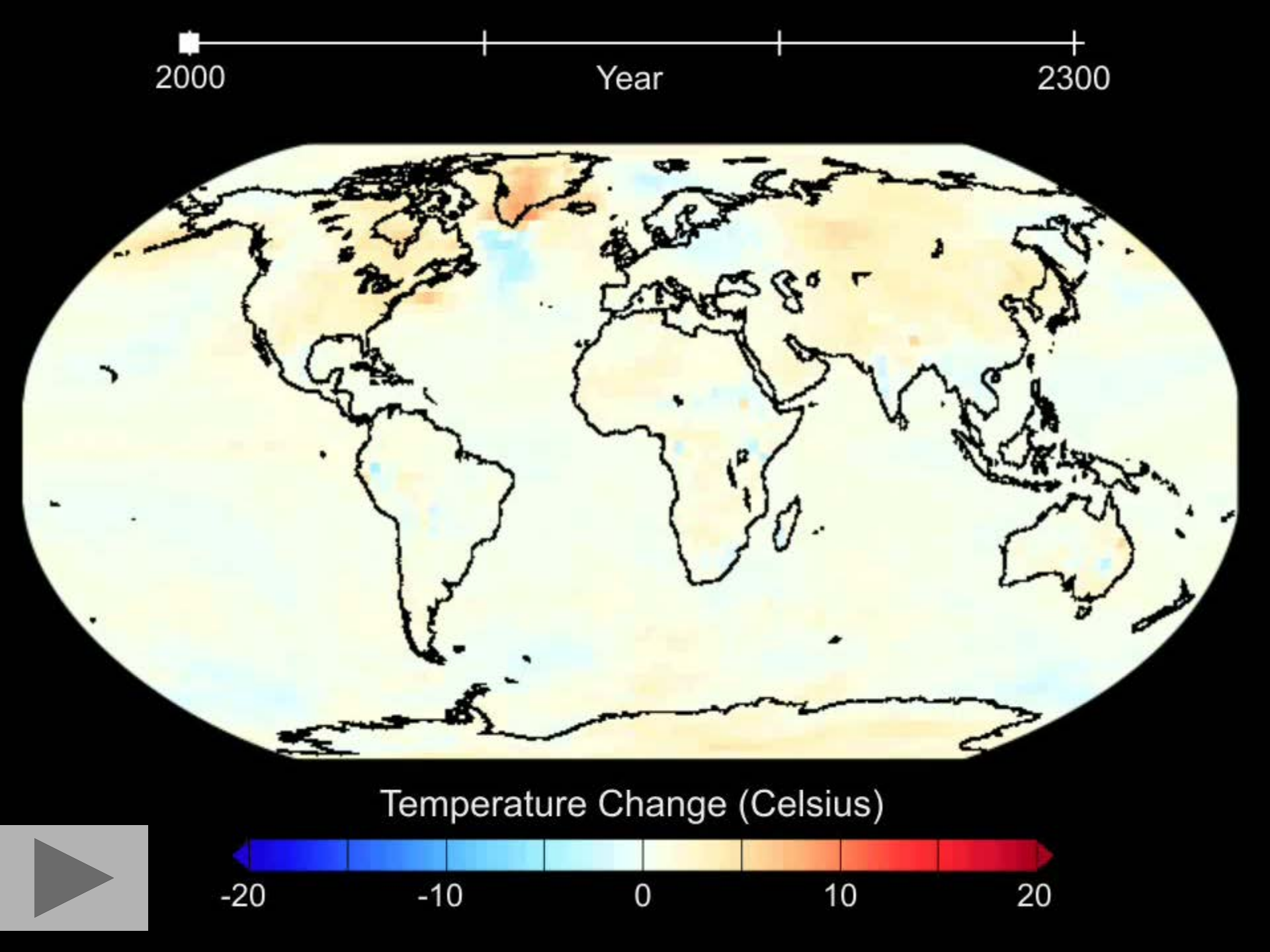


Karl and Trenberth 2003

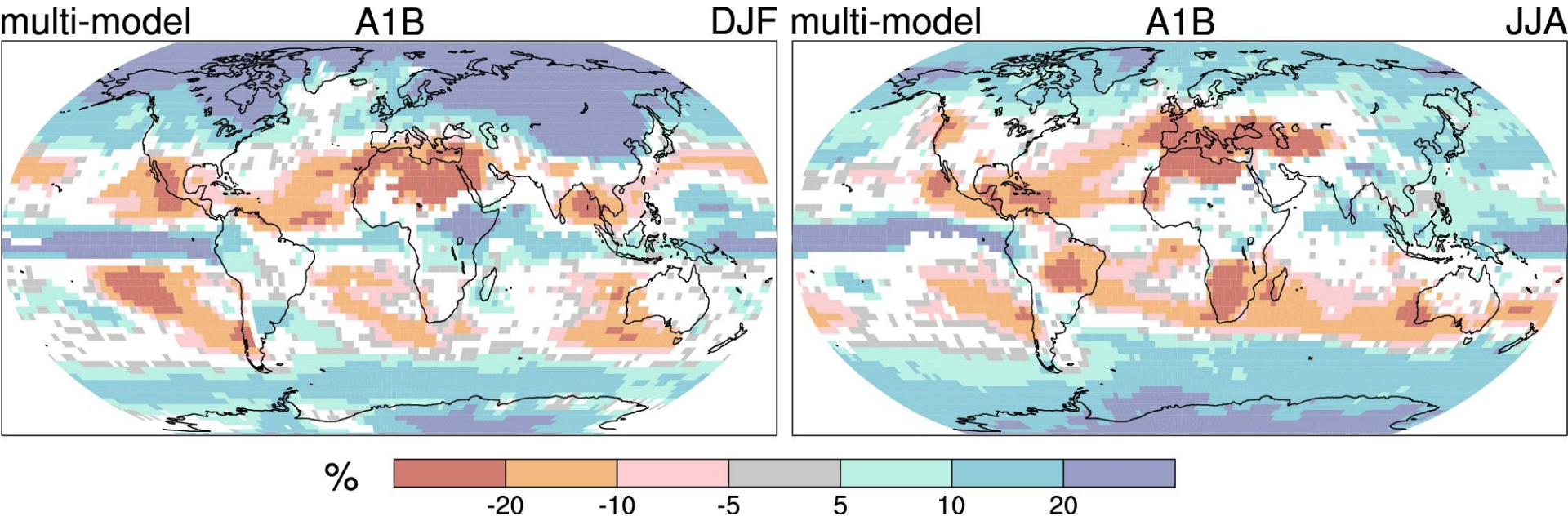
Natural forcings do not account for observed 20th century warming after 1970



Meehl et al, 2004: J. Climate.


2000
Year
2300
Temperature Change (Celsius)
-20
-10
0
10
20

Projected Patterns of Precipitation Change 2090-2100



Precipitation increases very likely in high latitudes

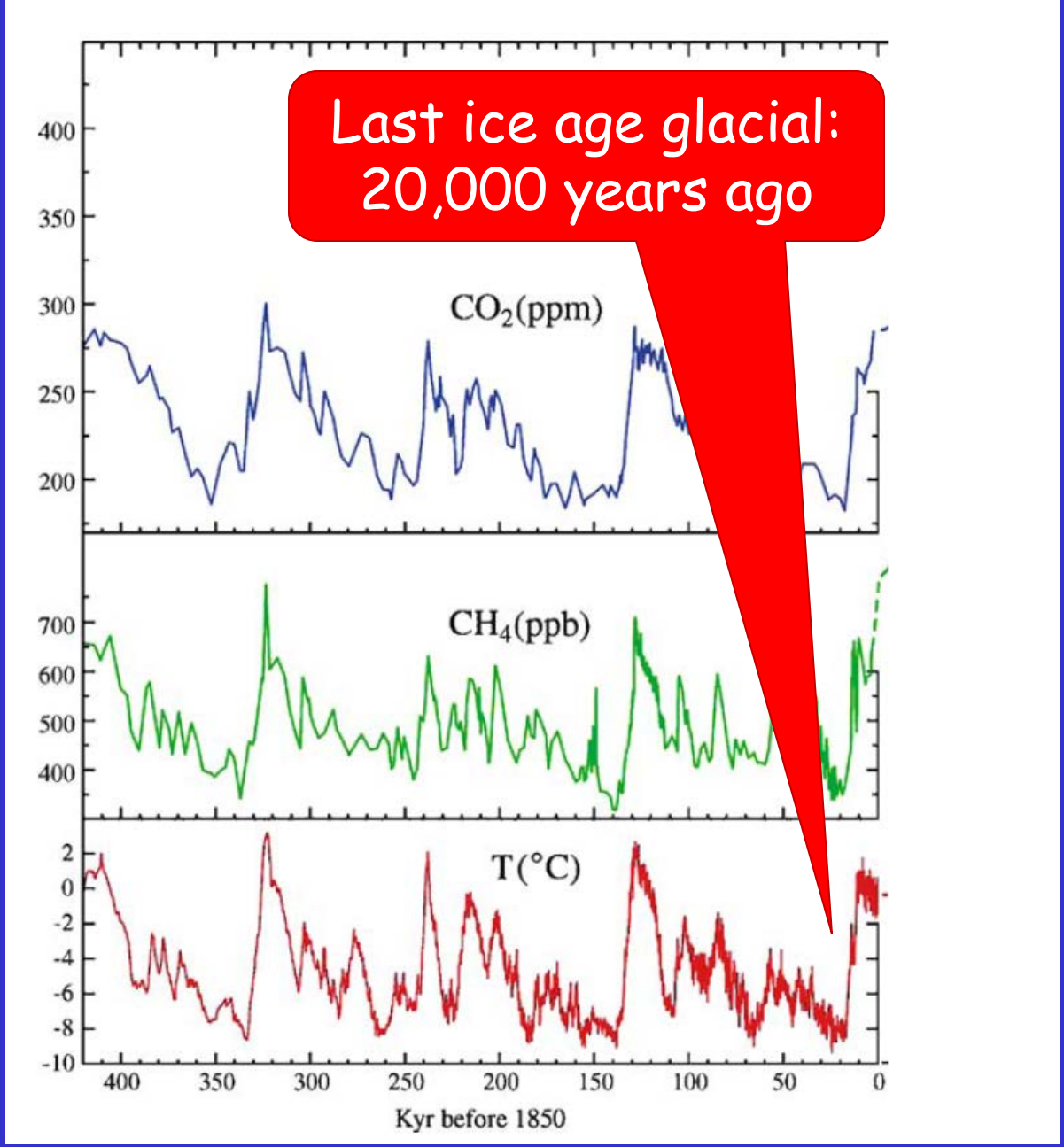
Decreases likely in most subtropical land regions

This continues the observed patterns in recent trends

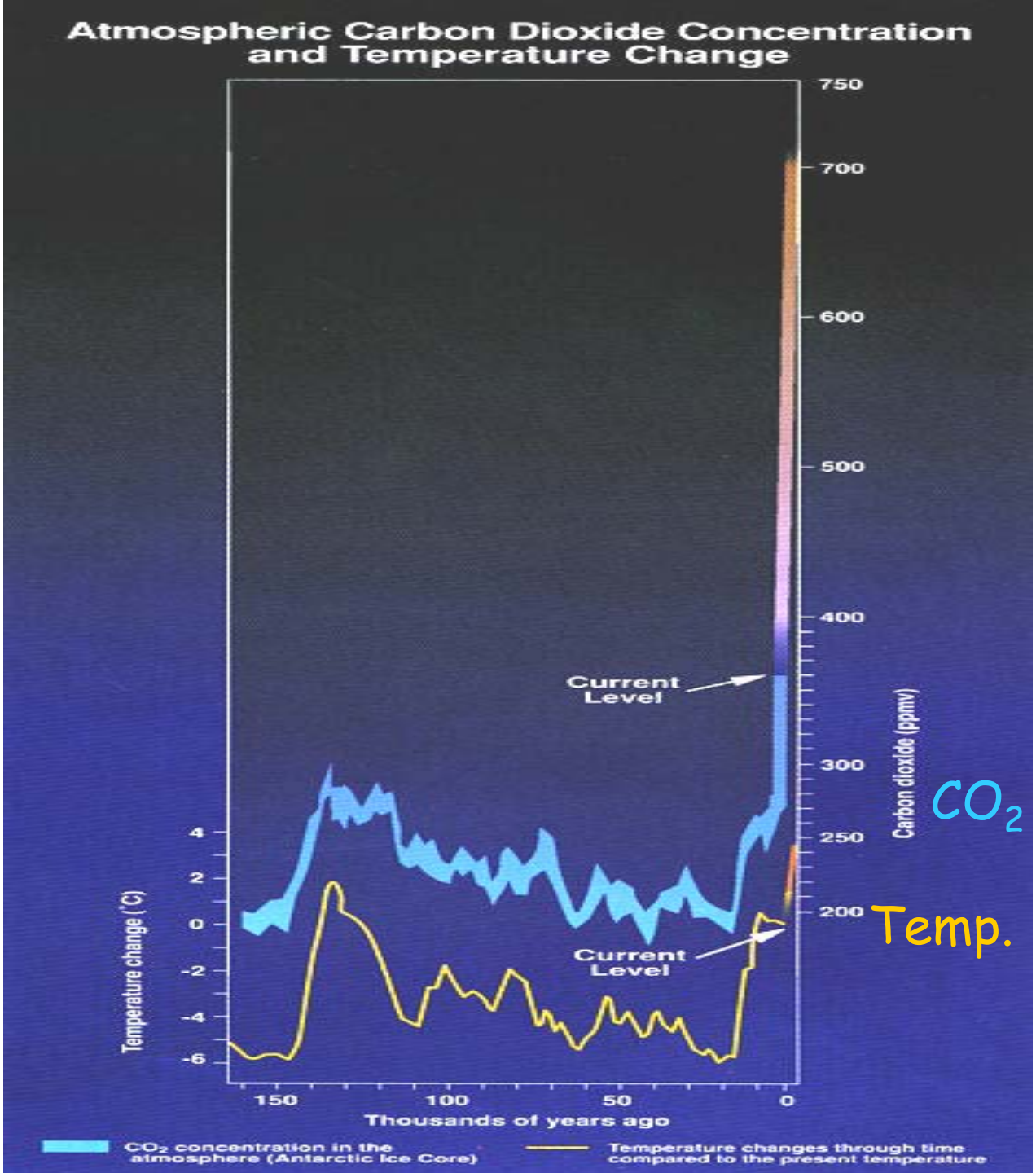
Summary for Policymakers (IPCC AR4)

Context:

400,000 years of Antarctic ice core records of Temperatures, Carbon dioxide and Methane.



Source: Hansen, Climatic Change 2005, based on Petit, Nature 1999


Atmospheric Carbon Dioxide Concentration and Temperature Change
750
700
600
500
400
300
250
200
Carbon dioxide (ppmv)
Current Level
Current Level
4
2
0
-2
-4
-6
Temperature change (°C)
150
100
50
0
Thousands of years ago
CO2 concentration in the atmosphere (Antarctic Ice Core)
Temperature changes through time compared to the present temperature
CO2
Temp.

The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change

- Ratified by 189 countries
- Ratified by the US
- Article 2 is statement of the objective
- Convention entered into force 21 March 1994

Kyoto Protocol

- A legal instrument under UNFCCC
- Requires net reduction in developed country averaged annual GHG emissions of 5% (US 7%) over the period 2008-12 compared to 1990 levels
- "Basket" of GHGs (CO_2, CH_4, N_2O, HFCs, PFCs, SF_6)
- Provisions for "flexible" market mechanisms: international trading system, credits, etc.
- 164 countries have ratified
- Protocol has now been ratified; took effect Feb 16, 2005.
- US withdrew in 2001. In 2004 US emissions were 16% (20%) over 1990 levels for GHG (CO_2).

SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

Syllabus

MASSACHUSETTS ET AL. *v.* ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY ET AL.

CERTIORARI TO THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA CIRCUIT

No. 05–1120. Argued November 29, 2006—Decided April 2, 2007

Carbon Dioxide is a pollutant and the EPA has a right to limit auto-emissions.

Carbon dioxide must be regulated

What about a carbon tax?

A key problem is that anyone can burn stuff and put Carbon Dioxide into the atmosphere as a waste product. If there was a value to Carbon Dioxide then this would presumably be reduced.

A carbon tax, carbon emission limits, or pollution fines are designed to create a **cost** for burning carbon products, like coal and oil.

Given a target (such as in the Kyoto Protocol) only so much can be burned and credits to allow burning can be traded (carbon emissions trading).

Such a solution can be equitable if implemented across the board. But it can favor those who pollute if a country does not subscribe.

Current trends: March 2007

A recent analysis shows the likelihood of an extra 1.2 billion tons of carbon released per year:

Coal fired power stations have been brought on line at a rate of 2 per week over the past 5 years. China leads with one every 3 days or so last years (560 new plants from 2002 to 2006 and 113 GigaWatts of coal fired power).

(200 MW each)

In the next 4 years, China is expected to lead by bringing online over 55 GW of coal fired power, but the US is right behind with 38 GW, and India with 36 GW, and the rest of the world 47 GW.

(Total 176 GW)

Far from decreasing carbon dioxide emissions, the trend is much worse than what is assumed as "business as usual".

Christian Science Monitor March 22, 2007

Global warming actions

There are uncertainties about how climate will change.
But climate will change.
And it could be very disruptive.
There will be substantial costs incurred;
-often by innocent people and countries

The issue is directly linked to

- fossil fuel energy use.
- security (foreign oil imports).
- sustainability.

Oil supplies will be exceeded by demand sooner or later and long before we run out.