# CLIMATLC <br> <br> HHGHKIGHTS 

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## Record heat-wave in north-western Canada

The last summer of this decade will be remembered for record-high temperatures in the western portions of the Northwest Territories and the Yukon. During early June, a ridge of high pressure from the north Pacific Ocean moved over the Northwest Territories and controlled the air circulation over the Arctic, setuing up a persistent flow of extremely warm air from the south.

Week after week, record-high temperatures were set along the coastal regions of the western Arctic as the mercury soared into the mid 30's. In July, daytime temperatures in some communities in the Arctic were equal to, or greater than those experienced in southern Canada. Norman Wells recorded its all-time high temperature of $34.9^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ on July 14; a day later, the temperature reached an all-time high of $34.9^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ at Coppermine. On July 16, Yellowknife experienced its all-time high temperature of $32.5^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$. Both Fort Simpson and Fort Smith had a record 18 days this summer of temperatures $30^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ or greater, compared to the long-term average of 3 days.

For 9 consecutive days, July 13-21, daily record-high values were established at Lymn Lake, Manitoba.

The hot and dry weather set the stage for the outbreak of disastrous forest fires in the northerm areas of Manitoba and Saskatchewan. During mid-July, about 600 fires raged across northem Manitoba forcing


There has been a persistence of above-normal temperatures over many weeks as indicated by the shaded areas. Within these areas, many locations have observed record-high maximum and record-high minimum temperatures. Only northern Québec shows an extended period of below-normal temperatures.
over 23,000 people out of their homes. In addition, hot and dry weather helped to fuel major forest fires in Ontario, the Yu kon, and in the Mackenzie Valley. Up to August 31st, 6 million hectares of forest have been destroyed across the country, compared to the annual average, for the

1976-1986 period, of 2 million hectares. In terms of forested area destroyed by the fires, the 1989 fire season ranks as the worst since records began in 1918.
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# Across the country 



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The dominant high pressure ridge and abundant sunshine which contributed to above-normal temperatures, briefly gave way mid-month, but quickly returned. The greatest departure was a positive anomaly of 5.0 Celsius degrees along the Dempster Highway.

Below-normal precipitation was general, except around the southem lake system with $140 \%$ of normal, and around Beaver Creek with 120\%.

The first 2 weeks saw all stations exceeding $30^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$. Many monthly extremes fell during this period. At the end of the month, the first frost hit most areas.

Whitehorse typifies the glorious summer that has been enjoyed in the Yukon. The August mean temperature of $15.1^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ was 2.6 Celsius degrees warmer than normal, and almost tied the 1957 record of $15.3^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$. The sunshine total of 305.5 hours was 75 hours more than normal. The combined 4 months of May, June, July, and August, have tied the record mean temperature of $13.2^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ set in 1958 .

## Northwest Territories

For the fifth consecutive month, temperatures have been above normal in the western Mackenzie District. The dominant high pressure ridges which have been responsible for record-high temperatures in the Yukon this month, also covered the western Territories. Inuvik recorded a monthly mean which was 4.8 Celsius degrees above normal. On the 13th, Fort Simpson was Canada's hot spot with $33.7^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$. Temperatures in the eastern Arctic were near, to slightly below normal.

Except for the extreme eastern Arctic, most of the Territories received below normal precipitation. Across the Arctic, by month's end, there has been the odd snowshower.

## British Columbia

August saw a weather pattern similar to July, with a series of upper troughs on, or just offshore, tending to have the most effect in southern parts of the province. As in July, thunderstorms made frequent appearances. As a result, precipitation was well-above average in the southern and central interior, while temperatures and sunshine did not stray too far from average in most parts of the province. Cranbrook reported the only record with 85.2 mm of rain, 263\% of normal, and a new August low sunshine record, of only 203.7 hours, $73 \%$ of normal.

Temperatures north of $55^{\circ}$ latitude were 1.5 to 2.5 Celsius degrees above normal. The north coast was near 1.0 degree above normal, while the south coast and southern interior varied from 1.0 degree below to 0.5 degree above normal. Open coast regions, both north and south, reported near $50 \%$ of normal precipitation.

## Alberta

With a few brief exceptions, temperatures during the first 3 weeks were generally near to, or above normal. The last week of the month was unsettled and considerably cooler than normal. Overall, for the month, central and extreme south and south-eastern regions were near average in temperature. The north was 1.0 to 2.5 Celsius degrees above normal. The highest temperature was $33.2^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ on the 11 th at Medicine Hat, and the coolest, $0.6^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ on the 31st, at High Level. Northern regions were drier than normal, while the southern $2 / 3$ of the province was wetter than normal. The wettest areas were through the Edson-Whitecourt-Grande Prairie regions with 186 to 212 mm of rain. Normal amounts for this area are between 60 and 90 mm . The mountain parks which normally average around 50 mm of rain, were also wetter than normal with 122 mm at Jasper, and 146 mm at Banff.


CLIMATIC EXTREMES IN CANADA - AUGUST 1989

MEAN TEMPERATURE:
WARMEST

COLDEST

HIGHEST TEMPERATURE:
LOWEST TEMPERATURE:
HEAVIEST PRECIPITATION:

HEAVIEST SNOWFALL:
DEEPEST SNOW ON THE GROUND ON AUGUST 31, 1989:

ALERT, NWT
4 cm

GREATEST NUMBER OF BRIGHT SUNSHINE HOURS:

COPPERMINE A, NWT
373 hours

## Saskatchewan and Manitoba

The month averaged out to have abovenormal temperatures at all but a few stations. There was some seesawing in temperatures, however. August 1st saw record-high temperatures as high as $40.0^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ at Morden, Manitoba, and on the 6th, Broadview, Saskatchewan had a record low minimum for the day, $1.4^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$.

With the rapid temperature fluctuations, there was an accompanying plague of severe weather. Literally every type of severe summer weather was reported, from waterspouts to winds. There were several hail episodes with one report from Hyas, Saskatchewan, on the 23rd, of hail that was "bumper deep" on the highway, and hail still on the ground 19 hours after the event. Crops were totally destroyed.

Precipitation was fairly ample across the region. Several stations reported above to well-above normal amounts. The wettest was Norway House, with 175.2 mm , compared to the normal of 49.0 mm . A few stations were drier than normal. Estevan was the driest with 17.2 mm , compared to
a normal of 52.8 mm . The driest areas were in south-east Saskatchewan, south-eastern Manitoba, and in the extreme north. Except for the northern stations there was less than the normal amount of sunshine.

## Ontario

Across Ontario, near-normal temperatures were experienced, but there were widely ranging rainfall totals. Temperatures were near normal, with the greatest departure, plus 1.6 Celsius degrees, in the KenoraSioux Lookout area of north-westem Ontario. The highest temperature recorded was $34.3^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ at Thunder Bay, while the coolest temperature was $-2.0^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ at Moosonee.

Rainfall totals ranged from a nearrecord low of 8 mm at St . Catharines, which was the driest August in the Niagara Peninsula since 1948, to a high of 135 mm at Kenora. The rain in the north, with below-normal sunshine, helped to lower the forest fire hazard. Southern Ontario, in general, was quite dry, with total rainfall just 10 to $80 \%$ of normal.

South-western Ontario normally experiences more tomadoes than the rest of the country, but there were no major tornadoes reported during August.

## Québec

Temperatures were slightly above normal in the south, and below normal in the north. Kuujuak, on Ungava Bay, had the greatest departure, 1.8 Celsius degrees below normal.

Total precipitation amounts varied from only 53.2 mm , or $60 \%$ of normal in the National Capital Region, to 170.9 mm at Blanc Sablon, at the extreme eastern tip of the province. In the north, precipitation was below normal. Values ranged from 20 $\mathrm{mm}, 31 \%$ of normal, at Inukjuak to 88.2 $\mathrm{mm}, \mathbf{9 4 \%}$ of normal in the FermontWabush area. Schefferville recorded 0.4 cm of snow.

## Maritimes

August was a very variable month. Sunshine hours ranged from 43.9 hours below normal at Fredericton, to 79.9 hours above normal at Sable Island, Nova Scotia, where the total of 258.5 hours, broke the August 1966 record of 234.7 hours. Sydney, Nova Scotia recorded 280.3 hours, which was the second-highest total for August since records began in 1949.

It was generally dry, with the exception of some areas in New Brunswick where it was extremely wet. On the 5th, Fredericton received 148.6 mm of rain, setting an alltime record for the greatest rainfall in 24 hours, in the Fredericton area, and the monthly total of 233.4 mm was a record amount. In Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, rainfall was generally below normal, ranging from $44 \%$ of normal at Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, to $86 \%$ of normal at Summerside, P.E.I.

Mean temperatures were generally above normal, except slightly below around Fredericton and Saint John.

Hurricane Dean tracked south of Cape Breton, Nova Scotia early on the 8th. Although the mainland escaped the effects of

## ICE CONDITIONS AND FORECAST

As of September 18th, new ice has been reported in the vicinity of Resolute, and in most areas further north. Ice growth in Baffin Bay can be expected to begin along northem coastlines during the second week of October, and by midmonth may cover northerm Baffin Bay and along the Baffin coast as far south as Clyde. There is sufficient ice north of the approaches to Lancaster Sound to produce drift of loose old ice into the area throughout the next 30 -day period. New ice can be expected to develop in Barrow Strait, and along the coastlines of Lancaster Sound, early in the last week of September.

In the western Arctic, at mid-September, the wide-open lead along the

Beaufort Sea coast was in the process of closing, bringing an end to trouble-free shipping in that area. The western waterway through Amundsen Gulf, Coronation Gulf, and Queen Maud Gulf remained mostly open water. Extensive ice cover persisted in southern Larsen Sound, but northwards through Peel Sound was mostly open water. New ice growth can be expected to begin in the western waterway from Amundsen Gulf through to Spence Bay, during the second week of October.

The multi-year pack over the Beaufort Sea can be expected to continue to advance slowly southwards during the next few weeks with occasional ice pressure
being created in the Cape Bathurst and Barter Island areas.

Shipping activity in the Arctic has passed its peak. Areas of concern until the fourth week of September include: the westem waterway from Point Barrow, Alaska, through Amundsen Gulf, Larsen Sound, Peel Sound, and into Barrow Strait; some ships remain in the Cameron Island and Resolute areas, so the ByamMartin Channel, Barrow Strait, and Lancaster Sound also require close scrutiny. By early October, most shipping in the Arctic should be complete except for one more trip to Nanisivik, in Admiralty Inlet, north-western Baffin Island, scheduled for mid-November.

Edward Becker,
Alain Frappier, Ice Centre, Outawa
the storm, Louisbourg received 58.2 mm of rain during its passage. On the morning of the 15 th, a tomado touched down at Carlisle, New Brunswick, with serious damage to a few properties.

## Newfoundland and Labrador

Above-normal temperatures prevailed across much of Newfoundland. Precipitation and sunshine were below normal on the Avalon Peninsula but well-above normal in western locations.

The first half of the month an abovenormal temperature trend was replaced by cooler, unsettled weather during the second half. Precipitation in some western locations was over $300 \%$ of normal. Stephenville reported $345.6 \mathrm{~mm}, 96.0 \mathrm{~mm}$ on the 5th, compared to a normal August of 104.1 mm . In contrast, St. John's reported 70.7 mm , about 50 mm below normal, and coupled with a dry spring, the city introduced a bylaw to restrict water usage. Water reservoir levels are well-below normal for this time of year.

On the 8th, Hurricane Dean weakened as it tracked rapidly across southem Newfoundland. Winds were in excess of 100 $\mathrm{km} / \mathrm{h}$, but only minor damage was reported.

In Labrador, mean temperatures were 1 to 2 Celsius degrees below normal, except at extreme eastem locations which were slightly above normal. Precipitation was generally above normal: Goose Bay, 220.9 mm, (normal, 103.2 mm ); and Churchill Falls, 133.6 mm , (normal, 95.0 mm ).


SEASONAL TOTAL OF GROWING DEGREE-DAYS TO END OF AUGUST


BRITISH COLUNBIA

| Abbotsford | 1431 | 1412 | 1309 |
| :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: |
| Kamloops | 1775 | $\star$ | 1694 |
| Penticton | 1705 | $\star$ | 1616 |
| Prince George | 975 | $\star$ | 870 |
| Vancouver | 1427 | 1441 | 1347 |
| Victoria | 1272 | 1262 | 1236 |

## ALBERTA

| Calgary | 970 | 1213 | 905 |
| :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: |
| Edmonton Mun. | 1100 | 1292 | 1057 |
| Grande Prairie | 1009 | $\star$ | 927 |
| Lethbridge | 1101 | 1492 | 1091 |
| Peace River | 999 | 1048 | 869 |
| SASKATCHEWN |  |  |  |
| Estevan | 1508 | 1793 | 1384 |
| Prince Albert | 1268 | 1301 | 1138 |
| Regina | 1464 | 1676 | 1308 |
| Saskatoon | 1358 | 1573 | 1266 |
| Swift Current | $\star$ | $\star$ | $\star$ |
| MANITOBA |  |  |  |
| Brandon | 1393 | 1475 | 1285 |
| Churchill | 523 | 366 | 401 |
| Dauphin | 1410 | 1439 | 1252 |
| Winnipeg | 1515 | 1565 | 1371 |


| ONTARIO |  |  |  |
| :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: |
| London | 1551 | 1724 | 1472 |
| North Bay | 1343 | $\star$ | 1232 |
| Ottawa | 1607 | 1706 | 1478 |
| Thunder Bay | 1136 | 1207 | 1110 |
| Toronto | 1570 | 1692 | 1482 |
| Trenton | 1572 | 1656 | 1536 |
| Windsor | 1802 | 2018 | 1776 |
| QUEBEC |  |  |  |
| Baie Comeau | 939 | $\star$ | 927 |
| Maniwaki | 1405 | 1390 | 1280 |
| Montréal | 1683 | 1686 | 1599 |
| Québec | 1433 | $\star$ | 1337 |
| Sept-îles | 902 | 832 | 833 |
| Sherbrooke | 1361 | 1342 | 1228 |


| NEW BRUNSWICX |  |  |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Charlo | 1156 | 1157 | 1092 |
| Fredericton | 1409 | 1390 | 1362 |
| Moncton | 1317 | 1245 | 124 |


| MOVA SCOTIA |  |  |  |
| :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: |
| Sydney | 1082 | 1124 | 1054 |
| Yarmouth | 1173 | 1099 | 1084 |
| PRINCE EDWARD | ISLAND |  |  |
| Charlottetown | 1303 | 1197 | 1200 |
|  |  |  |  |
| MEWFOUNDLAND | 835 | 845 | 782 |
| Gander | 803 | $\star$ | 729 |
| St. John's | 1116 | 962 | 948 |
| Stephenville |  |  |  |

## 50-kPa ATMOSPHERIC CIRCULATION

## August 1989



Mean geopotential heights

- 5 decametre interval -


Normal geopotential heights for the month - 5 decametre interval -


Mean geopotential height anomaly

- 5 decametre interval-


Mean heights difference w/r to previous month - 5 decametre interval -

## CLIMATIC HIGHLIGHTS

## Other major climate events this summer

On July 19-20, severe thunderstorms struck south-western Ontario. In a 17-hour period, torrential downpours in the 100 to 300 mm range flooded homes and farmland. Harrow received 264 mm , the highest 24 -hour accumulation ever received in Canada, east of the Rockies. Property and crop damage was extensive, and road repairs alone were estimated to cost 35 million dollars.

The prairie provinces were plagued by a high number of tornadoes this year. Saskatchewan's 28 reported tornadoes were twice the 1974-87 annual average of 14. On a positive note, timely rains arrived in June on the previously drought-stricken regions of the Prairies. The rains fell where it was needed the most (central and southern Saskatchewan), and erased drought concerns of the prairie farmers.

## Do these events signal a change in our climate?

The summer of '89 was also exceptionally warm in western Europe and Siberia. Western Europe's summer temperatures have been 2 to 3 Celsius degrees above normal. Can these warm spells be regarded as evidence of a global warming? According to scientists from the British Meteorological Office and University of East Anglia, global temperature records show that the average global temperature for 1988 was $15.3^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$, which was the highest ever recorded since reliable records began approximately 100 years ago.

Last year's temperature records continued a pattern of which the 5 warmest years have all been in the 1980's. A reference period of 1950-1979 is used to compare years which are above or below normal. The warmest year, 1988, was 0.34 Celsius degree above normal; 1987, 0.33

Celsius degree above, and in following order of warmest years were, 1981, 1980, and 1986. So far this year, global temperatures have been significantly warmer than normal. Global temperatures have risen by about 0.5 Celsius degree since 1900.

A warming trend in the 1980's has been observed in western Canada, however, the temperatures have cooled down over the eastern Arctic. The unusual warming could have been caused by increasing carbon dioxide concentrations in the atmosphere, due primarily to the burning of fossil fuels. However, the intensity and the sudden appearance of the warmth do not fit the carbon dioxide trend which shows a steady but gradual increase in concentration since the turn of the century. The warming could also have been produced by natural causes. If the cause is carbon dioxide, then warm spells, such as the ones experienced this year, will become more frequent in the future.

Records have been set or equalled for the number of days per year when the maximum temperature reached or exceeded $30^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ at the following locations. The values for 1989 are given, followed by the previous record, shown in parentheses.

| Location | No. of days | Location | No. of days |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Komakuk Beach | $1(1$ in 1982) |  |  |
| Inuvik | $3(1$ in 1982 $)$ | Fort Smith | $18(11$ in 1955) |
| Cape Young | $3(0)$ | Fort Chipewyan | $9(8$ in 1984) |
| Coppermine | $3(0)$ | Stony Rapids | $8($ new station $)$ |
| Fort Simpson | $18(9$ in 1975 $)$ | Collins Bay | $5(3$ in 1984) |
| Yellowknife | $4(4$ in 1979 | Thompson | $9(8$ in 1984) |
| Fort Reliance | $5(2$ in 1975) | The Pas | $12(11$ in 1961) |
| Hay River | $10(7$ in 1979 $)$ | Norway House | $9(8$ in 1975) |
|  | Baker Lake | $1(1$ in 1973) |  |



Departure of mean temperature from normal for the period June 1 to August 31, 1989. The shaded area indicates where records have been set or equalled for the number of days when the daytime temperature reached or exceeded $30^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$.






