

Phwoarr, what a scorcher! 2015 in climate change

**January**

- [Scientists find](#) sea levels have been rising twice as fast as previously thought over the last 20 years

February

- China [reaches 'peak coal'](#), with consumption falling by 2.9 % in 2014 compared with the previous year. China accounts for half of the world's annual coal burning

March

- Scientists publish [evidence](#) that climate change has made drought in the 'Fertile Crescent' 2-3 times more likely, and thus contributed to conflict in Syria and the subsequent flow of refugees
- For the first time, economic growth and rise in carbon emissions appear to have 'decoupled' from each other. [Data](#) from the International Energy Agency (IEA) shows global emissions from the energy sector stayed constant during 2014 while the global economy grew

May

- In England, climate change has made heatwaves 22 times more likely, [scientists find](#)

June

- [Scientists find](#) that the so-called 'global warming pause' or 'slowdown' may not have been real, just an artefact of measurement methods
- Pope issues an [Encyclical](#), Laudate Sii, on the environment. He addresses it to all human beings rather than just world's 1.2 billion

Catholics, so reaching out to wider audiences than ever before

- Archbishop of Canterbury joins representatives of other faiths [in asking for urgent action](#) to tackle climate change
- G7 countries [agree](#) to decarbonise the global economy over the course of the century
- China announces its [climate action plan](#), confirming that its emissions will peak around 2030 or earlier
- Norway confirms \$900bn sovereign wealth fund's [major coal divestment](#) – the largest divestment yet
- [Lancet Commission on Health and Climate Change](#) calls climate change a 'global health emergency', and says tackling it is the greatest health opportunity of the 21st Century



Pope Francis calls for action on climate change. Image: Martin Schulz, Creative Commons License

July

- 1st July sees hottest UK July day on record (36.7 degrees C)
- [Survey](#) shows that around the world, climate change rates as people's top global concern (more than terrorism or economic instability)

August

- President Obama releases US climate action [plan](#) to reduce emissions by 26-28% below 2005 levels by 2025
- [Islamic leaders call for action on climate change](#) and for phasing out of fossil fuels, saying that 'Excessive pollution from fossil fuels threatens to destroy the gifts bestowed on us by God'

September

- Mark Carney, governor of the Bank of England, warns that investors face huge losses from climate change action that could make vast reserves of fossil fuels unburnable



Mark Carney warns of financial risks from climate change. Image: Bank of England, Creative Commons License

- Fossil fuel divestment pledges [surpass \\$2.6trn](#), with more than 400 institutions and 2,000 individuals committing to divest from fossil fuels
- [NOAA announces](#) that 2015 is virtually guaranteed to be the hottest year on record
- In the UK, [renewable generation overtakes coal](#) for the first time, providing a quarter of UK electricity

- Shell [abandons](#) plans for Arctic drilling after major protests and blaming unfavourable regulatory circumstances
- UN's assessment of countries' climate pledges [show](#) they will put world on course for about 2.7C warming rather than 4-5C under business-as-usual

October

- India [announces its climate pledge](#), including major boost for renewables
- Buddhist leaders call for a strong deal in Paris
- [Indonesian forest fires become](#) 'one of world's biggest climate disasters'
- BP's chief economist [says](#) climate concerns make it unlikely that world's oil reserves will be fully exploited
- Calling climate change a 'threat multiplier', NATO Parliamentary Assembly [urges](#) Allied governments to back an ambitious climate deal

November

- The world enters 'uncharted territory', as the global average temperature rise since pre-industrial times [is set to reach 1°C](#) for the first time
- In the UK, [the mercury touches 22.4°C](#) – the warmest November day ever recorded
- Nearly four out of five people (78%) [want](#) their governments to restrict carbon emissions as part of an international climate deal



There is high public support globally for action on climate change. Image: The Weekly Bull, Creative Commons License