The forecast for 2023 is hot

2023 is forecast to be a hotter year than 2022, according to the UK's Met Office weather service. Why? Well, an unusual three-year-long weather pattern that typically has a cooling effect on our planet should finally come to an end next year. On top of that, global average temperatures are expected to rise as greenhouse gas emissions continue to climb.

As a result, the Met Office predicts 2023 will be one of the hottest years on record. That's no surprise, considering the last eight years are on track to be the eight hottest on the books, according to the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).

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Next year is expected to mark 10 consecutive years with global average temperatures at least 1 degree Celsius higher than the average during the preindustrial period. Earth's average temperature in 2023 is forecast to be between 1.08 and 1.32 degrees Celsius higher than it was before about 1900, when humans started burning fossil fuels more ferociously.

A degree hotter might not seem like much, especially as much of the US emerges from a frigid winter storm. But that kind of change on a global scale has already triggered catastrophic climate effects. Plus, it's an average for the entire planet — some regions have been hit much harder by climate change than others.

"This year we have faced several dramatic weather disasters which claimed far too many lives and livelihoods and undermined health, food, energy and water security and

infrastructure," WMO Secretary-General Petteri Taalas said in a statement today. "One third of Pakistan was flooded, with major economic losses and human casualties. Record breaking heatwaves have been observed in China, Europe, North and South America. The long-lasting drought in the Horn of Africa threatens a humanitarian catastophe."

The Horn of Africa, in particular, has had to cope with a double-whammy of both climate change and a La Niña weather pattern exacerbating drought. A rare "triple-dip" La Niña has been in play since September 2020. La Niña's impact varies from region to region — bringing heavier downpours to Australia while robbing eastern Africa of rain. But it generally has a temporary cooling effect on the globe as a whole. After persisting into its third winter, this La Niña will most likely come to a close by April next year.

La Niña is one of the extreme phases of the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) recurring climate pattern. There's evidence that extreme La Niña and El Niño events could become twice as frequent with higher global temperatures. That risky outcome — and others, like more severe flooding and heatwaves — could be avoided if humans successfully limit global warming below about 1.5 degrees Celsius, a goal of the Paris climate agreement. But as the global forecast for 2023 shows, we don't have much wiggle room left.

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