

Climate News in a Warming World

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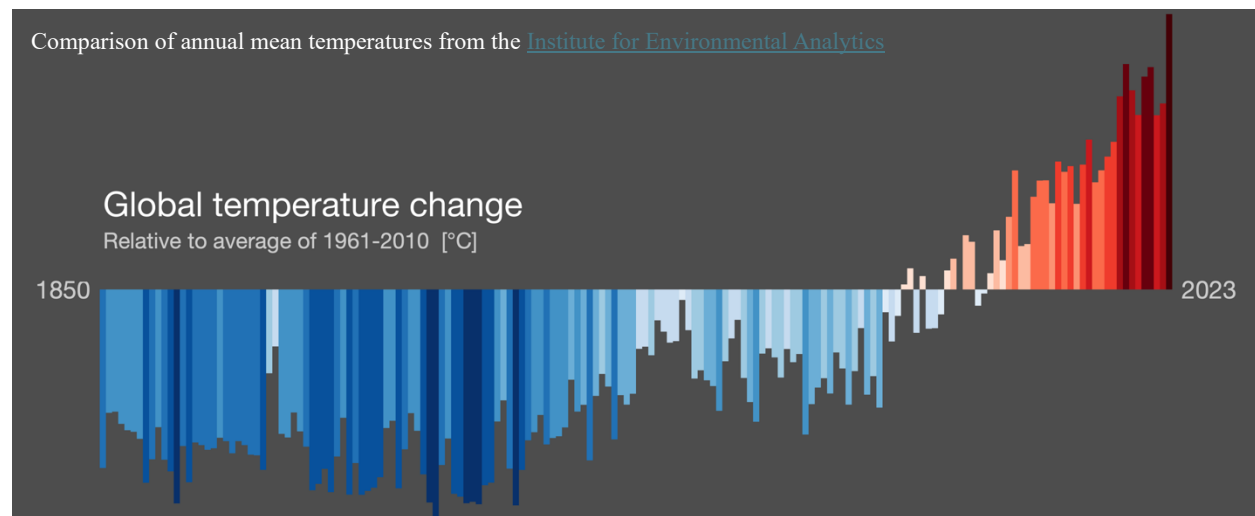
Our world is full of complex, unfamiliar, and dangerous ecosystems: the impenetrable thickets of tropical forests, the dark waters of deep-ocean trenches, the barren cold of the arctic tundra. But despite all that competition, the one I often find the most unwelcoming is the *media* ecosystem: the dense tangles of newscasters, politicians, and influences; the jagged online terrain of social media trends, misinformation accusations, and political infographics; the cacophony of voices demanding attention, advertisements demanding purchases, activists demanding outrage.

While my embrace of intimidating outdoor ecosystems might be uncommon, my fear of the one blinking at me from phones, TVs, and laptops is not. Aversion to the news cycle is anything but rare in 2025, where we live in a quickly changing world that never seems to be changing in a particularly positive way – especially if you’re paying attention to the news on climate.

Because while the world is changing in many ways, one very notable one is that it is getting hotter: [2024 was officially the first year on record](#) that our planet surpassed the 1.5°C (2.7°F) warming limit established in the 2016 [Paris Agreement](#).

This limit of warming above pre-industrial levels – the average warmth of the planet before humans started extensively burning coal and fossil fuels – was a boundary agreed upon by the 196 present parties to “significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change.” Such risks and impacts include the accelerated loss of biodiversity (wildlife populations have declined globally by [68% over the last 50 years](#)), or the increased frequency and intensity of natural disasters (such as [Hurricane Helene striking North Carolina in September](#) and the intense [wildfires surrounding Los Angeles now](#)).

Despite the alarming gravity of surpassing that threshold, it received remarkably little media attention. I’m shocked more people don’t know about it, especially since the immediate repercussions of climate change have never been more visible. But then again, those consequences are a big part of why I often don’t particularly want to look at the news myself: I don’t want to see people calling climate change a hoax, or politicians and companies refusing to slow down global



emission rates, or cities burning or glaciers melting or species going extinct. I certainly don't want to see the United States pulling out of the Paris Agreement – again – at a time when climate action has never been more important and climate consequences have never been more dire.

Unfortunately for me (and everyone else who's been dodging the news), these things continue to happen whether I pay attention to them or not. Not reading about them only accomplishes two things: (1) I remain ignorant about what's going on and thus am less stressed about it, and (2) I remain ignorant about what's going on and thus don't do anything to try and improve the situation. While I'm all for reducing stress, widespread ignorance about the facts of our climate situation is a big part of why more isn't being done to address it – and a little piece of that widespread ignorance belongs to each one of us when we tune out of the conversation.

But tuning in is more complicated than just turning on the news. There is so much climate misinformation out there, because climate change is complicated and because there are many parties who benefit from us feeling apathetic about it, hopeless about our individual actions making a difference, or angry at each other for believing or not believing in climate change in the first place. So where should you turn to for information that is true, comprehensive, easy to understand, and relevant – without being biased, misleading, or overwhelming?

There is no one right answer to that question, but at the start of this new year – following the hottest one any of us have ever been alive for – I encourage you to consider what a healthy diet of climate media looks like for you. Think about how much climate news you can digest in a way that inspires action without incurring apathy. Think about what you feel curious about, and think about how to get answers about it from those without too dubious of an agenda.

If you are startled to read that we've just surpassed the 1.5°C threshold, I especially encourage you to sign up for a climate newsletter. This one is, of course, an excellent start, but I am not a full-time climate journalist nor expert on all things climate. Here are some I would recommend for becoming a bit more informed about climate events from science-backed sources:

- [Climate Central](#) is a nonprofit news organization composed of scientists and science journalists analyzing and reporting on climate news. They focus on partnering with local reporters and creating high impact, easy to understand visuals.
- [Covering Climate Now](#) is “a global journalism initiative committed to bringing more and better coverage to the defining story of our time.” They focus on providing resources for understanding coverage of climate news.
- [Inside Climate News](#) is a nonprofit, non-partisan journalism initiative which “exist[s] to publish essential reporting, investigation, and analytics about the biggest crisis facing our planet.” They offer many free newsletter options and focus on watchdog journalism.
- If you're loyal to more standard news sources, check out resources like the New York Time's [Climate Section](#); they have a dedicated climate desk and release a weekly newsletter of big climate stories more focused on the US.
- See if any local media sources are covering climate news. This is often the very best way to stay informed about the issues that are especially important to your own home (and supporting local journalism is always a good idea, too!).

If you want to get more into the meat of the science behind climate discoveries – why we believe climate change is real, how we study it, what we’re learning about it – peer-reviewed academic journals are the go-to resource. Unfortunately, while these journal articles are extremely informative, they are not written in accessible language and most are behind paywalls. This is a big accessibility issue in the sciences, but a few good alternatives are emerging. Some key journals, like [PLOS Climate](#), have eliminated paywalls entirely. Others, like [Science](#) and [Nature](#), now publish opinion sections about recent scientific discoveries written in plainer language ([here’s an open access one](#) covering how scientists feel about the withdrawal from the Paris Agreement). If you really want to read the actual articles written by scientists, see if they are available on servers like [bioRxiv](#) (or shoot an academic like me an email – working for institutions like Yale means that I have free reign to download and share pdfs of peer-reviewed papers, and I am happy share the wealth).

While I hope you can find resources here that will help you stay up to date with the climate news of today, such vigilance can come with a downside that’s starting to be known as “climate grief.” I think of this as the feeling that hits me now when songs about white Christmases play: I love Christmas music, I love snow, I love the holiday season, and I absolutely adore the feeling of waking up on Christmas morning to the magic of a glittering white world. But white Christmases are mostly a memory, a thing of my childhood that has gotten rarer and rarer each year. This year’s thin layer of white sprinkled in with the reemerging grass blades was cause for celebration: enough of a white Christmas to count. I celebrated having a little snow powdered over the day, but even that feels a bit nostalgic now; every time we do get lucky enough to have a white Christmas, I can’t help wondering if it’s going to be my last one.

Climate grief is painful. It chases me on green Christmases and when favorite trees get cut down for new developments, wider roads, clearer vistas; it weighs heavier as the number of extinct species climbs higher, as old growth forests fall, as glaciers collapse, as Los Angeles burns. And it’s an inevitable part of paying attention to the world we live in. Reading climate news means I know that I live in an era where even if we do figure out how to reduce emissions and work together to save ourselves from climate disasters, I am unlikely to live to see the world return to equilibrium. I will spend the rest of my life facing worse and worse climate catastrophes.

But for all that pain, climate grief also keeps me in the fight. It is easy to get buried underneath it, but that’s not the point of forcing myself to pay attention to the world – the point is to remind myself why we must keep trying to do better. Why every tree saved, every trail preserved, every vote cast really, truly matters.

On that note, my final recommendation for your climate news consumption is the non-profit organization [Climate Changemakers](#), a climate advocacy network co-founded by an old classmate of mine. They send out weekly newsletters of big and small advocacy actions you can take depending on how much time you have, from sending emails to your governor about state environmental policies to calling your legislators about updating the electrical grid. It is this organization that sent me the encouraging news that 75% of our goals from the Paris Agreement can still be achieved through state and local action – and that is something that we have power over. That is something we can fight for.

Even in a changing world, I go outside to remind myself of this. I watch a barred owl blink at me from her winter roost in the cedar trees, and I remember that I play a part in whether she has a habitat, food, and a home. I climb the snowy trails to mountain lookouts, and I remember that I play a part in protecting these forests: in clearing the invasive species away, in speaking for their needs, in bringing others out into their beauty. I wait for the first flowers of spring, and I remember that even now, the trilliums and hepaticas and bloodroots lie in wait for warmer days, a brighter spring, and another chance to bloom.

