

Climate change consequences in North America



North America

Fires and cold waves

Heartbreaking images of California's ancient sequoia trees being wrapped in aluminium heralded the start of this year's wildfire season.

Extreme weather caused by climate change, including extensive drought and heatwaves, means there have already been at least 46,280 wildfires this year across the United States, and many are still burning. In Canada there have been at least 6300 fires.

Globally, the past decade was the hottest on record. The year 2020 was more than 1.2 degrees hotter than the average year in the 19th century.

Scientists say the devastating heatwave that struck parts of Canada and the United States in June had the unambiguous footprint of human-caused climate change. The peak temperatures observed were up to 5C higher than previous records in the region.

And it wasn't all heat and fires. The Texas cold wave in February has been linked to a stretching of the polar vortex in the stratosphere miles above ground level, a phenomenon that has become more common over the past 40 years.

Source: <https://www.smh.com.au/interactive/2021/how-the-world-ran-out-of-time/>