

2010 ties 2005 as hottest years on record

By Justin Gillis, New York Times

New government figures for the global climate show that 2010 was the wettest year in the historical record, and it tied 2005 as the hottest year since record-keeping began in 1880.

The new figures confirm that 2010 will go down as one of the more remarkable years in the annals of climatology. It featured prodigious snowstorms that broke seasonal records in the United States and Europe; a record-shattering summer heat wave that scorched Russia; strong floods that drove people from their homes in places like Pakistan, Australia, California and Tennessee; a severe die-off of coral reefs; and a continuation in the global trend of a warming climate.

Two agencies, NASA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, reported Wednesday that the global average surface temperature for 2010 had tied the record set in 2005. The analyses differ slightly; in the NOAA version, the 2010 temperature was 1.12 degrees Fahrenheit above the average for the 20th century, which is 57 degrees.

It was the 34th year running that global temperatures have been above the 20th-century average; the last below-average year was 1976. The new figures show that 9 of the 10 warmest years on record have occurred since the beginning of 2001.

The earth has been warming in fits and starts for decades, and a large majority of climatologists say that is because humans are releasing heat-trapping gases like carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. The carbon dioxide level has increased about 40 percent since the Industrial Revolution.

“The climate is continuing to show the influence of greenhouse

gases," said David R. Easterling, a scientist at NOAA's National Climatic Data Center in Asheville, N.C.

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