



25 July 2016 - A new Met Office report reveals that 2015 was a warmer and wetter than average year, with exceptional rainfall, severe flooding and warmth in December.

The State of the UK's Climate 2015 report provides a summary of the UK weather and climate throughout 2015. It is the second in an annual series.

Highlights from the State of the UK's Climate 2015 report confirms:

- December 2015 was the wettest calendar month in a UK series stretching back to 1910
- December 2015 was the warmest December in Central England since 1659
- 2015 as a whole was the seventh wettest year on record for the UK in a series stretching back to 1910

Dr Mark McCarthy is the head of the National Climate Information Centre, based at the Met Office Hadley Centre. He is also one of the report's authors. He said: "The weather during 2015 contained many notable features and I'm sure that everyone will have a personal memory of a weather moment during the year. Sadly, for some, the extreme rainfall during December has left a legacy of flooding for communities across northern England, and Scotland. Elsewhere there were some brighter spots including the sunniest April on record for the UK."

The report, the second in an annual series examining the UK climate, provides an authoritative assessment of the UK climate trends, variations and extremes.

Globally, 2015 was the warmest year on record and the average temperature reached 1 °C above pre-industrial values. For the UK, 2015 as a whole was the 16th warmest year in a UK-series stretching back to 1910. However, December 2015 was the warmest December in a series of records stretching back to 1659 within the Central England Temperature record - the longest running continuous temperature series in the world.

When analysing monthly, annual or seasonal records, climate scientists compare records to long-term 30-year averages. The official reference averages for this purpose are the periods 1961 to 1990 and 1981 to 2010. Dr Mark McCarthy added: "The Central England Temperature for December 2015 differs from these long-term averages by more than 5 °C - by far the greatest positive anomaly of any month in the Central England Temperature record since the series began in 1659."

For the UK, December 2015 was also the wettest calendar month for the UK since 1910, but as Dr Mark McCarthy explains this doesn't necessarily reflect the rainfall experienced across all areas of the UK. He said: "The UK rainfall map for December 2015 shows that large parts of Wales, northern England, Scotland and Northern Ireland experienced extreme rainfall, brought in large measure by the memorable storms of the month, including storms Desmond, Eva and Frank as they tracked across the UK. Although the high rainfall brought by these storms led to significant and repeated flooding in some parts, many areas in southern England received average or even below average rainfall."

Several counties and historic counties across the UK, had a notable year for temperature: it was the sixth warmest year on record for Buckinghamshire, and the seventh for Dorset. Although 2015 will be remembered by many as a wet year, some counties were drier than normal and, for example, Lincolnshire had its 25th driest year since 1910, while Westmorland had its third wettest year. Stirlingshire, Dumfriesshire, Dunbartonshire, and Peebleshire had their wettest year since 1910.

In December 2015, the following counties and historic counties recorded average temperatures 10 °C or above (the UK average for December 2015 was 7.9 °C):

Middlesex, 11.1 °C; Hampshire, 10.7 °C; Dorset, 10.7 °C; Cornwall, 10.7 °C; Surrey, 10.6 °C; Sussex, 10.6 °C; Berkshire, 10.5 °C; Somerset, 10.5 °C; Essex, 10.4 °C; Kent, 10.4 °C; Devon, 10.3 °C; Bedfordshire, 10.2 °C; Buckinghamshire, 10.2 °C; Hertfordshire, 10.2 °C; Wiltshire, 10.2 °C; West Suffolk, 10.2 °C; Oxfordshire, 10.1 °C; Huntingdonshire, 10.1 °C; Cambridgeshire, 10.1 °C; Gloucestershire, 10.1 °C; Pembrokeshire, 10.1 °C; Worcestershire, 10 °C; and Glamorganshire, 10 °C.

In December 2015, the following counties and historic counties recorded the greatest temperature increase compared with the average December temperature between 1981 and 2010:

Bedfordshire, 5.8 °C; Berkshire, 5.8 °C; Buckinghamshire, 5.8 °C; Hertfordshire, 5.8 °C; Oxfordshire, 5.8 °C; Huntingdonshire, 5.7 °C; Surrey, 5.7 °C; Wiltshire, 5.7 °C; Cambridgeshire, 5.6 °C; Essex, 5.6 °C; Gloucestershire, 5.6 °C; Hampshire, 5.6 °C; Middlesex, 5.6 °C; Northamptonshire, 5.6 °C; West Suffolk, 5.6 °C; Dorset, 5.5 °C; Warwickshire, 5.5 °C; Worcestershire, 5.5 °C.

During December 2015, the following top ten counties and historic UK counties received the greatest rainfall compared with the December average between 1981 and 2010:

Westmorland, 320 %; Peeblesshire, 290 %; Cumberland, 276 %; Roxburghshire, 276 %; Selkirkshire, 270 %; Carnarvonshire, 269 %; Perthshire, 262 %; Anglesey, 261 %; Dumfriesshire, 260 %; Northumberland, 259 %.

During December 2015, the following top ten counties and historic UK counties received the least rainfall compared with the December average between 1981 and 2010:

Caithness, 80 %; Essex, 83 %; Kent, 84 %; Suffolk, 84 %; Middlesex, 88 %; Surrey, 90 %; Dorset, 94 %; West Suffolk, 94 %; Norfolk, 95 %; Wiltshire, 95 %.