



2003 European Heat Wave

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What is a Heat Wave?

- The World Meteorological Organization defines a **heat wave** as a length of five or more consecutive days of heat exceeding the average maximum temperature of the area by 5°C (9°F)
- In simpler terms, a heat wave is a prolonged period of excessively hot weather, which may be accompanied by high humidity
- Heat waves usually occur in the summertime in warm climates, an area of high pressure with little or no rain or clouds

Temperature Anomalies Mar-May 2007

(with respect to a 1961-1990 base period)

National Climatic Data Center/NESDIS/NOAA

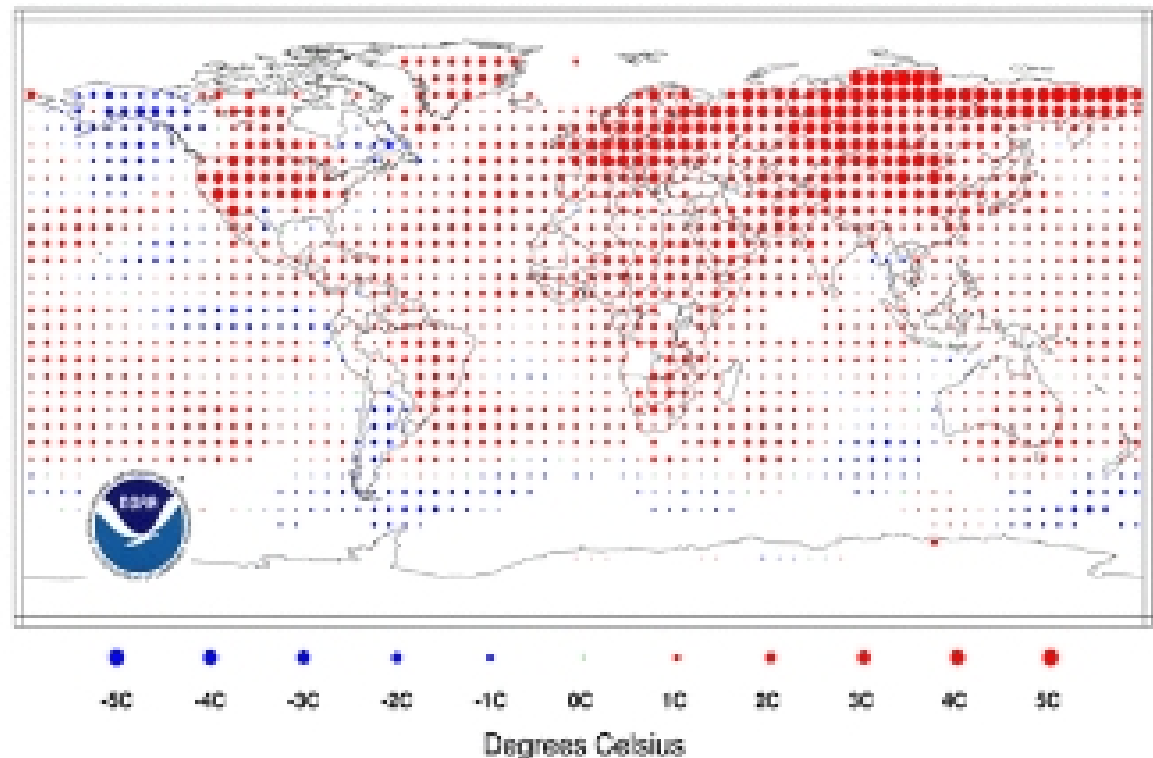


Figure adapted from: "The Climate of 2007," NOAA Satellite and Information Services

Notes: Slide 1

- Temperatures considered normal by people living in a warmer climate can be termed a heat wave in a cooler area of the world if the temperatures experienced are outside the normal climate pattern for that area.
- The figure illustrates the temperature anomalies over land and ocean surfaces in 2007. 'Anomaly' means a deviation from the common. A temperature anomaly is how much hotter or colder the surface temperature is from the average of the area, be it over land or ocean.

Sources for Slide 1:

- 1) "Heat Wave." Wikipedia. 21 Feb 2009 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heat_wave>
- 2) "The Climate of 2007." NOAA Satellite and Information Services. <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/68/Temperature_anomalies_2007.gif>