

Key takeaways from the US government's Fourth National Climate Assessment report

- 1. Hot weather is getting more common, while colder weather is becoming more rare**
 - According to the report, the number of record low temperatures has been steadily declining since the 1970s, while the number of record high temperatures has been increasing
 - The frequency of heat waves, defined as 6-day periods with a maximum temperature above the 90th percentile for 1961-1990, has increased since the 1960s, and the intensity of heat waves is expected to increase
- 2. Climate change has worsened wildfires in the southwest US and Alaska**
 - The number of wildfires has increased from 1984-2015, and the area burned in the western US and Alaska has steadily increased since the 1970s
 - Climate change is responsible for “over half the observed increase in western US forest fuel aridity from 1979-2015 and doubled the forest fire area over the period 1984-2015”
- 3. Crop production will decline in the US**
 - Due to rising temperatures, droughts and flooding predicted in the climate report, crop production will decline across the US
 - The Midwest will be hit particularly hard: the report predicts that the region's farms will be able to produce only 75% of the corn that they produce currently
- 4. Rising sea levels will force mass migration from coastal cities**
 - Sea level rise threatens the 42% of the US population that live in coastal shoreline counties
 - By the year 2100, the report estimates that 13.1 million people may be forced to migrate because of sea level rise of at least 6 feet
- 5. Illnesses and deaths due to high temperatures will increase**
 - Older adults, pregnant women and young children face increased risk of illness and death
 - The Midwest will see the largest increase in temperatures, which will lead to an additional 2,000 premature deaths by 2090

Sources: “Fourth National Climate Assessment,” *Global Change*; Rachel Gutman, “The Three Most Chilling Conclusions From the Climate Report,” *The Atlantic*. November 26, 2018; Jen Christensen, “15 takeaways from the US climate change report,” *CNN*. November 26, 2018.