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Climate, Weather, Catastrophes

The increasing occurrence of disastrous floods, record high temperatures, drought, forest fires, and tropical cyclones in many parts of the world has again focussed public interest on the issue of climate change. Questions are being raised time and again as to the causes of these extreme weather phenomena, which can have serious social and economic consequences, and as to the measures that could be applied to avert them or adapt to them.

Scientists have been studying the global climatic system now for more than ten years. This has involved analysis of mankind's effect on it and looking at the possible consequences of future climate changes. Over the last few years, as a result of intensive research many answers to questions concerning fundamental mechanisms and development trends have become much clearer.

01 Climate Change or Climate Catastrophe?

What kind of a temperature rise can we expect over the next few decades? Forecasts range from 0.1 to 5.0 degrees. For many years now over a hundred scientists at the Max Planck Institute of Meteorology in Hamburg have been studying how physical, chemical, and biological processes, as well as human behaviour, can contribute to global and regional climate change.

02 Beringia – Climatic Alarm in the Arctic

The climatic history of our planet can be seen most clearly in the sunken land bridge of Beringia between Alaska and Siberia. Today this region is again facing a dramatic development. In only ten years the temperature has risen by two degrees. The edges of the drift ice are moving north with ever increasing speed. Scientists are trying to find out why.

03 The Riddle of Ladakh

In the Himalayas scientists are searching for reasons for global climate change. What information can they derive from lakes high in the mountains? And how can Einstein's discoveries help them on their expedition?

04 In the Eye of the Storm

June to November is hurricane season in the Caribbean and along the southeastern coast of the United States. The average number of hurricanes as well as their intensity seems to be rising. When storms begin to develop its time for the so-called storm seekers to board their research planes packed with scientific equipment and fly through the hurricane's center. What triggers hurricanes? How can climate researchers explain this development in the Caribbean? Data collected on these daring flights through the eye of a storm may provide the answer.

05 Does the Weather Makes You Sick?

More than a third of all people are sensitive to changing weather conditions. Among the symptoms are headaches, migraine, sleep disorders and aching joints. The reason may be so-called "spherics", atmospheric pulsed radiation. Allergies and respiratory tract complaints correspond to changing weather and their numbers have drastically increased. Global warming spells bad news... for our health too.

06 Fishing for Climatic Clues

Scientists on board the research vessel "D.P. Hunter", which is actually equipped to search for oil deposits, carried out research off the southern coast of Tahiti to try and determine how our climate has changed over the last twenty thousand years. They hope to obtain information from drill samples taken from underwater fossilized corals.