

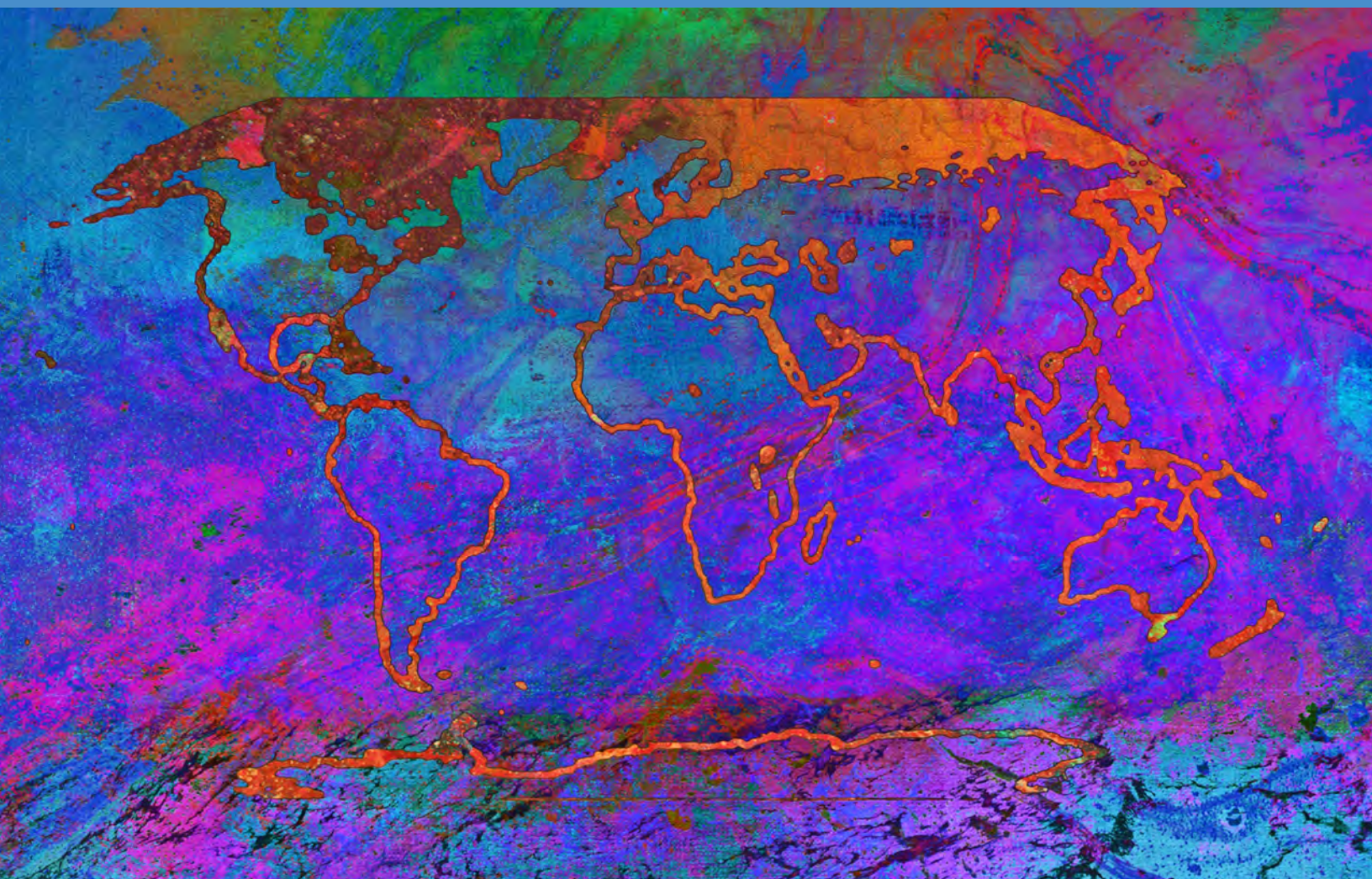
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INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON climate change

Climate Change 2021

The Physical Science Basis

Summary for Policymakers



WGI

Working Group I contribution to the
Sixth Assessment Report of the
Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change



Summary for Policymakers

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Introduction

This Summary for Policymakers (SPM) presents key findings of the Working Group I (WGI) contribution to the IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report (AR6)¹ on the physical science basis of climate change. The report builds upon the 2013 Working Group I contribution to the IPCC's Fifth Assessment Report (AR5) and the 2018–2019 IPCC Special Reports² of the AR6 cycle and incorporates subsequent new evidence from climate science³.

This SPM provides a high-level summary of the understanding of the current state of the climate, including how it is changing and the role of human influence, the state of knowledge about possible climate futures, climate information relevant to regions and sectors, and limiting human-induced climate change.

Based on scientific understanding, key findings can be formulated as statements of fact or associated with an assessed level of confidence indicated using the IPCC calibrated language⁴.

The scientific basis for each key finding is found in chapter sections of the main Report, and in the integrated synthesis presented in the Technical Summary (hereafter TS), and is indicated in curly brackets. The AR6 WGI Interactive Atlas facilitates exploration of these key synthesis findings, and supporting climate change information, across the WGI reference regions⁵.

¹ Decision IPCC/XLVI-2.

² The three Special reports are: Global warming of 1.5°C: an IPCC Special Report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty (SR1.5); Climate Change and Land: an IPCC Special Report on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security, and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems (SRCCL); IPCC Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate (SROCC).

³ The assessment covers scientific literature accepted for publication by 31 January 2021.

⁴ Each finding is grounded in an evaluation of underlying evidence and agreement. A level of confidence is expressed using five qualifiers: very low, low, medium, high and very high, and typeset in italics, for example, *medium confidence*. The following terms have been used to indicate the assessed likelihood of an outcome or a result: *virtually certain* 99–100% probability, *very likely* 90–100%, *likely* 66–100%, *about as likely as not* 33–66%, *unlikely* 0–33%, *very unlikely* 0–10%, *exceptionally unlikely* 0–1%. Additional terms (*extremely likely* 95–100%, *more likely than not* >50–100%, and *extremely unlikely* 0–5%) may also be used when appropriate. Assessed likelihood is typeset in italics, for example, *very likely*. This is consistent with AR5. In this Report, unless stated otherwise, square brackets [x to y] are used to provide the assessed *very likely* range, or 90% interval.

⁵ The Interactive Atlas is available at <https://interactive-atlas.ipcc.ch>

A. The Current State of the Climate

Since AR5, improvements in observationally based estimates and information from paleoclimate archives provide a comprehensive view of each component of the climate system and its changes to date. New climate model simulations, new analyses, and methods combining multiple lines of evidence lead to improved understanding of human influence on a wider range of climate variables, including weather and climate extremes. The time periods considered throughout this Section depend upon the availability of observational products, paleoclimate archives and peer-reviewed studies.

A.1 It is unequivocal that human influence has warmed the atmosphere, ocean and land. Widespread and rapid changes in the atmosphere, ocean, cryosphere and biosphere have occurred.

{2.2, 2.3, Cross-Chapter Box 2.3, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.8, 5.2, 5.3, 6.4, 7.3, 8.3, 9.2, 9.3, 9.5, 9.6, Cross-Chapter Box 9.1} (Figure SPM.1, Figure SPM.2)

A.1.1 Observed increases in well-mixed greenhouse gas (GHG) concentrations since around 1750 are unequivocally caused by human activities. Since 2011 (measurements reported in AR5), concentrations have continued to increase in the atmosphere, reaching annual averages of 410 ppm for carbon dioxide (CO₂), 1866 ppb for methane (CH₄), and 332 ppb for nitrous oxide (N₂O) in 2019⁶. Land and ocean have taken up a near-constant proportion (globally about 56% per year) of CO₂ emissions from human activities over the past six decades, with regional differences (*high confidence*)⁷. {2.2, 5.2, 7.3, TS.2.2, Box TS.5}

A.1.2 Each of the last four decades has been successively warmer than any decade that preceded it since 1850. Global surface temperature⁸ in the first two decades of the 21st century (2001–2020) was 0.99 [0.84–1.10] °C higher than 1850–1900⁹. Global surface temperature was 1.09 [0.95 to 1.20] °C higher in 2011–2020 than 1850–1900, with larger increases over land (1.59 [1.34 to 1.83] °C) than over the ocean (0.88 [0.68 to 1.01] °C). The estimated increase in global surface temperature since AR5 is principally due to further warming since 2003–2012 (+0.19 [0.16 to 0.22] °C). Additionally, methodological advances and new datasets contributed approximately 0.1°C to the updated estimate of warming in AR6¹⁰.

⁶ Other GHG concentrations in 2019 were: PFCs (109 ppt CF₄ equivalent); SF₆ (10 ppt); NF₃ (2 ppt); HFCs (237 ppt HFC-134a equivalent); other Montreal Protocol gases (mainly CFCs, HCFCs, 1032 ppt CFC-12 equivalent). Increases from 2011 are 19 ppm for CO₂, 63 ppb for CH₄ and 8 ppb for N₂O.

⁷ Land and ocean are not substantial sinks for other GHGs.

⁸ The term ‘global surface temperature’ is used in reference to both global mean surface temperature and global surface air temperature throughout this SPM. Changes in these quantities are assessed with *high confidence* to differ by at most 10% from one another, but conflicting lines of evidence lead to *low confidence* in the sign of any difference in long-term trend. {Cross-Section Box TS.1}

⁹ The period 1850–1900 represents the earliest period of sufficiently globally complete observations to estimate global surface temperature and, consistent with AR5 and SR1.5, is used as an approximation for pre-industrial conditions.

¹⁰ Since AR5, methodological advances and new datasets have provided a more complete spatial representation of changes in surface temperature, including in the Arctic. These and other improvements have additionally increased the estimate of global surface temperature change by approximately 0.1 °C, but this increase does not represent additional physical warming since the AR5.

A.1.3 The *likely* range of total human-caused global surface temperature increase from 1850–1900 to 2010–2019¹¹ is 0.8°C to 1.3°C, with a best estimate of 1.07°C. It is *likely* that well-mixed GHGs contributed a warming of 1.0°C to 2.0°C, other human drivers (principally aerosols) contributed a cooling of 0.0°C to 0.8°C, natural drivers changed global surface temperature by –0.1°C to 0.1°C, and internal variability changed it by –0.2°C to 0.2°C. It is *very likely* that well-mixed GHGs were the main driver¹² of tropospheric warming since 1979, and *extremely likely* that human-caused stratospheric ozone depletion was the main driver of cooling of the lower stratosphere between 1979 and the mid-1990s.
{3.3, 6.4, 7.3, Cross-Section Box TS.1, TS.2.3} (Figure SPM.2)

A.1.4 Globally averaged precipitation over land has *likely* increased since 1950, with a faster rate of increase since the 1980s (*medium confidence*). It is *likely* that human influence contributed to the pattern of observed precipitation changes since the mid-20th century, and *extremely likely* that human influence contributed to the pattern of observed changes in near-surface ocean salinity. Mid-latitude storm tracks have *likely* shifted poleward in both hemispheres since the 1980s, with marked seasonality in trends (*medium confidence*). For the Southern Hemisphere, human influence *very likely* contributed to the poleward shift of the closely related extratropical jet in austral summer.
{2.3, 3.3, 8.3, 9.2, TS.2.3, TS.2.4, Box TS.6}

A.1.5 Human influence is *very likely* the main driver of the global retreat of glaciers since the 1990s and the decrease in Arctic sea ice area between 1979–1988 and 2010–2019 (about 40% in September and about 10% in March). There has been no significant trend in Antarctic sea ice area from 1979 to 2020 due to regionally opposing trends and large internal variability. Human influence *very likely* contributed to the decrease in Northern Hemisphere spring snow cover since 1950. It is *very likely* that human influence has contributed to the observed surface melting of the Greenland Ice Sheet over the past two decades, but there is only *limited evidence*, with *medium agreement*, of human influence on the Antarctic Ice Sheet mass loss.
{2.3, 3.4, 8.3, 9.3, 9.5, TS.2.5}

A.1.6 It is *virtually certain* that the global upper ocean (0–700 m) has warmed since the 1970s and *extremely likely* that human influence is the main driver. It is *virtually certain* that human-caused CO₂ emissions are the main driver of current global acidification of the surface open ocean. There is *high confidence* that oxygen levels have dropped in many upper ocean regions since the mid-20th century, and *medium confidence* that human influence contributed to this drop.
{2.3, 3.5, 3.6, 5.3, 9.2, TS.2.4}

A.1.7 Global mean sea level increased by 0.20 [0.15 to 0.25] m between 1901 and 2018. The average rate of sea level rise was 1.3 [0.6 to 2.1] mm yr⁻¹ between 1901 and 1971, increasing to 1.9 [0.8 to 2.9] mm yr⁻¹ between 1971 and 2006, and further increasing to 3.7 [3.2 to 4.2] mm yr⁻¹ between 2006 and 2018 (*high confidence*). Human influence was *very likely* the main driver of these increases since at least 1971.
{2.3, 3.5, 9.6, Cross-Chapter Box 9.1, Box TS.4}

A.1.8 Changes in the land biosphere since 1970 are consistent with global warming: climate zones have shifted poleward in both hemispheres, and the growing season has on average lengthened by up to two days per decade since the 1950s in the Northern Hemisphere extratropics (*high confidence*).
{2.3, TS.2.6}

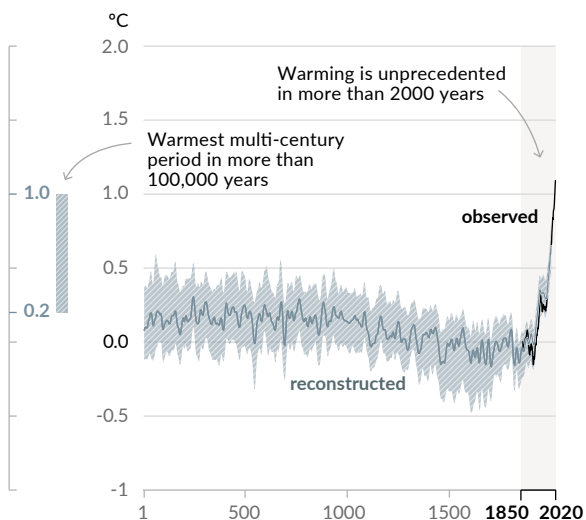
¹¹ The period distinction with A.1.2 arises because the attribution studies consider this slightly earlier period. The observed warming to 2010–2019 is 1.06 [0.88 to 1.21] °C.

¹² Throughout this SPM, ‘main driver’ means responsible for more than 50% of the change.

Human influence has warmed the climate at a rate that is unprecedented in at least the last 2000 years

Changes in global surface temperature relative to 1850-1900

a) Change in global surface temperature (decadal average) as reconstructed (1-2000) and observed (1850-2020)



b) Change in global surface temperature (annual average) as observed and simulated using human & natural and only natural factors (both 1850-2020)

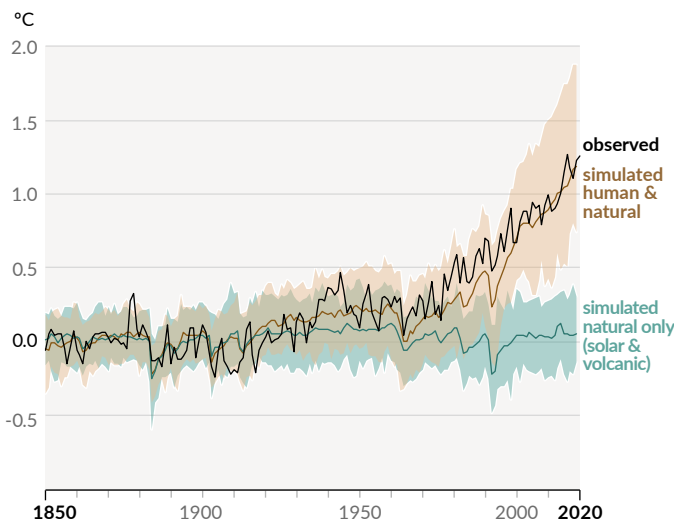


Figure SPM.1: History of global temperature change and causes of recent warming.

Panel a): Changes in global surface temperature reconstructed from paleoclimate archives (solid grey line, 1–2000) and from direct observations (solid black line, 1850–2020), both relative to 1850–1900 and decadal averaged. The vertical bar on the left shows the estimated temperature (*very likely* range) during the warmest multi-century period in at least the last 100,000 years, which occurred around 6500 years ago during the current interglacial period (Holocene). The Last Interglacial, around 125,000 years ago, is the next most recent candidate for a period of higher temperature. These past warm periods were caused by slow (multi-millennial) orbital variations. The grey shading with white diagonal lines shows the *very likely* ranges for the temperature reconstructions.

Panel b): Changes in global surface temperature over the past 170 years (black line) relative to 1850–1900 and annually averaged, compared to CMIP6 climate model simulations (see Box SPM.1) of the temperature response to both human and natural drivers (brown), and to only natural drivers (solar and volcanic activity, green). Solid coloured lines show the multi-model average, and coloured shades show the *very likely* range of simulations. (see Figure SPM.2 for the assessed contributions to warming).

{2.3.1, 3.3, Cross-Chapter Box 2.3, Cross-Section Box TS.1, Figure 1a, TS.2.2}

Observed warming is driven by emissions from human activities, with greenhouse gas warming partly masked by aerosol cooling

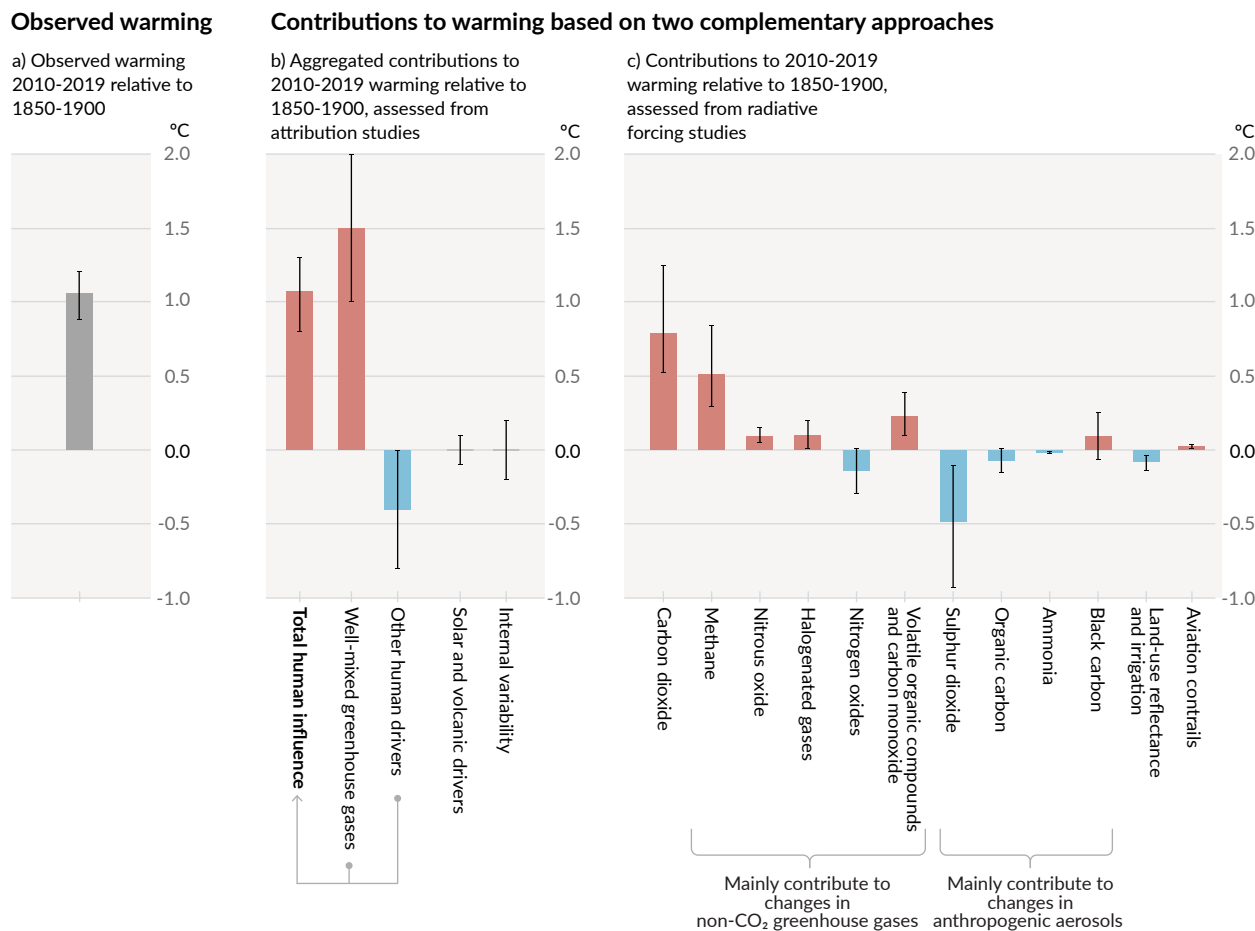


Figure SPM.2: Assessed contributions to observed warming in 2010–2019 relative to 1850–1900.

Panel a): Observed global warming (increase in global surface temperature) and its *very likely* range {3.3.1, Cross-Chapter Box 2.3}.

Panel b): Evidence from attribution studies, which synthesize information from climate models and observations. The panel shows temperature change attributed to total human influence, changes in well-mixed greenhouse gas concentrations, other human drivers due to aerosols, ozone and land-use change (land-use reflectance), solar and volcanic drivers, and internal climate variability. Whiskers show *likely* ranges {3.3.1}.

Panel c): Evidence from the assessment of radiative forcing and climate sensitivity. The panel shows temperature changes from individual components of human influence, including emissions of greenhouse gases, aerosols and their precursors; land-use changes (land-use reflectance and irrigation); and aviation contrails. Whiskers show *very likely* ranges. Estimates account for both direct emissions into the atmosphere and their effect, if any, on other climate drivers. For aerosols, both direct (through radiation) and indirect (through interactions with clouds) effects are considered. {6.4.2, 7.3}

A.2 The scale of recent changes across the climate system as a whole and the present state of many aspects of the climate system are unprecedented over many centuries to many thousands of years.

{Cross-Chapter Box 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 5.1} (Figure SPM.1)

A.2.1 In 2019, atmospheric CO₂ concentrations were higher than at any time in at least 2 million years (*high confidence*), and concentrations of CH₄ and N₂O were higher than at any time in at least 800,000 years (*very high confidence*). Since 1750, increases in CO₂ (47%) and CH₄ (156%) concentrations far exceed, and increases in N₂O (23%) are similar to, the natural multi-millennial changes between glacial and interglacial periods over at least the past 800,000 years (*very high confidence*).
{2.2, 5.1, TS.2.2}

A.2.2 Global surface temperature has increased faster since 1970 than in any other 50-year period over at least the last 2000 years (*high confidence*). Temperatures during the most recent decade (2011–2020) exceed those of the most recent multi-century warm period, around 6500 years ago¹³ [0.2°C to 1°C relative to 1850–1900] (*medium confidence*). Prior to that, the next most recent warm period was about 125,000 years ago when the multi-century temperature [0.5°C to 1.5°C relative to 1850–1900] overlaps the observations of the most recent decade (*medium confidence*).

{Cross-Chapter Box 2.1, 2.3, Cross-Section Box TS.1} (Figure SPM.1)

A.2.3 In 2011–2020, annual average Arctic sea ice area reached its lowest level since at least 1850 (*high confidence*). Late summer Arctic sea ice area was smaller than at any time in at least the past 1000 years (*medium confidence*). The global nature of glacier retreat, with almost all of the world's glaciers retreating synchronously, since the 1950s is unprecedented in at least the last 2000 years (*medium confidence*).
{2.3, TS.2.5}

A.2.4 Global mean sea level has risen faster since 1900 than over any preceding century in at least the last 3000 years (*high confidence*). The global ocean has warmed faster over the past century than since the end of the last deglacial transition (around 11,000 years ago) (*medium confidence*). A long-term increase in surface open ocean pH occurred over the past 50 million years (*high confidence*), and surface open ocean pH as low as recent decades is unusual in the last 2 million years (*medium confidence*).
{2.3, TS.2.4, Box TS.4}

¹³ As stated in section B.1, even under the very low emissions scenario SSP1-1.9, temperatures are assessed to remain elevated above those of the most recent decade until at least 2100 and therefore warmer than the century-scale period 6500 years ago.

A.3 Human-induced climate change is already affecting many weather and climate extremes in every region across the globe. Evidence of observed changes in extremes such as heatwaves, heavy precipitation, droughts, and tropical cyclones, and, in particular, their attribution to human influence, has strengthened since AR5.

{2.3, 3.3, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5, 8.6, Box 8.1, Box 8.2, Box 9.2, 10.6, 11.2, 11.3, 11.4, 11.6, 11.7, 11.8, 11.9, 12.3} (Figure SPM.3)

A.3.1 It is *virtually certain* that hot extremes (including heatwaves) have become more frequent and more intense across most land regions since the 1950s, while cold extremes (including cold waves) have become less frequent and less severe, with *high confidence* that human-induced climate change is the main driver¹⁴ of these changes. Some recent hot extremes observed over the past decade would have been *extremely unlikely* to occur without human influence on the climate system. Marine heatwaves have approximately doubled in frequency since the 1980s (*high confidence*), and human influence has *very likely* contributed to most of them since at least 2006.

{Box 9.2, 11.2, 11.3, 11.9, TS.2.4, TS.2.6, Box TS.10} (Figure SPM.3)

A.3.2 The frequency and intensity of heavy precipitation events have increased since the 1950s over most land area for which observational data are sufficient for trend analysis (*high confidence*), and human-induced climate change is *likely* the main driver. Human-induced climate change has contributed to increases in agricultural and ecological droughts¹⁵ in some regions due to increased land evapotranspiration¹⁶ (*medium confidence*).

{8.2, 8.3, 11.4, 11.6, 11.9, TS.2.6, Box TS.10} (Figure SPM.3)

A.3.3 Decreases in global land monsoon precipitation¹⁷ from the 1950s to the 1980s are partly attributed to human-caused Northern Hemisphere aerosol emissions, but increases since then have resulted from rising GHG concentrations and decadal to multi-decadal internal variability (*medium confidence*). Over South Asia, East Asia and West Africa increases in monsoon precipitation due to warming from GHG emissions were counteracted by decreases in monsoon precipitation due to cooling from human-caused aerosol emissions over the 20th century (*high confidence*). Increases in West African monsoon precipitation since the 1980s are partly due to the growing influence of GHGs and reductions in the cooling effect of human-caused aerosol emissions over Europe and North America (*medium confidence*).

{2.3, 3.3, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5, 8.6, Box 8.1, Box 8.2, 10.6, Box TS.13}

¹⁴ Throughout this SPM, ‘main driver’ means responsible for more than 50% of the change.

¹⁵ Agricultural and ecological drought (depending on the affected biome): a period with abnormal soil moisture deficit, which results from combined shortage of precipitation and excess evapotranspiration, and during the growing season impinges on crop production or ecosystem function in general. Observed changes in meteorological droughts (precipitation deficits) and hydrological droughts (streamflow deficits) are distinct from those in agricultural and ecological droughts and addressed in the underlying AR6 material (Chapter 11).

¹⁶ The combined processes through which water is transferred to the atmosphere from open water and ice surfaces, bare soil, and vegetation that make up the Earth’s surface.

¹⁷ The global monsoon is defined as the area in which the annual range (local summer minus local winter) of precipitation is greater than 2.5 mm day⁻¹. Global land monsoon precipitation refers to the mean precipitation over land areas within the global monsoon.

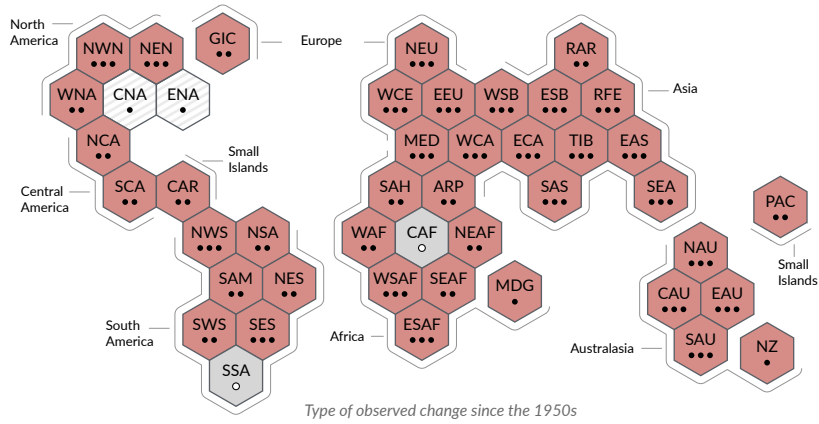
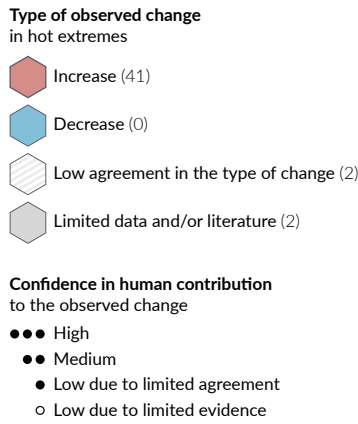
A.3.4 It is *likely* that the global proportion of major (Category 3–5) tropical cyclone occurrence has increased over the last four decades, and the latitude where tropical cyclones in the western North Pacific reach their peak intensity has shifted northward; these changes cannot be explained by internal variability alone (*medium confidence*). There is *low confidence* in long-term (multi-decadal to centennial) trends in the frequency of all-category tropical cyclones. Event attribution studies and physical understanding indicate that human-induced climate change increases heavy precipitation associated with tropical cyclones (*high confidence*) but data limitations inhibit clear detection of past trends on the global scale. {8.2, 11.7, Box TS.10}

A.3.5 Human influence has *likely* increased the chance of compound extreme events¹⁸ since the 1950s. This includes increases in the frequency of concurrent heatwaves and droughts on the global scale (*high confidence*); fire weather in some regions of all inhabited continents (*medium confidence*); and compound flooding in some locations (*medium confidence*). {11.6, 11.7, 11.8, 12.3, 12.4, TS.2.6, Table TS.5, Box TS.10}

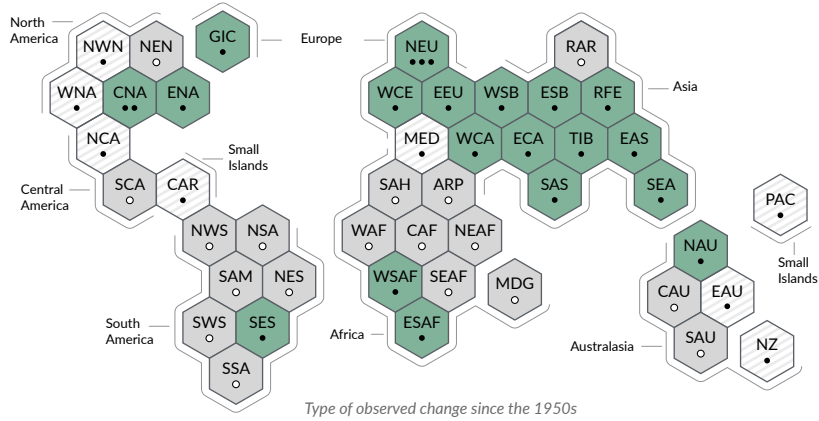
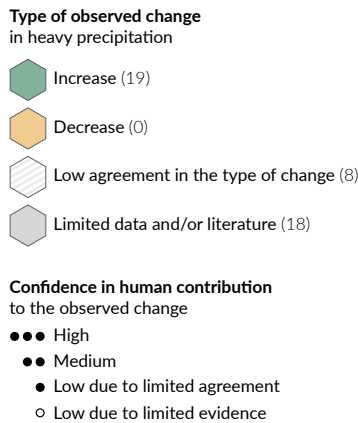
¹⁸ Compound extreme events are the combination of multiple drivers and/or hazards that contribute to societal or environmental risk. Examples are concurrent heatwaves and droughts, compound flooding (e.g., a storm surge in combination with extreme rainfall and/or river flow), compound fire weather conditions (i.e., a combination of hot, dry, and windy conditions), or concurrent extremes at different locations.

Climate change is already affecting every inhabited region across the globe with human influence contributing to many observed changes in weather and climate extremes

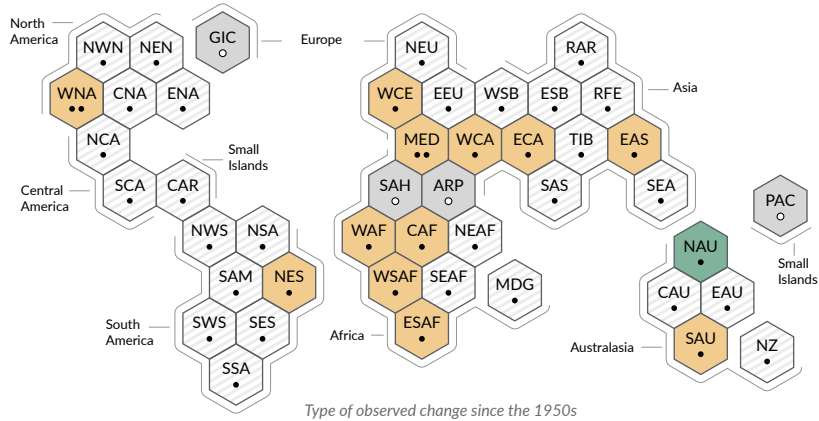
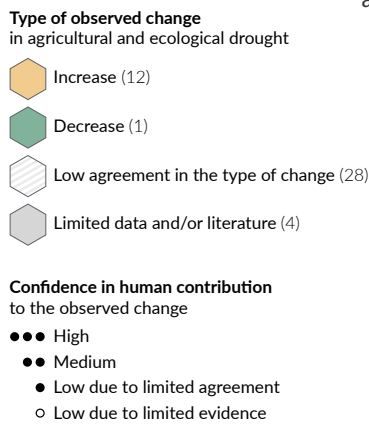
a) Synthesis of assessment of observed change in **hot extremes** and confidence in human contribution to the observed changes in the world's regions



b) Synthesis of assessment of observed change in **heavy precipitation** and confidence in human contribution to the observed changes in the world's regions



c) Synthesis of assessment of observed change in **agricultural and ecological drought** and confidence in human contribution to the observed changes in the world's regions



Each hexagon corresponds to one of the IPCC AR6 WGI reference regions



IPCC AR6 WGI reference regions: **North America:** NWN (North-Western North America), NEN (North-Eastern North America), WNA (Western North America), CNA (Central North America), ENA (Eastern North America), **Central America:** NCA (Northern Central America), SCA (Southern Central America), CAR (Caribbean), **South America:** NWS (North-Western South America), NSA (Northern South America), NES (North-Eastern South America), SAM (South American Monsoon), SWS (South-Western South America), SES (South-Eastern South America), SSA (Southern South America), **Europe:** GIC (Greenland/Iceland), NEU (Northern Europe), WCE (Western and Central Europe), EEU (Eastern Europe), MED (Mediterranean), **Africa:** MED (Mediterranean), SAH (Sahara), WAF (Western Africa), CAF (Central Africa), NEAF (North Eastern Africa), SEAF (South Eastern Africa), WSAF (West Southern Africa), ESAF (East Southern Africa), MDG (Madagascar), **Asia:** RAR (Russian Arctic), WSB (West Siberia), ESB (East Siberia), RFE (Russian Far East), WCA (West Central Asia), ECA (East Central Asia), TIB (Tibetan Plateau), EAS (East Asia), ARP (Arabian Peninsula), SAS (South Asia), SEA (South East Asia), **Australasia:** NAU (Northern Australia), CAU (Central Australia), EAU (Eastern Australia), SAU (Southern Australia), NZ (New Zealand), **Small Islands:** CAR (Caribbean), PAC (Pacific Small Islands)

Figure SPM.3: Synthesis of assessed observed and attributable regional changes.

The IPCC AR6 WGI inhabited regions are displayed as **hexagons** with identical size in their approximate geographical location (see legend for regional acronyms). All assessments are made for each region as a whole and for the 1950s to the present. Assessments made on different time scales or more local spatial scales might differ from what is shown in the figure. The **colours** in each panel represent the four outcomes of the assessment on observed changes. White and light grey striped hexagons are used where there is *low agreement* in the type of change for the region as a whole, and grey hexagons are used when there is limited data and/or literature that prevents an assessment of the region as a whole. Other colours indicate at least *medium confidence* in the observed change. The **confidence level** for the human influence on these observed changes is based on assessing trend detection and attribution and event attribution literature, and it is indicated by the number of dots: three dots for *high confidence*, two dots for *medium confidence* and one dot for *low confidence* (filled: limited agreement; empty: limited evidence).

Panel a) For hot extremes, the evidence is mostly drawn from changes in metrics based on daily maximum temperatures; regional studies using other indices (heatwave duration, frequency and intensity) are used in addition. Red hexagons indicate regions where there is at least *medium confidence* in an observed increase in hot extremes.

Panel b) For heavy precipitation, the evidence is mostly drawn from changes in indices based on one-day or five-day precipitation amounts using global and regional studies. Green hexagons indicate regions where there is at least *medium confidence* in an observed increase in heavy precipitation.

Panel c) Agricultural and ecological droughts are assessed based on observed and simulated changes in total column soil moisture, complemented by evidence on changes in surface soil moisture, water balance (precipitation minus evapotranspiration) and indices driven by precipitation and atmospheric evaporative demand. Yellow hexagons indicate regions where there is at least *medium confidence* in an observed increase in this type of drought and green hexagons indicate regions where there is at least *medium confidence* in an observed decrease in agricultural and ecological drought.

For all regions, table TS.5 shows a broader range of observed changes besides the ones shown in this figure. Note that SSA is the only region that does not display observed changes in the metrics shown in this figure, but is affected by observed increases in mean temperature, decreases in frost, and increases in marine heatwaves.

{11.9, Table TS.5, Box TS.10, Figure 1, Atlas 1.3.3, Figure Atlas.2}

A.4 Improved knowledge of climate processes, paleoclimate evidence and the response of the climate system to increasing radiative forcing gives a best estimate of equilibrium climate sensitivity of 3°C with a narrower range compared to AR5. **{2.2, 7.3, 7.4, 7.5, Box 7.2, Cross-Chapter Box 9.1, 9.4, 9.5, 9.6}**

A.4.1 Human-caused radiative forcing of 2.72 [1.96 to 3.48] W m⁻² in 2019 relative to 1750 has warmed the climate system. This warming is mainly due to increased GHG concentrations, partly reduced by cooling due to increased aerosol concentrations. The radiative forcing has increased by 0.43 W m⁻² (19%) relative to AR5, of which 0.34 W m⁻² is due to the increase in GHG concentrations since 2011. The remainder is due to improved scientific understanding and changes in the assessment of aerosol forcing, which include decreases in concentration and improvement in its calculation (*high confidence*).

{2.2, 7.3, TS.2.2, TS.3.1}

A.4.2 Human-caused net positive radiative forcing causes an accumulation of additional energy (heating) in the climate system, partly reduced by increased energy loss to space in response to surface warming. The observed average rate of heating of the climate system increased from 0.50 [0.32 to 0.69] W m⁻² for the period 1971–2006¹⁹, to 0.79 [0.52 to 1.06] W m⁻² for the period 2006–2018²⁰ (*high confidence*). Ocean warming accounted for 91% of the heating in the climate system, with land warming, ice loss and atmospheric warming accounting for about 5%, 3% and 1%, respectively (*high confidence*).
{7.2, Box 7.2, TS.3.1}

A.4.3 Heating of the climate system has caused global mean sea level rise through ice loss on land and thermal expansion from ocean warming. Thermal expansion explained 50% of sea level rise during 1971–2018, while ice loss from glaciers contributed 22%, ice sheets 20% and changes in land water storage 8%. The rate of ice sheet loss increased by a factor of four between 1992–1999 and 2010–2019. Together, ice sheet and glacier mass loss were the dominant contributors to global mean sea level rise during 2006–2018. (*high confidence*)
{Cross-Chapter Box 9.1, 9.4, 9.5, 9.6}

A.4.4 The equilibrium climate sensitivity is an important quantity used to estimate how the climate responds to radiative forcing. Based on multiple lines of evidence²¹, the *very likely* range of equilibrium climate sensitivity is between 2°C (*high confidence*) and 5°C (*medium confidence*). The AR6 assessed best estimate is 3°C with a *likely* range of 2.5°C to 4°C (*high confidence*), compared to 1.5°C to 4.5°C in AR5, which did not provide a best estimate.
{7.4, 7.5, TS.3.2}

¹⁹ cumulative energy increase of 282 [177 to 387] ZJ over 1971–2006 (1 ZJ = 10²¹ J).

²⁰ cumulative energy increase of 152 [100 to 205] ZJ over 2006–2018.

²¹ Understanding of climate processes, the instrumental record, paleoclimates and model-based emergent constraints (see glossary).

B. Possible Climate Futures

A set of five new illustrative emissions scenarios is considered consistently across this report to explore the climate response to a broader range of greenhouse gas (GHG), land use and air pollutant futures than assessed in AR5. This set of scenarios drives climate model projections of changes in the climate system. These projections account for solar activity and background forcing from volcanoes. Results over the 21st century are provided for the near-term (2021–2040), mid-term (2041–2060) and long-term (2081–2100) relative to 1850–1900, unless otherwise stated.

Box SPM.1: Scenarios, Climate Models and Projections

Box SPM.1.1: This report assesses the climate response to five illustrative scenarios that cover the range of possible future development of anthropogenic drivers of climate change found in the literature. They start in 2015, and include scenarios²² with high and very high GHG emissions (SSP3-7.0 and SSP5-8.5) and CO₂ emissions that roughly double from current levels by 2100 and 2050, respectively, scenarios with intermediate GHG emissions (SSP2-4.5) and CO₂ emissions remaining around current levels until the middle of the century, and scenarios with very low and low GHG emissions and CO₂ emissions declining to net zero around or after 2050, followed by varying levels of net negative CO₂ emissions²³ (SSP1-1.9 and SSP1-2.6) as illustrated in Figure SPM.4. Emissions vary between scenarios depending on socio-economic assumptions, levels of climate change mitigation and, for aerosols and non-methane ozone precursors, air pollution controls. Alternative assumptions may result in similar emissions and climate responses, but the socio-economic assumptions and the feasibility or likelihood of individual scenarios is not part of the assessment.

{TS.1.3, 1.6, Cross-Chapter Box 1.4} (Figure SPM.4)

Box SPM.1.2: This report assesses results from climate models participating in the Coupled Model Intercomparison Project Phase 6 (CMIP6) of the World Climate Research Programme. These models include new and better representation of physical, chemical and biological processes, as well as higher resolution, compared to climate models considered in previous IPCC assessment reports. This has improved the simulation of the recent mean state of most large-scale indicators of climate change and many other aspects across the climate system. Some differences from observations remain, for example in regional precipitation patterns. The CMIP6 historical simulations assessed in this report have an ensemble mean global surface temperature change within 0.2°C of the observations over most of the historical period, and observed warming is within the *very likely* range of the CMIP6 ensemble. However, some CMIP6 models simulate a warming that is either above or below the assessed *very likely* range of observed warming.

{1.5, Cross-Chapter Box 2.2, 3.3, 3.8, TS.1.2, Cross-Section Box TS.1} (Figure SPM.1 b, Figure SPM.2)

Box SPM.1.3: The CMIP6 models considered in this Report have a wider range of climate sensitivity than in CMIP5 models and the AR6 assessed *very likely* range, which is based on multiple lines of evidence. These CMIP6 models also show a higher average climate sensitivity than CMIP5 and the AR6 assessed best estimate. The higher CMIP6 climate sensitivity values compared to CMIP5 can be traced to an amplifying cloud feedback that is larger in CMIP6 by about 20%.

{Box 7.1, 7.3, 7.4, 7.5, TS.3.2}

Box SPM.1.4: For the first time in an IPCC report, assessed future changes in global surface temperature, ocean warming and sea level are constructed by combining multi-model projections with observational constraints based on past simulated warming, as well as the AR6 assessment of climate sensitivity. For other quantities, such robust methods do not yet exist to constrain the projections. Nevertheless, robust projected

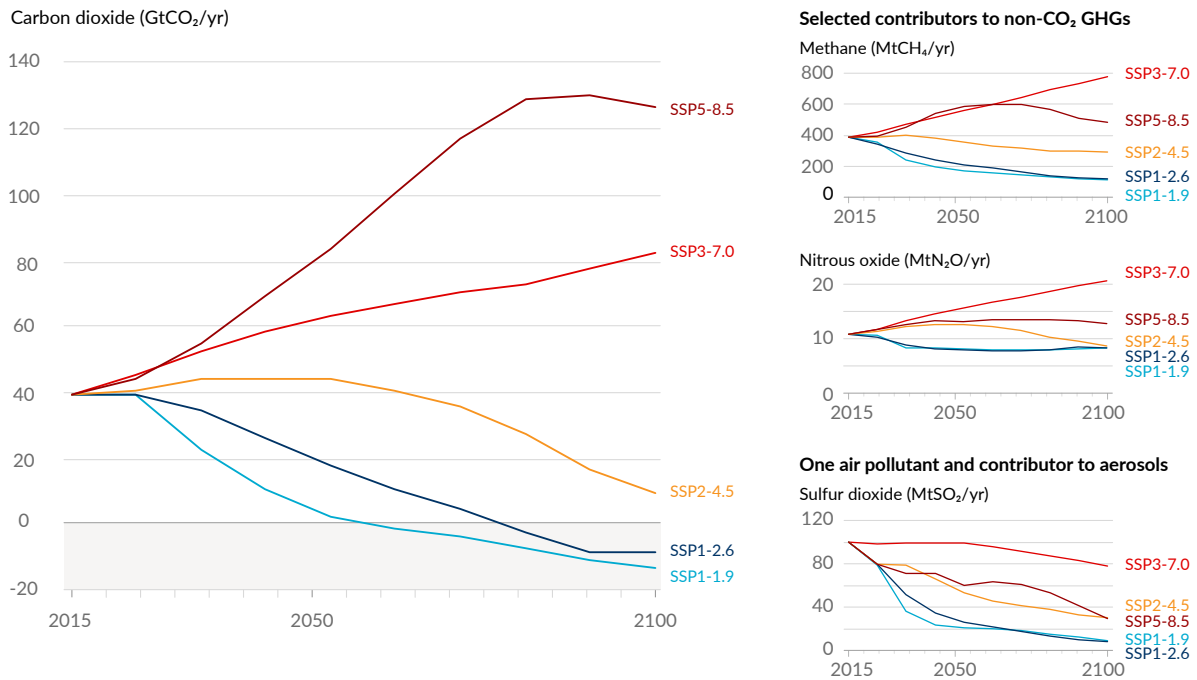
²² Throughout this report, the five illustrative scenarios are referred to as SSPx-y, where ‘SSPx’ refers to the Shared Socio-economic Pathway or ‘SSP’ describing the socio-economic trends underlying the scenario, and ‘y’ refers to the approximate level of radiative forcing (in W m⁻²) resulting from the scenario in the year 2100. A detailed comparison to scenarios used in earlier IPCC reports is provided in Section TS.1.3 and 1.6 and 4.6. The SSPs that underlie the specific forcing scenarios used to drive climate models are not assessed by WGI. Rather, the SSPx-y labelling ensures traceability to the underlying literature in which specific forcing pathways are used as input to the climate models. IPCC is neutral with regard to the assumptions underlying the SSPs, which do not cover all possible scenarios. Alternative scenarios may be considered or developed.

²³ Net negative CO₂ emissions are reached when anthropogenic removals of CO₂ exceed anthropogenic emissions. {Glossary}

geographical patterns of many variables can be identified at a given level of global warming, common to all scenarios considered and independent of timing when the global warming level is reached. {1.6, Box 4.1, 4.3, 4.6, 7.5, 9.2, 9.6, Cross-Chapter Box 11.1, Cross-Section Box TS.1}

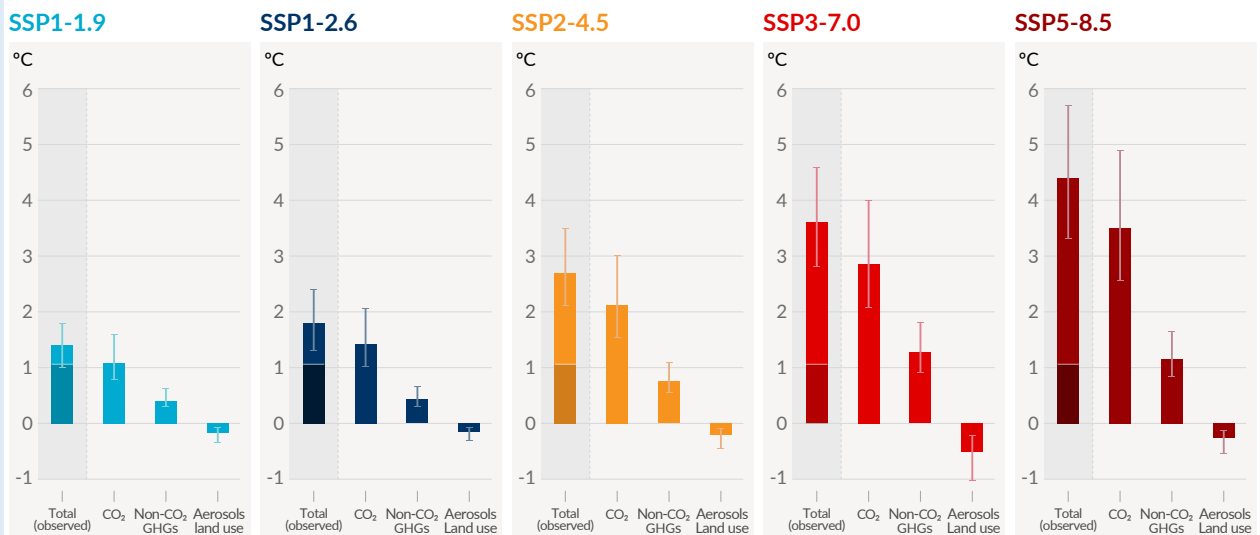
Future emissions cause future additional warming, with total warming dominated by past and future CO₂ emissions

a) Future annual emissions of CO₂ (left) and of a subset of key non-CO₂ drivers (right), across five illustrative scenarios



b) Contribution to global surface temperature increase from different emissions, with a dominant role of CO₂ emissions

Change in global surface temperature in 2081-2100 relative to 1850-1900 (°C)



Total warming (observed warming to date in darker shade), warming from CO₂, warming from non-CO₂ GHGs and cooling from changes in aerosols and land use

Figure SPM.4: Future anthropogenic emissions of key drivers of climate change and warming contributions by groups of drivers for the five illustrative scenarios used in this report.

The five scenarios are SSP1-1.9, SSP1-2.6, SSP2-4.5, SSP3-7.0 and SSP5-8.5.

Panel a) Annual anthropogenic (human-caused) emissions over the 2015–2100 period. Shown are emissions trajectories for carbon dioxide (CO₂) from all sectors (GtCO₂/yr) (left graph) and for a subset of three key non-CO₂ drivers considered in the scenarios: methane (CH₄, MtCH₄/yr, top-right graph), nitrous oxide (N₂O, MtN₂O/yr, middle-right graph) and sulfur dioxide (SO₂, MtSO₂/yr, bottom-right graph, contributing to anthropogenic aerosols in panel b).

Panel b) Warming contributions by groups of anthropogenic drivers and by scenario are shown as change in global surface temperature (°C) in 2081–2100 relative to 1850–1900, with indication of the observed warming to date. Bars and whiskers represent median values and the *very likely* range, respectively. Within each scenario bar plot, the bars represent total global warming (°C; total bar) (see Table SPM.1) and warming contributions (°C) from changes in CO₂ (CO₂ bar), from non-CO₂ greenhouse gases (non-CO₂ GHGs bar; comprising well-mixed greenhouse gases and ozone) and net cooling from other anthropogenic drivers (aerosols and land-use bar; anthropogenic aerosols, changes in reflectance due to land-use and irrigation changes, and contrails from aviation; see Figure SPM.2, panel c, for the warming contributions to date for individual drivers). The best estimate for observed warming in 2010–2019 relative to 1850–1900 (see Figure SPM.2, panel a) is indicated in the darker column in the total bar. Warming contributions in panel b are calculated as explained in Table SPM.1 for the total bar. For the other bars the contribution by groups of drivers are calculated with a physical climate emulator of global surface temperature which relies on climate sensitivity and radiative forcing assessments.

{Cross-Chapter Box 1.4, 4.6, Figure 4.35, 6.7, Figure 6.18, 6.22 and 6.24, Cross-Chapter Box 7.1, 7.3, Figure 7.7, Box TS.7, Figures TS.4 and TS.15}

B.1 Global surface temperature will continue to increase until at least the mid-century under all emissions scenarios considered. Global warming of 1.5°C and 2°C will be exceeded during the 21st century unless deep reductions in CO₂ and other greenhouse gas emissions occur in the coming decades.
{2.3, Cross-Chapter Box 2.3, Cross-Chapter Box 2.4, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5} (Figure SPM.1, Figure SPM.4, Figure SPM.8, Table SPM.1, Box SPM.1)

B.1.1 Compared to 1850–1900, global surface temperature averaged over 2081–2100 is *very likely* to be higher by 1.0°C to 1.8°C under the very low GHG emissions scenario considered (SSP1-1.9), by 2.1°C to 3.5°C in the intermediate scenario (SSP2-4.5) and by 3.3°C to 5.7°C under the very high GHG emissions scenario (SSP5-8.5)²⁴. The last time global surface temperature was sustained at or above 2.5°C higher than 1850–1900 was over 3 million years ago (*medium confidence*).
{2.3, Cross-Chapter Box 2.4, 4.3, 4.5, Box TS.2, Box TS.4, Cross-Section Box TS.1} (Table SPM.1)

Table SPM.1: Changes in global surface temperature, which are assessed based on multiple lines of evidence, for selected 20-year time periods and the five illustrative emissions scenarios considered. Temperature differences relative to the average global surface temperature of the period 1850–1900 are reported in °C. This includes the revised assessment of observed historical warming for the AR5 reference period 1986–2005, which in AR6 is higher by 0.08 [–0.01 to 0.12] °C than in the AR5 (see footnote 10). Changes relative to the recent reference period 1995–2014 may be calculated approximately by subtracting 0.85°C, the best estimate of the observed warming from 1850–1900 to 1995–2014.
{Cross-Chapter Box 2.3, 4.3, 4.4, Cross-Section Box TS.1}

²⁴ Changes in global surface temperature are reported as running 20-year averages, unless stated otherwise.

Scenario	Near term, 2021–2040		Mid-term, 2041–2060		Long term, 2081–2100	
	Best estimate (°C)	Very likely range (°C)	Best estimate (°C)	Very likely range (°C)	Best estimate (°C)	Very likely range (°C)
SSP1-1.9	1.5	1.2 to 1.7	1.6	1.2 to 2.0	1.4	1.0 to 1.8
SSP1-2.6	1.5	1.2 to 1.8	1.7	1.3 to 2.2	1.8	1.3 to 2.4
SSP2-4.5	1.5	1.2 to 1.8	2.0	1.6 to 2.5	2.7	2.1 to 3.5
SSP3-7.0	1.5	1.2 to 1.8	2.1	1.7 to 2.6	3.6	2.8 to 4.6
SSP5-8.5	1.6	1.3 to 1.9	2.4	1.9 to 3.0	4.4	3.3 to 5.7

B.1.2 Based on the assessment of multiple lines of evidence, global warming of 2°C, relative to 1850–1900, would be exceeded during the 21st century under the high and very high GHG emissions scenarios considered in this report (SSP3-7.0 and SSP5-8.5, respectively). Global warming of 2°C would *extremely likely* be exceeded in the intermediate scenario (SSP2-4.5). Under the very low and low GHG emissions scenarios, global warming of 2°C is *extremely unlikely* to be exceeded (SSP1-1.9), or *unlikely* to be exceeded (SSP1-2.6)²⁵. Crossing the 2°C global warming level in the mid-term period (2041–2060) is *very likely* to occur under the very high GHG emissions scenario (SSP5-8.5), *likely* to occur under the high GHG emissions scenario (SSP3-7.0), and *more likely than not* to occur in the intermediate GHG emissions scenario (SSP2-4.5)²⁶.

{4.3, Cross-Section Box TS.1} (Table SPM.1, Figure SPM.4, Box SPM.1)

B.1.3 Global warming of 1.5°C relative to 1850-1900 would be exceeded during the 21st century under the intermediate, high and very high scenarios considered in this report (SSP2-4.5, SSP3-7.0 and SSP5-8.5, respectively). Under the five illustrative scenarios, in the near term (2021-2040), the 1.5°C global warming level is *very likely* to be exceeded under the very high GHG emissions scenario (SSP5-8.5), *likely* to be exceeded under the intermediate and high GHG emissions scenarios (SSP2-4.5 and SSP3-7.0), *more likely than not* to be exceeded under the low GHG emissions scenario (SSP1-2.6) and *more likely than not* to be reached under the very low GHG emissions scenario (SSP1-1.9)²⁷. Furthermore, for the very low GHG emissions scenario (SSP1-1.9), it is *more likely than not* that global surface temperature would decline back to below 1.5°C toward the end of the 21st century, with a temporary overshoot of no more than 0.1°C above 1.5°C global warming.

{4.3, Cross-Section Box TS.1} (Table SPM.1, Figure SPM.4)

²⁵ SSP1-1.9 and SSP1-2.6 are scenarios that start in 2015 and have very low and low GHG emissions and CO₂ emissions declining to net zero around or after 2050, followed by varying levels of net negative CO₂ emissions.

²⁶ Crossing is defined here as having the assessed global surface temperature change, averaged over a 20-year period, exceed a particular global warming level.

²⁷ The AR6 assessment of when a given global warming level is first exceeded benefits from the consideration of the illustrative scenarios, the multiple lines of evidence entering the assessment of future global surface temperature response to radiative forcing, and the improved estimate of historical warming. The AR6 assessment is thus not directly comparable to the SR1.5 SPM, which reported likely reaching 1.5°C global warming between 2030 and 2052, from a simple linear extrapolation of warming rates of the recent past. When considering scenarios similar to SSP1-1.9 instead of linear extrapolation, the SR1.5 estimate of when 1.5°C global

B.1.4 Global surface temperature in any single year can vary above or below the long-term human-induced trend, due to substantial natural variability²⁸. The occurrence of individual years with global surface temperature change above a certain level, for example 1.5°C or 2°C, relative to 1850–1900 does not imply that this global warming level has been reached²⁹.

{Cross-Chapter Box 2.3, 4.3, 4.4, Box 4.1, Cross-Section Box TS.1} (**Table SPM.1, Figure SPM.1, Figure SPM.8**)

B.2 Many changes in the climate system become larger in direct relation to increasing global warming. They include increases in the frequency and intensity of hot extremes, marine heatwaves, and heavy precipitation, agricultural and ecological droughts in some regions, and proportion of intense tropical cyclones, as well as reductions in Arctic sea ice, snow cover and permafrost. {4.3, 4.5, 4.6, 7.4, 8.2, 8.4, Box 8.2, 9.3, 9.5, Box 9.2, 11.1, 11.2, 11.3, 11.4, 11.6, 11.7, 11.9, Cross-Chapter Box 11.1, 12.4, 12.5, Cross-Chapter Box 12.1, Atlas.4, Atlas.5, Atlas.6, Atlas.7, Atlas.8, Atlas.9, Atlas.10, Atlas.11} (**Figure SPM.5, Figure SPM.6, Figure SPM.8**)

B.2.1 It is *virtually certain* that the land surface will continue to warm more than the ocean surface (*likely* 1.4 to 1.7 times more). It is *virtually certain* that the Arctic will continue to warm more than global surface temperature, with *high confidence* above two times the rate of global warming.

{2.3, 4.3, 4.5, 4.6, 7.4, 11.1, 11.3, 11.9, 12.4, 12.5, Cross-Chapter Box 12.1, Atlas.4, Atlas.5, Atlas.6, Atlas.7, Atlas.8, Atlas.9, Atlas.10, Atlas.11, Cross-Section Box TS.1, TS.2.6} (**Figure SPM.5**)

B.2.2 With every additional increment of global warming, changes in extremes continue to become larger. For example, every additional 0.5°C of global warming causes clearly discernible increases in the intensity and frequency of hot extremes, including heatwaves (*very likely*), and heavy precipitation (*high confidence*), as well as agricultural and ecological droughts³⁰ in some regions (*high confidence*). Discernible changes in intensity and frequency of meteorological droughts, with more regions showing increases than decreases, are seen in some regions for every additional 0.5°C of global warming (*medium confidence*). Increases in frequency and intensity of hydrological droughts become larger with increasing global warming in some regions (*medium confidence*). There will be an increasing occurrence of some extreme events unprecedented in the observational record with additional global warming, even at 1.5°C of global warming. Projected percentage changes in frequency are higher for rarer events (*high confidence*).

{8.2, 11.2, 11.3, 11.4, 11.6, 11.9, Cross-Chapter Box 11.1, Cross-Chapter Box 12.1, TS.2.6} (**Figure SPM.5, Figure SPM.6**)

warming is first exceeded is close to the best estimate reported here.

²⁸ Natural variability refers to climatic fluctuations that occur without any human influence, that is, internal variability combined with the response to external natural factors such as volcanic eruptions, changes in solar activity and, on longer time scales, orbital effects and plate tectonics.

²⁹ The internal variability in any single year is estimated to be $\pm 0.25^\circ\text{C}$ (5–95% range, *high confidence*).

³⁰ Projected changes in agricultural and ecological droughts are primarily assessed based on total column soil moisture. See footnote 15 for definition and relation to precipitation and evapotranspiration.

B.2.3 Some mid-latitude and semi-arid regions, and the South American Monsoon region, are projected to see the highest increase in the temperature of the hottest days, at about 1.5 to 2 times the rate of global warming (*high confidence*). The Arctic is projected to experience the highest increase in the temperature of the coldest days, at about 3 times the rate of global warming (*high confidence*). With additional global warming, the frequency of marine heatwaves will continue to increase (*high confidence*), particularly in the tropical ocean and the Arctic (*medium confidence*).

{Box 9.2, 11.1, 11.3, 11.9, Cross-Chapter Box 11.1, Cross-Chapter Box 12.1, 12.4, TS.2.4, TS.2.6} (**Figure SPM.6**)

B.2.4 It is *very likely* that heavy precipitation events will intensify and become more frequent in most regions with additional global warming. At the global scale, extreme daily precipitation events are projected to intensify by about 7% for each 1°C of global warming (*high confidence*). The proportion of intense tropical cyclones (categories 4-5) and peak wind speeds of the most intense tropical cyclones are projected to increase at the global scale with increasing global warming (*high confidence*).

{8.2, 11.4, 11.7, 11.9, Cross-Chapter Box 11.1, Box TS.6, TS.4.3.1} (**Figure SPM.5, Figure SPM.6**)

B.2.5 Additional warming is projected to further amplify permafrost thawing, and loss of seasonal snow cover, of land ice and of Arctic sea ice (*high confidence*). The Arctic is *likely* to be practically sea ice free in September³¹ at least once before 2050 under the five illustrative scenarios considered in this report, with more frequent occurrences for higher warming levels. There is *low confidence* in the projected decrease of Antarctic sea ice.

{4.3, 4.5, 7.4, 8.2, 8.4, Box 8.2, 9.3, 9.5, 12.4, Cross-Chapter Box 12.1, Atlas.5, Atlas.6, Atlas.8, Atlas.9, Atlas.11, TS.2.5} (**Figure SPM.8**)

³¹ monthly average sea ice area of less than 1 million km² which is about 15% of the average September sea ice area observed in 1979-1988