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Extreme Climatic Events

What we call climate is the long-term *average* of varying weather conditions in a region. Variation occasionally produces extreme values of climate indicators such as temperature or precipitation. Such extremes can be catastrophic events in themselves such as floods and droughts, or produce indirect effects such as forest fires or human health problems like frostbite or heat stroke.

A shift in both average and extreme weather events over time, with related impacts on human society, is an inevitable result of the global climate change currently underway.

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Ice jam on the Athabasca River.
Source: Elser 2008
(click to enlarge)

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