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UW-Milwaukee Study Could Realign Climate Change Theory

Scientists Claim Earth Is Undergoing Natural Climate Shift

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MILWAUKEE -- The bitter cold and record snowfalls from two wicked winters are causing people to ask if the global climate is truly changing.

The climate is known to be variable and, in recent years, more scientific thought and research has been focused on the global temperature and how humanity might be influencing it.

However, a new study by the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee could turn the climate change world upside down.

Scientists at the university used a math application known as synchronized chaos and applied it to climate data taken over the past 100 years.

"Imagine that you have four synchronized swimmers and they are not holding hands and they do their program and everything is fine; now, if they begin to hold hands and hold hands tightly, most likely a slight error will destroy the synchronization. Well, we applied the same analogy to climate," researcher Dr. Anastasios Tsonis said.

Scientists said that the air and ocean systems of the earth are now showing signs of synchronizing with each other.

Eventually, the systems begin to couple and the synchronous state is destroyed, leading to a climate shift.

"In climate, when this happens, the climate state changes. You go from a cooling regime to a warming regime or a warming regime to a cooling regime. This way we were able to explain all the fluctuations in the global temperature trend in the past century," Tsonis said. "The research team has found the warming trend of the past 30 years has stopped and in fact global temperatures have leveled off since 2001."

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The most recent climate shift probably occurred at about the year 2000.

Now the question is how has warming slowed and how much influence does human activity have?

"But if we don't understand what is natural, I don't think we can say much about what the humans are doing. So our interest is to understand -- first the natural variability of climate -- and then take it from there. So we were very excited when we realized a lot of changes in the past century from warmer to cooler and then back to warmer were all natural," Tsonis said.

Tsonis said he thinks the current trend of steady or even cooling earth temps may last a couple of decades or until the next climate shift occurs.

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