

YK Climate Watch
@ykclimatewatch
December 11, 2018



Yesterday in Yellowknife, the temperature was 10°C warmer than the historic average.

#ClimateChangeRightNow
#ClimateAction

for immediate release

Ecology North launches Yellowknife Climate Watch Twitter Robot @ykclimatewatch

Ecology North, in partnership with Wilfrid Laurier University, launches @ykclimatewatch, a Twitterbot for Climate Change Watch in Yellowknife. The bot tweets every day it is warmer than the 1971-2000 Climate Normals based on data from Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC).

NWT Leadership Needed

Special Report #15 released on October 8, 2018 by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change states that the world must reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 45% below 2010 levels before 2030, and by 100% by 2050 to limit global warming to 1.5°C.¹ Going warmer than 1.5°C means more for the North than other places on Earth.

The Government of the Northwest Territories has committed to a 30% reduction below 2005 levels (1,656 kT CO₂ eq) before 2030, which unfortunately is only equivalent to a 6% reduction below 2010 levels (1,239 kT CO₂ eq) before 2030. This is far from the required 45%.² There is no plan to date on how the additional 39% will be reduced.

Methodology

In December of 2018, Ecology North volunteers kept track of temperature differences in daily averages compared to the 1971-2000 Daily Climate Normals³ baseline from ECCC. Canadian Climate Normals are three-decade averages used to describe the climatic conditions of a particular location. The twitterbot releases the data everyday according to the following formula: if the difference between the daily temperature and the baseline is higher or lower than 1°C, the robot tweets this difference.

There were at least 17 days in the month of December that were 1°C or warmer than the baseline. On December 11, the temperature was 18°C warmer.

Weather vs Climate

Everyone knows that what you read in the thermometer (the weather) in the morning is not necessarily reflective of climate change. But there are alarming changes in the variability and upward trends in temperature that can be captured when we pay attention to the weather daily.

Ecology North's intention with this twitterbot is to generate discussion and awareness around the issue. Northerners are amongst the most affected populations in the world by climate change. For the Northwest Territories, this change means shortening windows for ice roads, thawing permafrost impacting buildings, runways and roads, droughts and forest fires, floods, and impacts on wildlife and people's health.

What we can do

We want northerners to ask our government to think outside the box, and put in the conditions to unleash innovation. Local food production, distributed renewable energy generation and electric mobility could all spur economic development and climate action. As a territory, we spend more than \$ 150M yearly buying fossil fuels. What if we reduced this expense by 45% and used the savings for housing and education?

Open call for collaboration and funding

The robot will keep tweeting, and Yellowknife-based researchers from Wilfrid Laurier University have offered to provide commentary on some of the results.

"The five warmest years in global record have all come in the 2010's⁴. The planet is heating up and the north is the canary in the coalmine. We in the north can no longer stand on the sidelines and suggest that others must take action. Watch the Twitterbot and consider the future generations' right to a stable planet."

— Craig Scott, Executive Director

Ecology North wishes to increase its climate change and global warming coverage, especially with 2018 being the fourth warmest year in history⁵. We are looking for funders to help us amplify this message to national platforms.

¹ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. "Special Report : Global Warming of 1.5°C". ipcc.ch/sr15/

² GNWT ENR. "Greenhouse Gas Emission Summary Report 2015." enr.gov.nt.ca

³ Government of Canada. "Canadian Climate Normals 1971-2000 Station Data". climate.weather.gc.ca

⁴ Climate Central. "The 10 Hottest Global Years on Record". climatecentral.org

⁵ The New York Times. "2018 Is Shaping Up to Be the Fourth-Hottest Year. Yet We're Still Not Prepared for Global Warming." August 9, 2018. nytimes.com