



Written by [James Murphy](#) on January 17, 2021

Climate Deceit: Claims of a Record Year for Atlantic Hurricanes Are Bogus

You may have heard from climate alarmists that the 2020 hurricane season in the Atlantic Ocean was “record breaking” and a cause for concern among climate scientists. It’s possible that you’ve heard that 2020 broke a new record for the most “named storms,” causing atmospheric scientists to nervously wring their hands over human-produced greenhouse gases causing more destructive storms over the years to come.

Luckily, there’s actual scientific data to refute these claims.

2020 was indeed an active tropical storm season in the Atlantic Ocean, there’s no question about that. There were a total of 30 “named” storms over the season, taking the crown for the greatest number of named storms from the 2005 season, which gave us the catastrophic Hurricane Katrina that destroyed much of New Orleans and other parts of the Gulf Coast.

But “named storms” include hurricanes as well as smaller-sized tropical storms. In terms of actual hurricanes, there were only 13 in 2020. In 2005, there were 15.

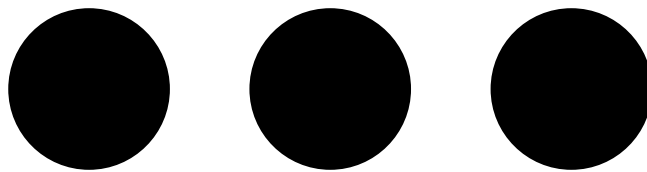
So, while the claim that 2020 was “record breaking” in terms of “named storms” is technically true, it’s also very misleading — misleading nearly to the point of being an outright lie.

Consider, for instance, that the practice of naming tropical storms and hurricanes did not begin until 1954, when the World Meteorological Organization began giving Atlantic storms female names. In 1978, male names began being used for storms as well.

The 1954 starting point leaves some very significant hurricanes and tropical storm seasons unnamed. For instance, the very active and intense hurricane decade of the [1930s](#) is completely unnamed. The record year for hurricanes, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) was [1933](#), also an unnamed year. The deadliest hurricane in American history, which occurred in September of 1900 and utterly destroyed the city of Galveston, Texas, is also unnamed in the present sense.

So, the period during which storms have been “named” covers less than seven decades. This is not a large sample size when you’re talking about long-term climate change.

The deception goes deeper than that. As the years have gone by, our ability to see more storms has been vastly improved by satellites, meaning that since the satellite era — which only began in the 1960s



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— we’ve been able to observe more storms than previously. More observed storms means more named storms.

A far better — and more honest — way of tracking historical storm data is NOAA’s Accumulated Cyclone Energy (ACE) data, which dates back to 1851. ACE is a measure of the intensity and duration of tropical storms and cyclones. Those who accumulate the ACE data readily admit that data prior to 1966 is incomplete, but meteorologists have done [exhaustive research](#) on available storm data from across the globe, going back 170 years.

The ACE data clearly shows a cyclical pattern to the number and intensity of storms in the Atlantic. These storms also show a fairly clear relation to a well-known and natural cycle called the Atlantic Multidecadal Oscillation (AMO), in which ocean temperatures switch from warm to cool over 50-60 year cycles. When ocean temperatures are warmer — as they were in the 1930s — storm activity goes up.

According to the ACE data, hurricane activity in 2020 was not an all-time record. It was the 10th-highest for recorded hurricane activity — higher than average, certainly, but nowhere near a record.

Paul Homewood of the blog Not A lot of People Know That also points out that the data prior to 1966 remains incomplete and probably under-reported.

“It’s also worth pointing out that hurricane activity, even after reanalysis, still likely under records hurricane activity prior to the satellite era,” writes Homewood.

The climate-alarmist movement deals largely in deception, and like many good fibbers, their prevarications are tinged with pieces of truth. By claiming that 2020 is a “record year” for hurricanes, they give the impression that hurricanes have never been worse in recorded history. When in truth it’s only a “record” when you count the number of named storms, which only goes back 70 years.

But that’s what climate alarmism relies upon: misleading headlines, under-reported data, and the angst of Swedish teenagers.



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