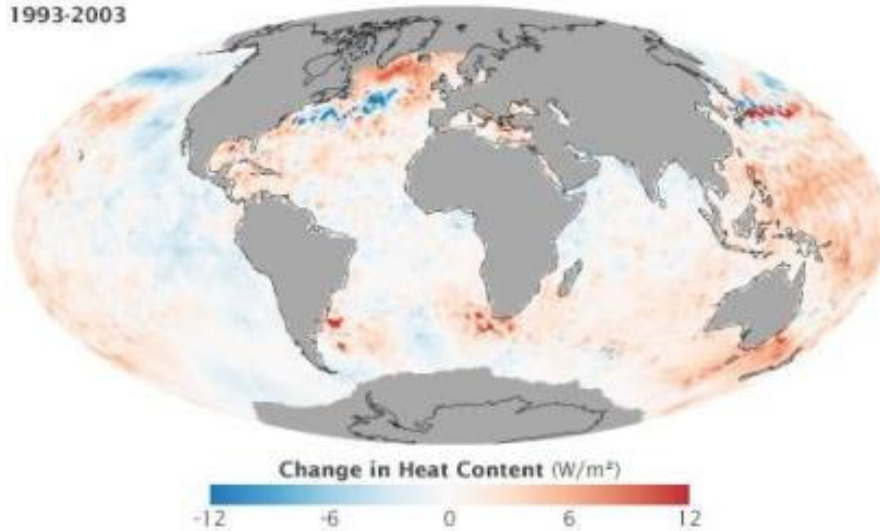


Baltimore Weather Examiner: Oceans are cooling according to NASA

January 21, 2009

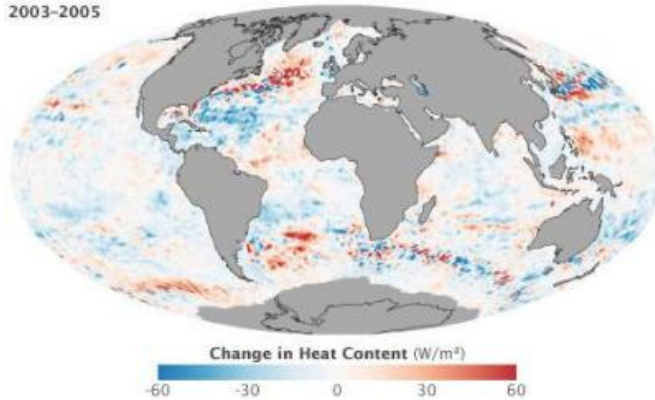
Justin Berk, Baltimore Weather Examiner

1993-2003



Two separate studies through NASA confirm that since 2003, the world's oceans have been losing heat. In the peak of the recent warming trend, 1998 actually ranked 2nd to 1934 as the warmest year on record.

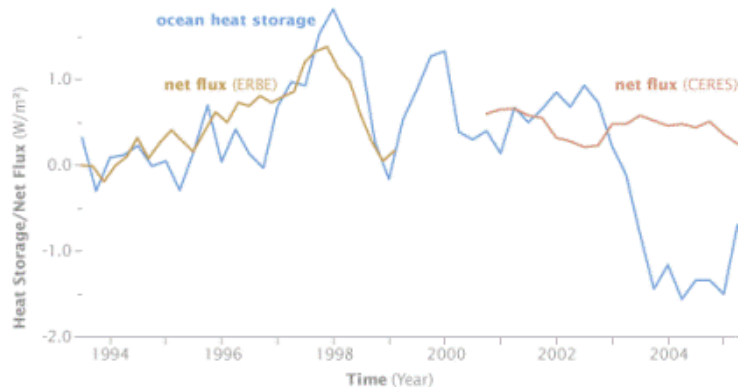
2003-2005



John Willis, an oceanographer at NASA's Jet Propulsion Lab, published his first report about the warming oceans. The article **Correcting Ocean Cooling** (see below) published on NASA's Earth Observatory page this week discussed his and other results. Willis used data

from 1993-2003 that showed the warm-up and followed the Global Warming Theory. In 2006, he co-piloted a follow-up study led by John Lyman at Pacific Marine Environmental Laboratory in Seattle that updated the time series for 2003-2005. Surprisingly, the ocean seemed to have cooled. He was *surprised*, and called it a 'speed bump' on the way to global warming.

A second, independent study was conducted. Takmeng Wong and his colleagues at NASA's Langley Research Center in Virginia came up with the same results. Wong studies net flux of solar energy at the top of our atmosphere. From the 1980s to 1990s his team noticed increased amounts



net energy when comparing incoming solar energy to what Earth radiates and reflects. Since then, the solar flux has remained the same. Other studies have suggested that the sun's output has decreased in the past few years.

Wong's take is that melting arctic ice is responsible for the cooling of the oceans. I contend that if that were the case, why did it take until 2003 to show cooling, after a few decades of warming? Also, the UKMET office showed that Earth's temperatures have been cooling for the past five years. Since 75% of the planet is water, that would make sense. Just last week, I wrote about the [arctic sea ice returning to 1979 levels](#) just 1 1/2 years after the fear of the biggest summer ice retreat in 2007.

But what about the basics? Ocean temperatures do experience a 'lag' or delay in heating and cooling. That is why Ocean City's surf temperatures are chilly during Memorial Day weekend, but warm significantly by Labor Day weekend. The average Northern Hemisphere's peak heat (air temp) is in mid-July, while the Atlantic Ocean's peak heat (water) is in mid-September. The ocean temperature peaks in mid-September coincide with heightened hurricane activity.

So, could these reports indicate that melting cools the oceans and has a negative feedback on warming? Is this just a speed bump in the general trend of warming? Does this 'surprise' almost sound like they are disappointed that the warming trend has not continued so far? Or is this just part of a natural cycle, such as the seasons, but on a larger scale? With regard to cycles, we have only been sampling and studying a small part of Earth's history and have perhaps jumped to conclusions about the impact of carbon dioxide (there are more potent gases such as methane that don't make headlines). What do you think? What about the 'surprise' of the scientists?