



As Hurricane Sandy approaches the East Coast, many are wondering about the science behind this 'Frankenstorm' and whether it has any clear connection to global climate change.

In a piece titled 'Frankenstorm: Has Climate Change Created a Monster?', NPR's Adam Frank notes that 2012 has been a banner year for weather anomalies: droughts, fires, floods, and extreme temperatures. But while some of those events can be tied to climate change, others cannot.

"There is a hierarchy of weather events which scientists feel they understand well enough for establishing climate change links," Frank writes. "Global temperature rises and extreme heat rank high on that list, but Hurricanes rank low." That being said, Frank writes that warmer ocean temperatures do lead to more evaporation, "and that likely leads to storms with more and more dangerous rainfall of the kind we saw with Hurricane Irene last year."

In situations like Sandy, climate scientists will often use an analogy: climate change is like putting expected extreme weather events on steroids. These scientists say that while it's difficult to immediately attribute specific events to climate change (though not impossible, according to Frank), it is possible to say that many of these events are made worse by it.

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