



Winter lacked an Antarctic chill this year in New Zealand, to record effect.

Scientists said on Tuesday that the South Pacific nation had its warmest winter since record-keeping began more than a century ago.

The average nationwide temperature was 9.5C (49.1F) for June, July and August, about 1.2C above average and 0.3C above the previous record set in 1984, the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research said. Record-keeping began in 1909.

This year's unusually balmy winter was fuelled by a pattern of warmer winds from the north coupled with fewer of the southerly winds that typically bring cold air from Antarctica, Niwa climate scientist Brett Mullan said. Mullan believes that while global weather remain variable, it is warming.

The mild winter was a boon for farmers, who have been recovering from a punishing summer drought as it allowed grass to sprout in parched fields.

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