

Scientists: Solar vortex could trigger 'Little Ice Age'

By Macrina Cooper-White, Huffington Post

If you thought the polar vortex was bad, get a load of a new climate phenomenon that just might be coming our way.

Scientists say we could be headed for another "Little Ice Age," given how eerily calm the sun has been in recent years.

First, a bit of background. The sun goes through cycles that last roughly 11 years, marked by the ebb and flow of sunspots on its surface. At peak sunspot activity, the so-called solar maximum, the sun sports lots of sunspots and is steadily unleashing solar flares and coronal mass ejections (CMEs). Since our current solar cycle, Number 24, kicked off in 2008, the number of sunspots observed has been half of what heliophysicists expected.

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