

2014 hottest year on record in Calif., Nev.

By Paul Rogers, San Jose Mercury News

Driven by climate change and a persistent ridge of high pressure over the Pacific Ocean that caused California's drought, 2014 was the state's hottest year ever recorded.

Temperatures last year averaged 61.5 degrees Fahrenheit in California – 4.1 degrees hotter than the 20th century average, according to a report Thursday by federal scientists.

Three other Western states – Alaska, Arizona and Nevada – also experienced their hottest years since 1895, when modern instruments were first used. And Anchorage, Alaska, didn't have a single day in 2014 in which the temperature dropped below zero, the first time in 101 years of record keeping.

"We do have a long-term warming trend across the globe, across the U.S. and in California," said Jake Crouch, a climate scientist with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which released the data. "This really warm year is just an exclamation point on top of a warming trend for that part of the country."

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