

# Strange Winter Weather Affects People, Nature



You may look forward to winter so you can go sledding, ice skating, skiing, or snowboarding. But in parts of the U.S., the temperatures this winter have been too warm for snow and winter fun. Even if you live somewhere that usually gets a lot of snow, you may have been able to play baseball outside in December!

2006 was the warmest year on record in the U.S., scientists said. It was the sixth warmest year on record around the world. The average temperature for 2006 in the U.S. was 55 degrees, which was 2 degrees warmer than average. That was a bit warmer than 1998, which was the second warmest year on record. At the same time, other parts of the U.S., like the Midwest and Colorado, had heavy snowstorms in November and December.

## **NEWS WORD BOX**

|             |         |
|-------------|---------|
| temperature | average |
| degrees     | predict |
| record      | usually |

Scientists are not sure why the weather has been so warm in parts of the U.S. Some say it has to do with *El Nino*. El Nino is a weather pattern caused by warm water in the Pacific Ocean. It can affect weather all around the world. Others say the warm temperatures have more to do with global warming. They say Earth's rising temperatures are caused by air pollution.

Scientists are predicting that 2007 could be an even warmer year than 2006. This worries scientists because warmer temperatures in places that usually are very cold could endanger cold-weather animals like polar bears and penguins

## **MORE FACTS ABOUT THE WARM WINTER**

- The warm weather is causing flowers that usually bloom in spring to bloom now. It causes some hibernating animals to wake up early too.
- Businesses that depend on snow -- such as ski resorts and snow plowing companies -- are worried about losing money this winter.

## **THINK ABOUT THE NEWS**

Some people think that global warming caused by air pollution is one of the reasons the weather is warmer this winter.  
What are some ways in which people might cut down on air pollution?