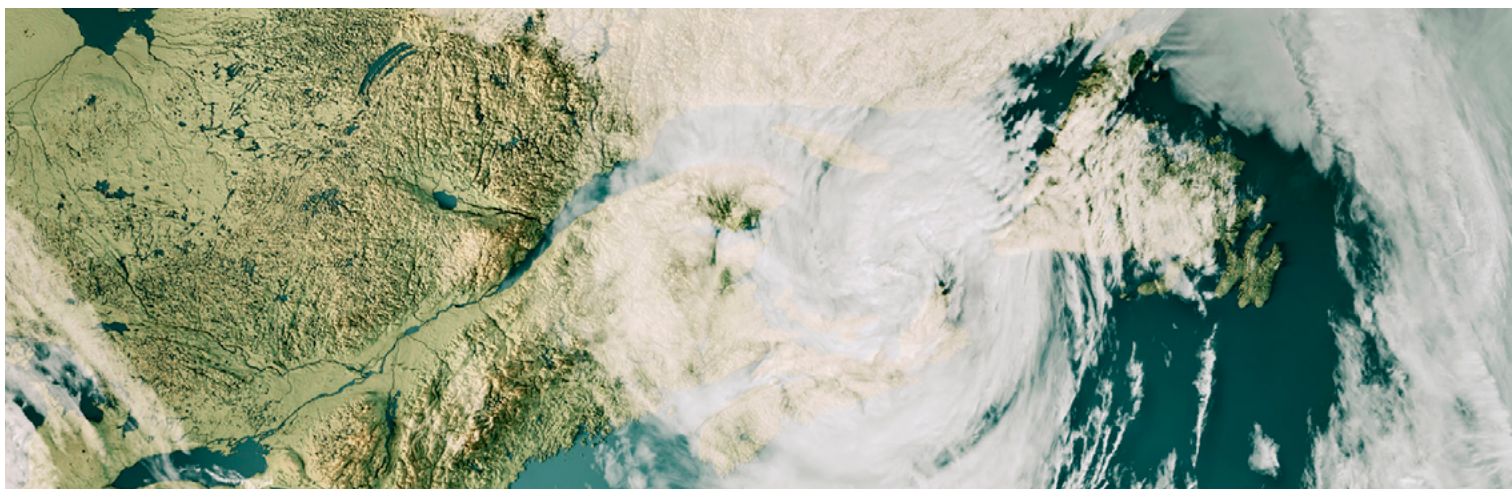


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'Weird and wacky weather' dominates in 2022

The Canadian Press

If nothing else, 2022 gave Canadians a slew of new weather words.

There was 'springuary' for the winter that wouldn't leave. There was 'hotumn' for the fall that never came. 'Derecho' got new currency after the powerful winds flattened a swath of Ontario. Rain-swamped Montreal gave us 'urban flooding'.

And east coasters learned just what a 'hybrid storm' means from Hurricane Fiona - the top weather story of the year, chosen by senior climatologist for Environment Canada.

"Fiona was a large-scale, high-impact storm - likely the most damaging hurricane in Canadian history in terms of insurance costs with initial estimates of \$700 million," Dave Phillips said in his 27th annual rundown.

Winds gusted past 100km/h across five provinces during the September blast. Fiona - a hybrid of a hurricane and a cyclone - destroyed houses and wharves, knocked out power to more than 600,000 homes and businesses, and reshaped coastal geography. Three people died.

Number two - a group of thunderstorms moving in a line that tore through Ontario and Quebec in May.

"I've heard of derechos before, but they were always in the forested areas of Ontario," Phillips said. "This one went along the 401 (highway)."

At least three tornados, with winds upward of 190km/h, were recorded near Uxbridge, Ottawa and London. Kitchener-Waterloo set a new windspeed record of 132km/h. At least 11 people were killed, mostly by falling trees. Insurance claims topped \$1 billion.

Manitoba got its turn in the spring. Phillips' number three weather story is the series of drenching snow and rainstorms that dropped more than 330 millimetres of precipitation on Winnipeg - an amount

almost four times normal that shattered a 125-year-old record.

Flooding was the result. Forty-five municipalities and nine First Nations declared local states of emergency due to washed-out roads, swollen ditches, flooded properties, and damage to water treatment infrastructure. At one point, Winnipeg released 60 million litres of untreated sewage into the Red River instead of letting it back up into countless basements.

The weather weirdness continued. The summer broke more than 500 maximum daily temperature records, mostly in British Columbia and Alberta. Lytton, B.C., which set the national all-time high temperature record in 2021, again topped out with a high of 39.6C - an all-time September record for the province.

Meanwhile, what's up with the shoulder seasons? For many Canadians, spring and fall got squeezed out between winters and summers that just wouldn't quit.

"We had seasons that lasted a day or two and others that went on for months longer than their normal allotment," said Phillips. "I think spring lasted three days."

And everywhere there were storms. In June, the southern Prairies got more than a month's worth of rain in three days. In August, central Alberta saw a hailstorm that produced one Brobdingagian pellet that weighed almost 300 grams, one of the world's largest hailstones.

Warton, Ont., got 54 centimetres of snow in 10 hours in November. In June, western Quebec had it's own baseball-sized hail, accompanied by up to 60 millimetres of rain in three hours.

The lesson, if there is one, is that climate change is producing more variable weather in a country already renowned for it, Phillips said.

"This isn't just another year of weird and wacky weather," he said. "There is a connection, a thread, that connects these things together. People focus on the extremes of climate change. But it's also the variability, the wild swings.

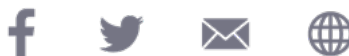
What will three degrees of warming look like?" asks Phillips.

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