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# Russia Sees Record High Average Temperatures in 2020: Institute

By AFP

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**Economists have predicted that Russia stands to reap benefits from hotter temperatures, primarily through expanded navigation and exploration in the Arctic.**

Russia in 2020 saw record high average temperatures and a record drop of summer ice cover on its Arctic maritime route, the country's weather monitoring institute Rosgidromet said Thursday.

Russia's average annual temperature last year was 3.22 degrees Celsius higher than the average for the period of 1961-1990 and more than one degree higher than the country's previous record in 2007, Rosgidromet said in a report released Thursday.

"Last year turned out to be extremely warm both in our country and for the planet as a whole," it said in a statement.

Rosgidromet noted that Russia's increasing rate of warming was "much higher" than the

global average.

The weather monitoring institute added that Russia's Arctic maritime shipping route, the Northern Sea Route, was "completely free of ice" by the end of last summer, reaching a "record low level".

The report also said that the thickness of the melted permafrost layer that thaws annually is also growing.

While President Vladimir Putin has noted the benefits of warmer temperatures opening up transportation routes like the Northern Sea Route, climate change is a particular hazard for the Russia's infrastructure built on permafrost.

Earlier this week Rosgidromet predicted that the country would see above-average temperatures in the spring, with dry weather in Siberia leading to more forest fires this year.

Devastating forest fires have ripped across Siberia with increasing regularity over the past few years, which the country's weather officials and environmentalists have linked to climate change and an underfunded forest service.

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