



Warmer Sooner Longer

February 23, 2024

The annual ritual of Groundhog Day is behind us, but we all still wonder when the weather will turn warm again. It happens at different times in different parts of the country, of course, but there is evidence that, in the Northern Hemisphere, the warming trend is coming as much as a week earlier, on average, than it did thirty years ago.

The phenomenon is called 'season creep' by phenologists (people who study biological life cycles), and it can be measured by the time that plant species start leafing out, hibernating animals come out of their burrows and migratory birds fly northwards. This season creep has seen these things happen roughly 2-3 days earlier, on average, each decade during the spring, and has shown a roughly 1-2 days delay to the start of autumn. From 1952-2011, the length of summer weather increased from 78 to 95 days, and winter weather's duration decreased from 76 to 73 days. Projecting out the more recent (accelerated) changes, a study suggested that by the year 2100, winters will last less than two months.

Without realizing it, we've all made gradual adjustments. Gardner's have advanced their spring planting times and are planting warmer climate plant varieties in places where they have never grown before. Entire forests have been slowly migrating northwards, as their seeds begin to sprout in soil that was formerly inhospitable.

Of course, each year is different, and spring weather could be delayed—despite what that groundhog was telling us. But last year was the earliest spring on record in parts of the eastern U.S., and climate projections suggest that we will continue to be adapting to shorter winters, longer summers, and seasons that no longer fit our equinox-based calendar.

Sources:

<https://www.route-fifty.com/management/2023/04/warming-temperatures-trigger-earliest-spring-record-parts-eastern-us/384914/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Season_creep

<https://agupubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1029/2020gl091753>

If you have any questions about this article or want to discuss your family finances, investment portfolio, or financial planning advice, please call on me anytime at my number [\(215\) 325-1595](tel:2153251595) or you can [click here to schedule a meeting](#).

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