

One thing we have learnt this week – wind speeds are increasing

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Wind speeds are increasing. In the past I have blogged that wind

speeds were generally falling (although not everywhere). No one seemed to know absolutely why this was, but one theory was that increased urbanisation and construction was taking the energy out of the wind. Now a group of scientists has analysed the weather data from over a 9000 weather stations worldwide going back to 1970. This suggests that wind speeds are rising after a slowdown. The increase is thought to be due to climate change and is set to keep going for another decade. This is exactly what you would expect from climate change putting more energy into the atmosphere. Its not stated what will happen then but I personally cannot see wind speeds falling. Although global heating makes all this very uncertain. It thought that large-scale ocean and atmospheric circulation patterns like the gulf stream and the jet stream are altering and increasing wind speeds. There is of course good news and bad news here. The big news in the story is that wind turbines are going to generate a lot more energy. And that those who have invested in them are going to make a lot more money. A windfall if you like. But the fact that wind speeds are increasing is not wholly good news. There will be increased damage to trees, buildings, tidal surges and course loss of life. There is of course probably nothing we can do about the the fact that wind speeds are increasing. But will have to learn to adapt to the more malign effects and look forward to more wind generated electricity on the grid. Neil

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