



Temperature trends since 1850, based on three different datasets. Source: World Meteorological Organization

Climate change deniers (I can't bring myself to write "denialists," which is not a word recognized by my dictionary) have made a lot of the fact that 1998 was warmer than the years that immediately followed, as if a warming trend could only be real if every year was warmer than the next. Of course that's not the case; a trend super-imposed on a noisy system (like the weather) can be quite real even if some years are above or below the trend line.

Now the [World Meteorological Organization](#) has confirmed that the deniers' shouts of "global cooling!" are well off the mark. According to the WMO, the decade of 2000-2009 taken as a whole was warmer than 1990-1999, which in turn was warmer than 1980-1989. Although it's too early to say for sure, with three weeks left in the year, it is likely that 2009 will be the fifth warmest year since the beginning of the instrumental record in 1850.

Of course, conspiracy theorists always have an answer. No doubt they will say this latest report just confirms the worldwide scope of the conspiracy . . .