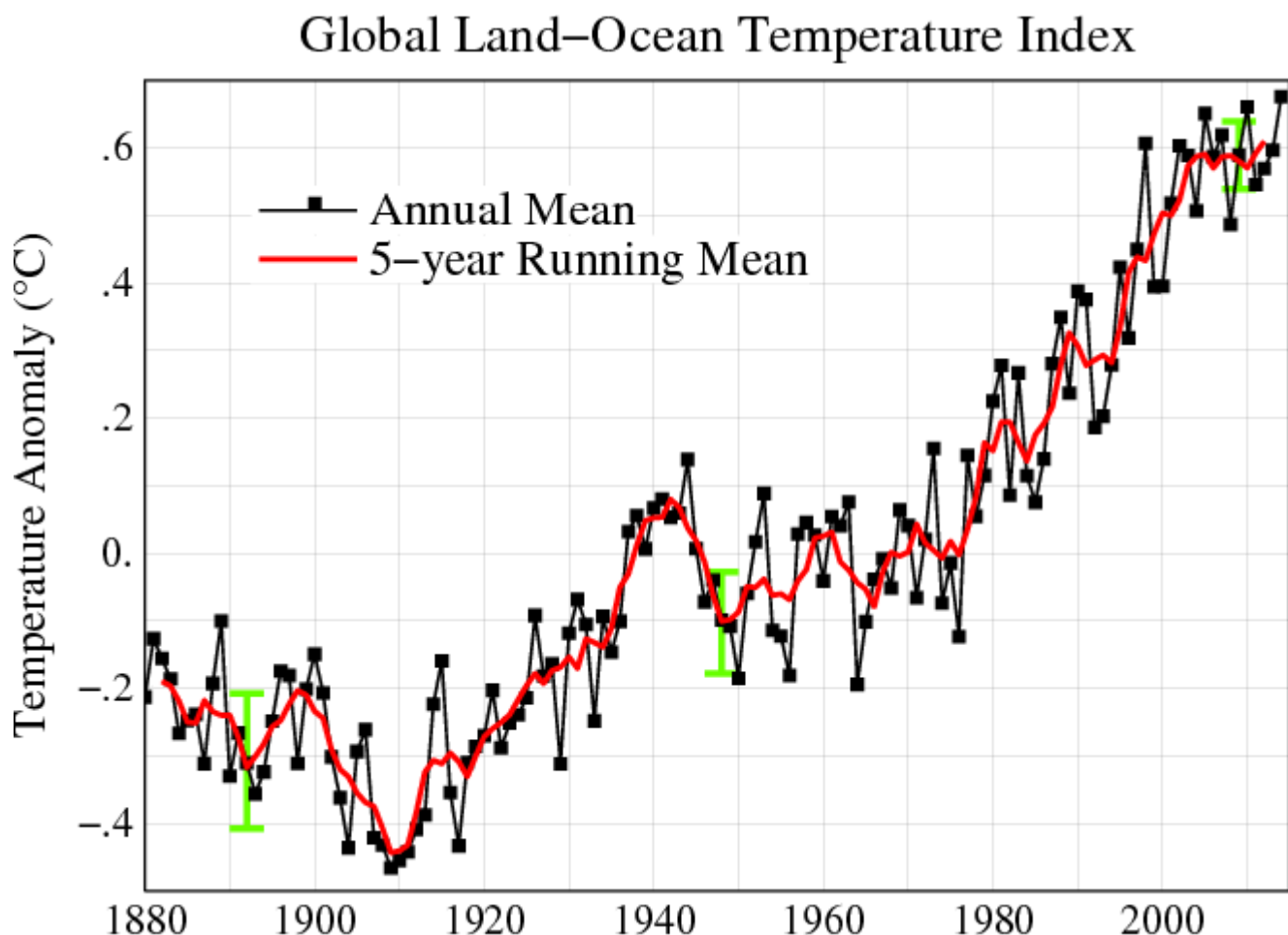


Scientists at NOAA and NASA announced the 2014 was the hottest year since systematic record keeping began in 1880. This is all the more striking because 2014 wasn't a strong El Nino year, when you expect especially warm global temperatures. If you leave on the East Coast or in the Midwest, you may not have noticed any warmth — the eastern U.S. was the one land-area on earth that had a relatively cool year. But the Western U.S. had very hot temperatures, making drought conditions worse.

As this graph shows, there has been an unmistakeable long-term trend for the past 115 years, despite year-to-year fluctuations:



As it happens, the same day, Pope Francis made some very apt remarks. According to the [Guardian](#), here's what he said:

*"I don't know if it is all (man's fault) but the majority is, for the most part, it is man who continuously slaps down nature," he said. ...*

*"We have, in a sense, lorded it over nature, over Sister Earth, over Mother Earth," said Francis, who since his election in 2013 has made many appeals for the protection of the environment.*

*"I think man has gone too far," he said. "Thank God that today there are voices that are speaking out about this."*

Amen to that.