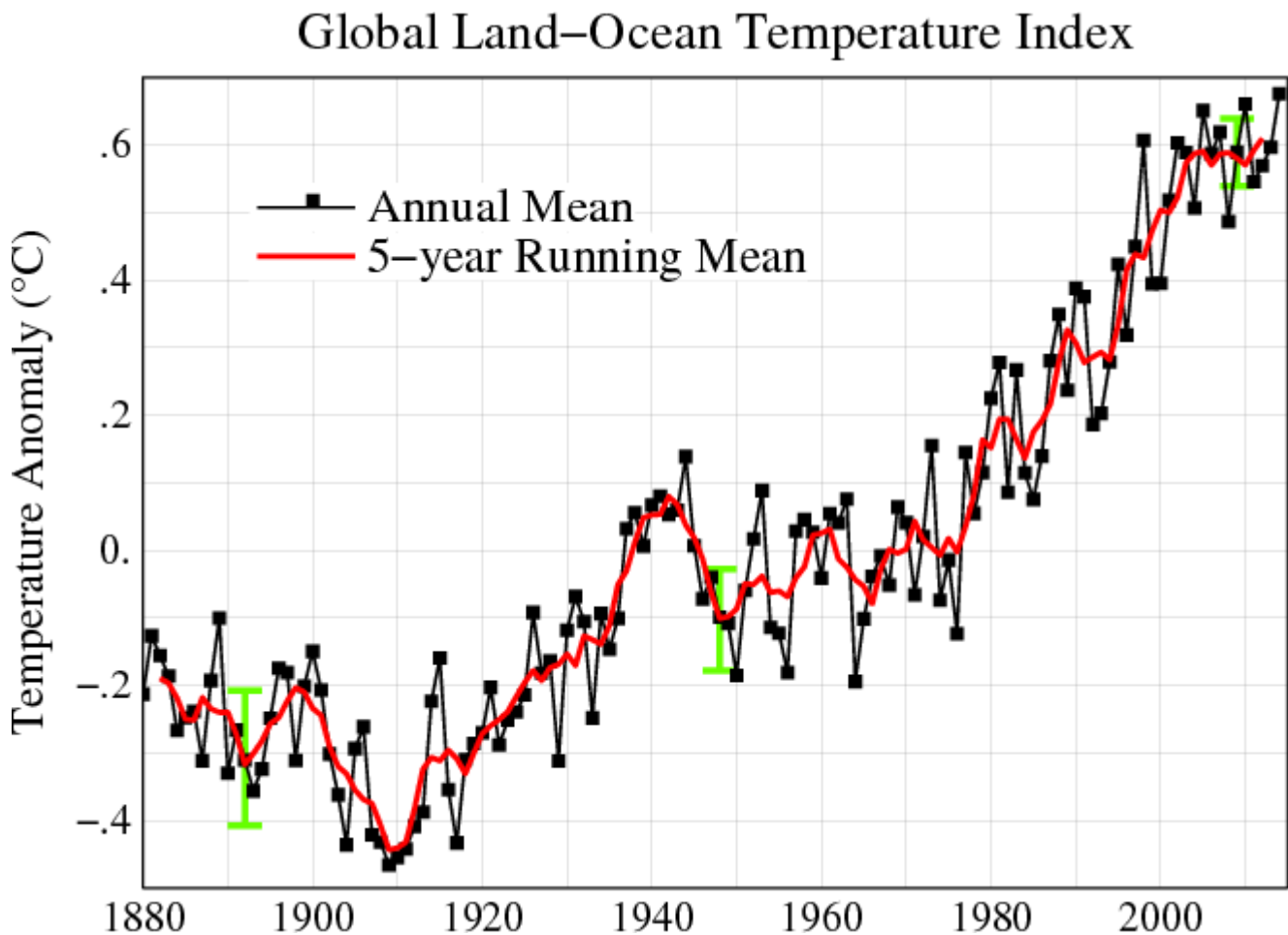


Scientists at NOAA and NASA announced the 2014 was the hottest year since systematic record keeping began in 1880. This is all the more striking because 2014 wasn't a strong El Niño year, when you expect especially warm global temperatures. If you leave on the East Coast or in the Midwest, you may not 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 unmistakable 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.