



Natural Hazards



read

The Beast from the East

quiz

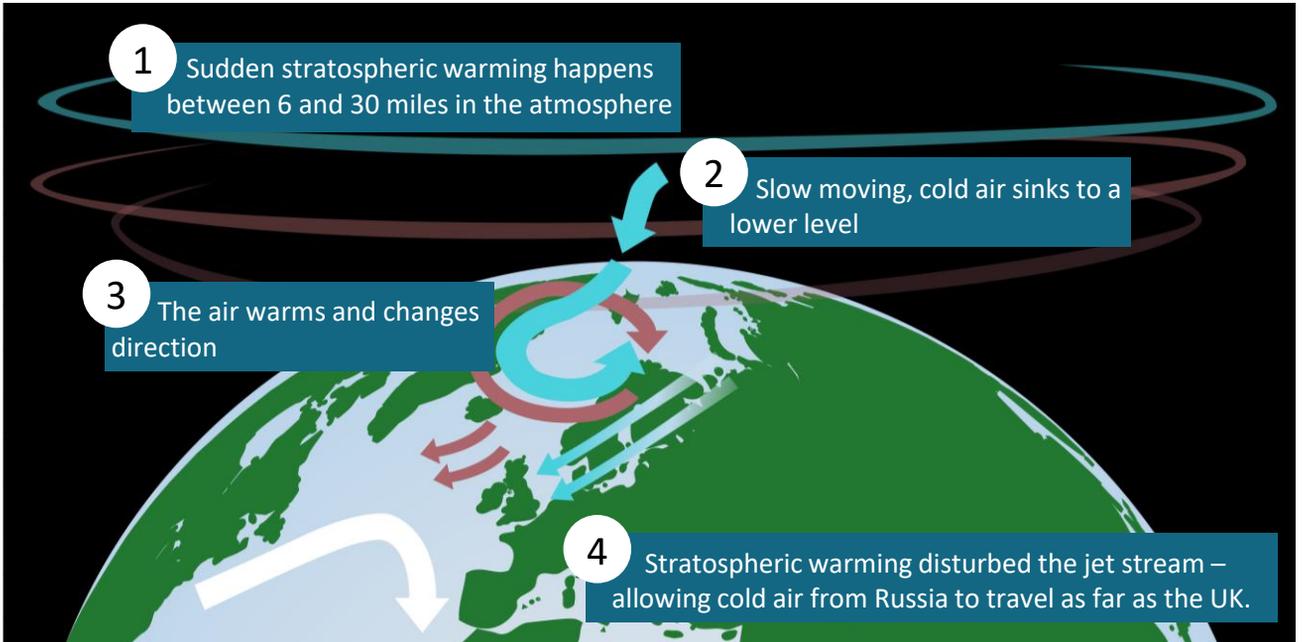


The Big Picture



Background

The Beast from the East was a prolonged cold snap, with heavy snow during the last week of February, 2018. It involved a polar vortex, from Siberia. It lasted for 10 days, and was compounded by the arrival of Storm Emma. Temperatures dropped to -10°C with a wind chill of -22°C .



Social Impacts

- 10 people died
- Thousands of homes were left without power
- Thousands of schools were closed
- Hundreds of motorists on the M80 near Glasgow were stuck for up to 13 hours
- The NHS cancelled non-urgent operations and clinics, affecting people's access to healthcare.



Environmental Impacts

- Extensive snowfall led to snow drifts, in South Wales 50cm caused 7m drifts
- The cold reduced the insect population, causing food shortages for birds & wildlife.
- Crop yields and growing seasons were reduced e.g. asparagus and potatoes.
- High Force (waterfall) froze for the first time since 1929.



Economic Impacts

- The Beast from the East cost the UK economy £1 billion/day
- Road closures cut supplies to supermarkets, reducing stock levels and profits
- Transport closures impacted tourism and trade
- £10 million of insurance claims from car accidents.



Management

- Red weather warning issued by the Met Office
- 4000 snow ploughs and gritters cleared roads
- Armed forces rescued drivers and drove NHS workers to work. In Edinburgh 200 critical care hospital workers were transported to their shifts at two hospitals in Edinburgh.
- High on the Pennines on the M62, the military provided support rescuing vehicles.