

THE WEATHER NETWORK A YEAR IN REVIEW. TRANSCRIPT

As 2025 unfolded, extreme weather and natural disasters reshaped communities across the globe.

The year began with devastation in Southern California. In January, fast moving wildfires tore through Los Angeles and parts of Ventura County, fuelled by extreme winds, drought, and low humidity. The Palisades and Eaton fires forced more than 100,000 evacuations, with later studies estimating 440 excess deaths, ranking them among the deadliest and most destructive wildfires in modern US history.

By late January, the focus shifted across the Atlantic. Storm Eowyn battered Ireland, the UK, and Norway, cutting power to more than a million properties and grounding transport across the region. It became Northern Ireland's most severe storm since 1998 and the UK's strongest in over a decade.

As winter faded, wildfire danger spread east. From late March into May, South Korea faced more than 20 major wildfires burning simultaneously. Thirty two people were killed, tens of thousands displaced, and entire communities evacuated in what is considered South Korea's worst wildfire disaster ever.

Then, disaster struck without warning. On March 28th, a 7.7 magnitude earthquake hit central Myanmar near Zagin, collapsing buildings across the region. More than 5,400 people were killed, making it the deadliest earthquake worldwide since the 2023 Turkey Syria disaster.

High above the atmosphere, 2025 brought setbacks in space. SpaceX experienced multiple Starship test failures tied to engineering challenges rather than weather. But the sight of rocket debris raining through the atmosphere caused some to think that a meteor was crashing down. Likewise, with these mysterious looking spirals, it wasn't aliens, but the atmosphere playing tricks with ejected rocket fuel from separate space missions.

Midsummer brought tragedy to the southern United States. On July 4th, catastrophic flash flooding swept parts of Texas and New Mexico, killing at least 119 people. Among the hardest hit was Camp Mystic, where rising waters left little time to escape, sweeping away young campers in the night.

Weeks later, the Earth unleashed extraordinary power. An 8.8 magnitude earthquake struck off Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula, triggering tsunami alerts across the Pacific and sending this wave barreling inland. More than 2 million people evacuated, though remarkably no deaths were reported.

As autumn approached, the Western Pacific turned deadly. Typhoon Kalmaegi tore through the Philippines, Vietnam, and Thailand, killing hundreds and flooding communities, especially around Cebu. Then came one of the strongest Atlantic hurricanes ever recorded. Hurricane Melissa struck Jamaica after rapidly intensifying into a category 5, with winds nearing 300 km per hour. Scientists later confirmed unusually warm oceans fuelled the storm's destructive power, and it became the strongest storm to ever hit the island nation.

As the year wound down, relentless rains overwhelmed Southeast Asia. Flooding from simultaneous cyclones and monsoons hit Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, and Vietnam, affecting nearly 11 million people, with entire communities displaced and critical infrastructure left underwater. Sri Lanka claimed the floods to be its worst natural disaster in their history, surpassing the impacts of the 2004 tsunami.

And in December, nature delivered one final reminder of its power. Hawaii's Kilauea erupted spectacularly for the 38th time in 2025, sending lava fountains hundreds of meters into the air, even destroying a US Geological Survey camera in the process.

VOCABULARY

atmosphere (noun) - the layer of air that surrounds the earth.

barrelling (verb) - moving very fast and with force.

battered (adjective) - badly damaged by strong weather or repeated hits.

deadliest (adjective) - causing more deaths than others.

destructive (adjective) - causing a lot of damage.

devastation (noun) - great damage and destruction.

drought (noun) - a long time with little or no rain.

erupt (verb) - to suddenly explode or burst out.

evacuated (verb) - moved people away from danger to a safe place.

extraordinary (adjective) - very unusual or special.

ground (noun) - the solid surface of the earth.

hurricane (noun) - a very strong storm with powerful winds and rain.

infrastructure (noun) - basic systems like roads, bridges, and power supplies.

magnitude (noun) - how big or powerful something is.

natural disaster (noun) - a bad event caused by nature, like floods or earthquakes.

simultaneously (adverb) - happening at the same time.

surpass (verb) - to go beyond or be more than something else.

tragedy (noun) - a very sad event that causes suffering or death.

typhoon (noun) - a powerful tropical storm in parts of Asia.

unleashed (verb) - suddenly released with great force.