

# The Butterfly Tempest Weather Bulletin

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Who, exactly, coined that memorable image that claimed that a butterfly, flapping its wings in one part of the world, could affect the weather on the other side of the globe? Edward Lorenz is credited with using this image as the title of talk he gave in 1972 to the American Academy for the Advancement of Science. The idea has passed in and out of thousands of minds, but the actual geographic locations seem to vary wildly. In the interests of calming the public, we have attempted to record recent reports of butterfly-induced weather catastrophes. We remind you, though, that even if your locality is not listed here, that is no guarantee that you are safe!

- *...whether a butterfly in **Beijing** flaps its wings three times or only two can (in principle) alter totally the weather in **San Francisco** some days hence.*  
David Campbell and Gottfried Mayer-Kress,  
Chaos and Politics: Applications of Nonlinear Dynamics to Socio-Political Issues,  
in: The Impact of Chaos on Science and Society,  
edited by Celso Grebogi and James Yorke,  
United Nations University Press, 1997.
- *It is eerie to note, however, that the anonymous poster about Ms Shelley's death had earlier in the year edited the Wikipedia entry about the so-called Butterfly Effect, the notion that a butterfly flapping its wings in **China** can influence the weather in **Florida**.*  
Noam Cohen, The New York Times, 09 July 2007.
- *...Edward Lorenz, a meteorologist who suggested that a single flap of a seagull's wings could alter the weather forever through a gradual accretion of energy.*  
David Carr,  
Change is Good: An Article That Explains Bookselling,  
The New York Times, Sunday, 18 July 2004
- *Its gracefully interfolded wings remind us of the butterfly that flutters in **Venezuela** only to cause a typhoon in **Taiwan**.*  
Alexander Dewdney,  
The Tinkertoy Computer and Other Machinations,  
Freeman, 1993.
- *"I was reading in the paper the other day that the beating of a butterfly's wings in a **South American jungle** can cause a hurricane **thousands of miles away**," he began.*  
Michael Dibdin, in his murder mystery "A Long Finish".
- *The notion that a butterfly stirring the air today in **Peking** can transform storm systems next month in **New York***  
James Gleick,  
Chaos: Making a New Science
- *Here's how Dudley Smith, president and CEO of the World Association of Management Consulting Firms, described the Butterfly Effect to a ballroom full of consultants at the group's 1996 world conference in Yokohama, Japan: "We are no better at guessing tomorrow's weather than we are at foretelling the millennium...A butterfly in **Java** waves its wings and, as a result, the weather in **Chicago** turns nasty."*  
Kate Kane,  
"If a Consultant Flaps His Lips in Yokohama...",  
Fast Company.Com, Issue 07, February 1997, Page 46.
- *"Somewhere, a butterfly opened its wings."*  
Erik Larson,  
Isaac's Storm
- *(The butterfly is in the **Amazon** and the storm is in **Chicago**)*  
Roger Lewin,  
Complexity: Life at the edge of Chaos

- *Predictability: Does the Flap of a Butterfly's Wings in **Brazil** set off a tornado in **Texas**?*  
Edward Lorenz
- *A butterfly flutters its wings **somewhere** and starts up an irreversible and unpredictable process.*  
Pernille Rygg,  
The Butterfly Effect,  
1995.
- *The flapping of a single butterfly's wing today produces a tiny change in the state of the atmosphere. Over a period of time, what the atmosphere actually does diverges from what it would have done. So, in a month's time, a tornado that would have devastated the **Indonesian coast** doesn't happen. Or maybe one that wasn't going to happen does.*  
Ian Stewart,  
Does God Play Dice? The Mathematics of Chaos
- *Due to nonlinearities in weather processes, a butterfly flapping its wings in **Tahiti** can, in theory, produce a tornado in **Kansas**.*  
Eric Weisstein, editor,  
CRC Concise Encyclopedia of Mathematics,  
"Butterfly Effect"
- *"Could a butterfly in a **West African rain forest**, by flitting to the left of a tree rather than to the right, possibly set into motion a chain of events that escalates into a hurricane striking **coastal South Carolina** a few weeks later?"*  
Ernest Zebrowski, "Perils of a Restless Planet"
- *It has been said that something as small as the flutter of a butterfly's wings can ultimately cause a typhoon **halfway around the world**. - Chaos Theory*  
an opening quote in the movie "The Butterfly Effect"

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