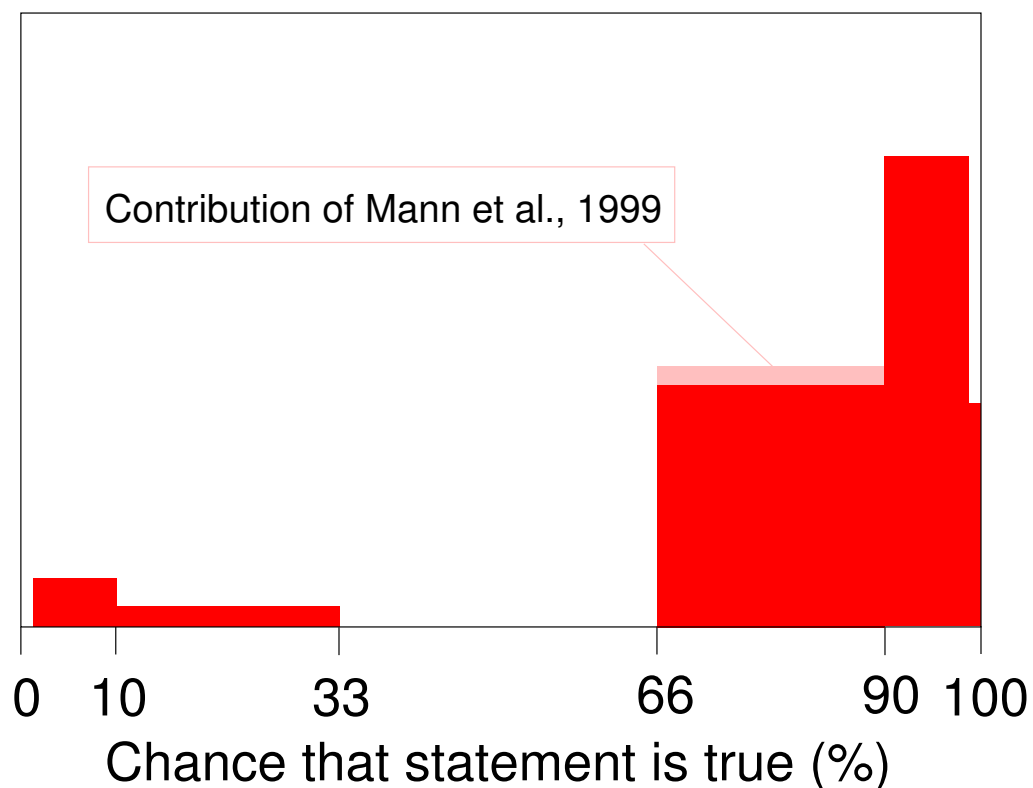


The Mann et al. "Hockeystick" and the IPCC TAR

There is currently considerable debate surrounding criticisms of the "hockeystick" temperature reconstruction of Mann, Bradley, and Hughes, 1999 (Geophys. Res. Lett., 26, 759–762). Some have suggested that this reconstruction was the "cornerstone" of the case for anthropogenic global warming made by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in their Third Assessment Report (TAR) in 2001. Well, how prominent was the Mann et al. "hockeystick"?



The IPCC TAR summarised its findings in a 20–page document – the "Summary for Policymakers". Within this discussion of the present state of climate change research were 52 "caveated" statements. The uncertainty of each statement was indicated by an estimated chance that it would turn out to be true. The specific categories were:

	Chance of being true
Virtually certain	greater than 99%
Very likely	90–99%
Likely	66–90%
Unlikely	10–33%
Very unlikely	1–10%

One way of estimating the relative prominence of the reconstruction of Mann et al., 1999, is to count the number of these "caveated" statements related to their work. There are obviously alternative ways of providing this estimate (e.g. counting the *sentences* related to Mann et al.), but this method is simple and seems reasonably robust.

The caveated statements are shown schematically in the above diagram. The number of statements in each category is proportional to the *area* of the coloured region. The two statements (out of the total of 52) which are related to the reconstruction of Mann et al. are represented by the pink area.

It seems quite clear from the diagram that the Mann et al. reconstruction was *not* the "cornerstone" of the case for anthropogenic global warming made by the IPCC TAR. It was just one small (but nevertheless important) contribution.

John Hunter, 23/3/2005