

# Paris soaked by wettest spring in 150 years

June 20 2016

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The river Seine near the Eiffel tower after its banks became flooded following heavy rainfalls on June 6, 2016

Parisians, never ones to suffer in silence, have had good cause to grumble of late: meteorologists confirmed Monday it has been the wettest spring in the French capital in nearly 150 years.

The news came on the final day of spring, which, after weeks and weeks of grey skies and pouring rain, fittingly ended with an hours-long downpour in Paris.

Usually, after a long winter, Parisians flood parks and the outdoors to soak up some much-needed spring sun, quaffing wine on the banks of the Seine or sipping cocktails on restaurant terraces.

But this year, with the summer solstice on Tuesday, it is still boots and coats for most Parisians, who have only seen the sun peek through the clouds a handful of times.

The French meteorological agency Meteo-France said the three months of rain (320 mm) were double the normal amount, and the most since records began in 1873.

In early June, residents watched in awe as the Seine river rose to its highest level in three decades, prompting the closure of the riverside Louvre and Orsay museums while they evacuated priceless artworks.

The flooding which saw rescuers rowing canoes through towns around Paris, caused around one billion euros in damages, the AFA insurance association said on Friday.

Several other French towns also saw record rainfall, which Meteo-France forecaster Etienne Kapikian attributed to more low atmospheric pressure systems than usual in central and western Europe.

While summer will arrive for a day or two this week, storms and lower temperatures will follow.

"There is no generalised, sunny weather expected for the moment," said Kapikian.

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