

No El Nino? No problem. Earth sizzles to near record heat

March 17 2017, by Seth Borenstein



A composite image of the Western hemisphere of the Earth. Credit: NASA

Even without an El Nino warming the world's waters, Earth in February sizzled to its second hottest temperature on record, behind only last year.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration calculated that February 2017 averaged 55.66 degrees (13.08 degrees Celsius). That's 1.76 degrees (.98 degrees Celsius) warmer than the 20th century average.

It was also the second hottest winter in the [northern hemisphere](#) on record. Records go back to 1880.

In the past, Earth doesn't come near record heat if there's no El Nino. This year it did—on every continent.

NOAA climate scientist Ahira Sanchez-Lugo called it clear evidence of [climate change](#).

She calculated that the rate of February warming since 1980 is twice as high as since 1880.

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