

The heat is back on high: May smashes US temperature records

June 6 2018, by Seth Borenstein



In this Tuesday, May 15, 2018 file photo, Rick Stewart sits in the sunshine with the New York City skyline in the background, in a park in Weehawken, N.J. According to weather records released on Wednesday, June 6, 2018, May reached a record 65.4 degrees in the continental United States, which is 5.2 degrees above the 20th century average. (AP Photo/Seth Wenig)

Record heat returned to the United States with a vengeance in May.

May warmed to a [record](#) average 65.4 degrees in the Lower 48 [states](#), breaking the high of 64.7 set in 1934, according to federal weather figures released Wednesday. May was 5.2 degrees above the 20th century's average for the month.

Weather stations in the nation broke or tied nearly 8,600 daily heat records in May, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration reported. It hit 100 in Minneapolis on May 28, the earliest the city has seen triple digits.

"The warmth was coast-to-coast," said [climate](#) scientist Jake Crouch at NOAA's Centers for Environmental Information.

What made May seem even warmer was that April was unusually cool for much of the United States, he said. Wisconsin had its coldest April followed by its second warmest May.

The United Kingdom , Germany and other places also set May heat records, but overall global figures for the month are still being tabulated, Crouch said.

It was especially warm at night in the U.S during May. The overnight low temperature averaged 52.5 degrees nationwide. That broke the record by 2 degrees which "is unheard of" at this time of year, he said.

Partly to blame is the overall warming trend from man-made climate change, Crouch said. April was cool because the jet stream brought polar air south, but it shifted out of that pattern in May. Then, a tropical system and subtropical storm Alberto brought warm moisture to the eastern part of the country, while the West was quite dry. That allowed temperatures to heat up.

"Nature is dealing cards from a very different deck now compared to the

20th century," Pennsylvania State University [climate scientist](#) David Titley said in an email.

U.S. [temperature](#) reports go back to 1895. With the new May record, six of the U.S. monthly record highs have been set since 2006.

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