In this April 11, 2010 file photo, tourists walk along a ridge at Death Valley National Park, Calif. Preliminary data show that Death Valley set the world record for hottest month in July, 2018. National Weather Service meteorologist Todd Lericos says the month's average temperature at Furnace Creek in Death Valley was 108.1 degrees Fahrenheit (42.28 Celsius). That eclipses the previous record, set in Death Valley during July 2017 when the average was 107.4 degrees F (41.89 C). (AP Photo/Brian Melley, File)

The natural furnace of California's Death Valley was on full broil in
July, tentatively setting a world record for hottest month ever.

The month's average temperature was 108.1 degrees (42.28 Celsius), said Todd Lericos, a meteorologist in the Las Vegas office of the National Weather Service.

That roasted the previous record, set in Death Valley in July 2017 when the average was 107.4 degrees (41.89 Celsius).

"It eclipsed the record by quite a bit," Lericos said, adding that the data is considered preliminary and needs to be reviewed before it goes into official record books.

The temperatures are measured at Furnace Creek in Death Valley National Park, a vast, austere and rugged landscape in the desert of southeastern California that includes Badwater Basin, which at 282 feet (85.9 meters) below sea level is the lowest point in North America.

The valley got its morbid name from a group of pioneers who got lost there in 1849-1850 and thought it would be the end, according to the National Park Service. Only one died, however, before they found their way out.

Summer heat is so routinely extreme that tourists are warned to drink at least a gallon (4 liters) of water each day, carry additional water in their cars, stay close to their vehicles and watch themselves and others for dizziness, nausea and other symptoms of potentially deadly heat illness.
This warning appears on the National Park Service's Death Valley Twitter page, seen Wednesday, Aug. 1, 2018. Preliminary data show that Death Valley set the world record for hottest month in July. National Weather Service meteorologist Todd Lericos says the month's average temperature at Furnace Creek in Death Valley was 108.1 degrees Fahrenheit (42.28 Celsius). That eclipses the previous record, set in Death Valley during July 2017 when the average was 107.4 degrees F (41.89 C). (National Park Service via AP)

Visitors are urged to "travel prepared to survive," avoid hiking at low elevations and return to their air-conditioned cars for a cool-down after
just 10 to 15 minutes of exposure outdoors.

And amid the heat, thunderstorms bring the threat of flash floods.

The location holds the world record for highest temperature ever recorded—134 degrees (56.67 Celsius)—set on July 10, 1913.

Even with that history, July was exceptional as a weather pattern stoked temperatures.

A very persistent high pressure system set up over the Southwest, restricting the movement of air vertically in the atmosphere and creating a heat wave, Lericos said. "It was fairly intense for this time of year," he said.

Among the extreme conditions were four consecutive days reaching a high of 127 degrees (52.7 Celsius) and overnight lows that remained over the century mark.

© 2018 The Associated Press. All rights reserved.

Citation: Death Valley sets tentative world record for hottest month (Update) (2018, August 1) retrieved 10 April 2024 from https://phys.org/news/2018-08-death-valley-tentative-world-hottest.html

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.