

US sizzles in rare autumn heat wave

October 2 2019



People walk near the World War II Memorial on the National Mall with the Lincoln Memorial in the background as temperatures soar into the mid-90s on October 2, 2019 in Washington

A freakish heat wave is making early autumn feel like the dog days of summer in much of the southern and eastern United States, with forecasters predicting that temperatures Wednesday could get close to triple digits.

Washington hit 97 degrees Fahrenheit (36 Celsius) late in the afternoon, according to the National Weather Service (NWS), surpassing the city's previous monthly record of 96 degrees on October 5, 1941.

The mercury rose into the 90s across much of the south, the NWS said, with Montgomery, Alabama reaching 98 degrees, Little Rock, Arkansas hitting 94 and Atlanta seeing 95 degrees in the mid-afternoon.

Temperature tracking in New York's Central Park recorded 92 degrees, just two degrees lower than the city's all-time October high in 1941.

Temperatures in some places could be as many as 30 degrees higher than normal, the NWS said, while a quarter of the country will reportedly experience temperatures above 90 degrees.

It's been so bad this week that some schools with no air conditioning in states like Ohio and Maryland are sending children home early or closing altogether.

In Tipp City, Ohio, teachers gave kids popsicles and held some classes in shady spots outdoors, NBC affiliate WDTN reported.

Records were set or tied Tuesday in more than a dozen cities including Cleveland, Ohio, New Orleans, Louisiana and Syracuse, New York, the Weather Channel reported.

Atlanta could break its all-time October record high of 95 degrees Wednesday or Thursday, it added.

Relief is expected late in the week as a cold front rushes in, sending temperatures way down. Some in the Northeast could even see the first frost or freeze of the season.

The United States has already experienced extreme weather at the other end of the scale this week, as the northern state of Montana was blanketed with record snowfall—four feet (1.20 meters) in the town of Browning.

And at 8:00 am Wednesday in Billings, Montana's most populous town, it was a lowly 34 degrees.

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