

Locked out: UK records sunniest month on record in May

June 1 2020, by Pan Pylas



People on the beach at Durdle Door, as the public are being reminded to practice social distancing following the relaxation of coronavirus lockdown restrictions, near Lulworth in Dorset, England, Saturday, May 30, 2020. (Andrew Matthews/PA via AP)

Britain's national weather agency has confirmed what most people cooped up at home during the coronavirus lockdown may have

guessed—May was the sunniest month on record.

The Met Office said Monday that there were 266 hours of sunshine during the month, beating the previous record of June 1957 by one hour. Records go back to 1929.

The forecaster also said that May was the driest May in England on record, and the second driest in Wales, in a rainfall series that goes even further back, to 1862.

Overall, it has been the sunniest spring on record for the U.K. and the fifth driest—perhaps all the more remarkable given that the country had just experienced its fifth wettest winter.

The warm and dry weather has raised concerns over whether it may make a potential second spike in the country's coronavirus outbreak more likely, especially now that all four U.K. nations—England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland—have started easing some of the lockdown restrictions, albeit at different speeds.

Over the weekend, beaches and parks were packed with many people clearly not observing social distancing guidelines to stay 2 meters (6 1/2 feet) apart.

Chaotic scenes at beaches on the Jurassic Coast in southern England, which saw three people seriously injured after jumping off cliffs into the sea, prompted a local leader to call for stricter travel rules.



People on the beach at Durdle Door, as the public are being reminded to practice social distancing following the relaxation of coronavirus lockdown restrictions, near Lulworth in Dorset, England, Saturday, May 30, 2020. (Andrew Matthews/PA via AP)

Vikki Slade, the leader of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council, has written to lawmakers and Dorset Police after the weekend incidents, including at the limestone arch of Durdle Door.

She said she had witnessed incidents of people failing to adhere to social distancing rules, illegal parking, widespread barbecues and staff facing abuse when going about their work.

"We saw the most awful scenes in Durdle Door with the arrival of two

helicopters to deal with the stupidity of people jumping from the top of cliffs, cheered and clapped by thousands of beachgoers," she said.

In England, people can travel anywhere within their country provided they don't stay overnight and continue to abide by social distancing requirements.

Slade said England should follow the examples of Scotland and Wales and impose, on pain of fines, five-mile limits on travel from home for reasons other than work.



People relax on the beach of Durdle Door beach, as the public are being reminded to practice social distancing following the relaxation of coronavirus lockdown restrictions, near Lulworth in Dorset, England, Saturday May 30, 2020. (Andrew Matthews/PA via AP)



People make their way to Durdle Door Beach, as the public are being reminded to practice social distancing following the relaxation of coronavirus lockdown restrictions, near Lulworth in Dorset, England, Saturday, May 30, 2020. (Andrew Matthews/PA via AP)



Low water levels on the river Tyne at Corbridge, England, Monday June 1, 2020. Families who are locked down because of the coronavirus have been able to visit local beauty spots as warm weather has swept the region. (Owen Humphreys/PA via AP)



People relax in York Minster's Dean's Park that has reopened to the public following the introduction of measures to bring England out of lockdown, In York, England, Monday June 1, 2020. The park closed to the public in March as part of the Minster's response to the Coronavirus pandemic. The British government has lifted some lockdown restrictions to restart social life and activate the economy while still endeavouring to limit the spread of the highly contagious COVID-19 coronavirus.(Danny Lawson / PA via AP)



A Police Community Support Officer talks to people as they social distance in York, following the introduction of measures to bring England out of lockdown, in York, England, Monday June 1, 2020. The park closed to the public in March as part of the Minster's response to the Coronavirus pandemic. The British government has lifted some lockdown restrictions to restart social life and activate the economy while still endeavouring to limit the spread of the highly contagious COVID-19 coronavirus. (Danny Lawson / PA via AP)



Jockey Ben Robinson wearing a face covering stands with other jockeys as they observe social distancing in the paddock before a race as horse racing is resumed at Newcastle Racecourse, in Newcastle, England, Monday June 1, 2020. Horse Racing in the UK returned to action on Monday, but resuming without spectator racegoers following the coronavirus shutdown. (Alan Crowhurst / PA via AP)



Jockeys observe social distancing as they stand in the paddock before a race as horse racing is resumed at Newcastle Racecourse, in Newcastle, England, Monday June 1, 2020. Horse Racing in the UK returned to action on Monday, but resuming without spectator racegoers following the coronavirus shutdown. (Alan Crowhurst / PA via AP)



A family play in the shallows on the banks of the river Tyne, that has very low water levels, at Corbridge, England, Monday June 1, 2020. Families who are locked down because of the coronavirus have been able to visit local beauty spots as warm weather has swept the region. (Owen Humphreys/PA via AP)



Children jump on a trampoline at the Little Darling home-based Childcare after nurseries and primary schools partly reopen in England after the COVID-19 lockdown in London, Monday, June 1, 2020. (AP Photo/Frank Augstein)

The dry weather has also prompted water authorities to urge gardeners to avoid using sprinklers in the evening.

"With so many people at home and enjoying their gardens, water companies are seeing record demand for water, which can cause issues with water pressure," said Water U.K. Chief Executive Christine McGourty.

"We need to keep washing our hands, but make other small changes to

our water use, for example cutting back on paddling pools and sprinklers, particularly at the peak times in the evening."

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