

Hot again: 2020 sets yet another global temperature record

January 14 2021, by Seth Borenstein



In this Wednesday, Aug. 19, 2020. file photo, smoke from California wildfires up to 200 miles away obscures the view of traffic traveling on Interstate 80, looking west in Sparks, Nev. Local schools canceled all outdoor activities as the air quality index approached the "very unhealthy" category for the general population Wednesday afternoon. (AP Photo/Scott Sonner)

Earth's rising fever hit or neared record hot temperature levels in 2020, global weather groups reported Thursday.

While look outside: "We saw the heat waves. We saw the fires. We saw the (melting) Arctic," said NASA top climate scientist Gavin Schmidt. "We're expecting it to get hotter and that's exactly what happened."

NOAA said 2020 averaged 58.77 [degrees](#) (14.88 degrees Celsius), a few hundredths of a degree behind 2016. NASA saw 2020 as warmer than 2016 but so close they are essentially tied. The European 100 degrees (38 Celsius) in the Russian Arctic last June, said NASA's Schmidt.

The pandemic may have added ever so slightly to last year's warming, enough to edge 2020 past 2016 in NASA's calculations, Schmidt said.

Around the globe, people were driving less—and that reduced short-term aerosol pollution which acts as a [cooling](#) agent by reflecting heat. Schmidt said fewer cooling aerosols could be responsible for .09 to .18 degrees (.05 to .1 degrees Celsius) warming for the year.

NOAA's Vose and Schmidt expect 2021 to be among the top five [hottest years](#) but probably not a record breaker because of natural temporary cooling in parts of the Pacific called La Nina.

NOAA and NASA measurements go back to 1880, while the United Kingdom Met Office has readings back to 1850.



In this Friday, July 31, 2020 file photo, a fan sprays water mist as customers sit outside a cafe in downtown Rome during a heat wave with temperatures over 34 Celsius (104 Fahrenheit). (AP Photo/Riccardo De Luca)



In this Wednesday, Aug. 12, 2020 file photo, a man keeps cool with a shirt over his head as he walks alongside The Serpentine in Hyde Park in London with high temperatures forecast again for many parts of England. (AP Photo/Kirsty Wigglesworth)



In this Thursday, June 18, 2020 file photo, vendors and rickshaw drivers sleep in the open early on a hot summer morning in Karachi, Pakistan, as parts of the country continued to experience an intense heat wave. (AP Photo/Fareed Khan)

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Citation: Hot again: 2020 sets yet another global temperature record (2021, January 14) retrieved 6 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2021-01-hot-global-temperature.html>

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