

Portland records hottest day ever amid Northwest scorcher

June 27 2021, by Sara Cline and Rebecca Boone



People gather at the Sandy River Delta, in Ore., to cool off during the start of what should be a record-setting heat wave on June 25, 2021. The Pacific Northwest sweltered Friday as a historic heat wave hit Washington and Oregon, with temperatures in many areas expected to top out 25 to 30 degrees above normal in the coming days. Credit: Dave Killen/The Oregonian via AP

Utility workers and wildlife managers across the Pacific Northwest were trying to keep people and animals safe Saturday as a historic heat wave scorched the region, toppling records and sending residents searching for relief.

Stores sold out of portable air conditioners and fans, hospitals canceled outdoor vaccination clinics, cities opened cooling centers, baseball teams canceled or moved up weekend games, and utilities braced for possible power outages.

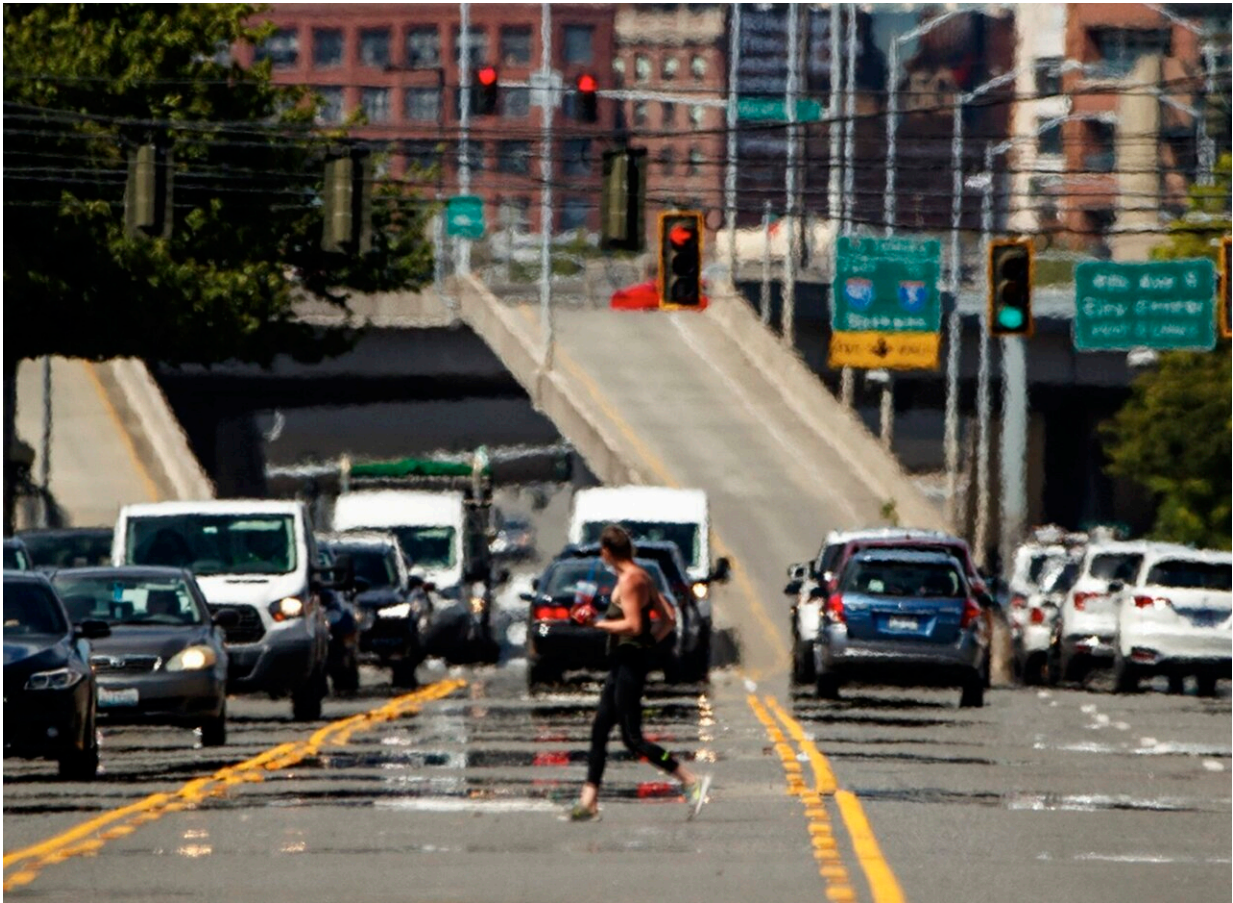
Portland, Oregon, had the hottest day ever recorded—reaching 108 degrees Fahrenheit (42.2 degrees Celsius) Saturday afternoon, according to the National Weather Service. The previous record for Oregon's largest city was 107 F (41.7 C), a mark hit in 1965 and 1981.

Seattle reached 101 F (38.3), making it the hottest June day on record and only the fourth time in recorded history the usually temperate city had topped 100 degrees.

Other cities and towns from eastern Washington state to southern Oregon were also expected to break records, with temperatures in many areas expected to top out up to 30 degrees above normal.

It's a dangerous forecast for a region accustomed to mild weather, and where many don't have air conditioning.

James Bryant, a Seattle resident, picked up an air conditioner in anticipation of the extreme heat.



Heat waves distort a street scene in the Sodo neighborhood of Seattle on Wednesday., June 23, 2021. It's been an unseasonably hot June in the Seattle area, and warmer temperatures are on the way, forecast to last into next week. Credit: Amanda Snyder/The Seattle Times via AP

"My house is already hot, and so with the added heat over the next few days, I've got kids. I got to make sure they don't get too hot as well," Bryant said. "It seems to be a trend ... So I'm not sure what's driving it, but it's not fun, that's for sure."

The hot weather had berry farmers scrambling to pick crops before they rot on the vine and fisheries managers working to keep endangered

sockeye salmon safe from too-warm river water.

Officials in Multnomah County, Oregon were asking for volunteers to help staff cooling centers as older people, homeless residents and others struggled with the heat. Cascades Street Outreach, an advocacy group for people experiencing homelessness, was going to homeless camps in the region to encourage people to use the cooling centers.

Peter Tiso, who works with Multnomah County's Joint office of Homeless Services, told the Oregonian/OregonLive.com that the Oregon Convention Center can hold about 300 people, but no one will be turned away from the cooling shelter. The shelter also allows pets, he said.



Sarah O'Sell transports her new air conditioning unit to her nearby apartment on a dolly in Seattle on Friday, June 25, 2021. O'Sell snagged one of the few AC units available at the Junction True Value Hardware as Pacific Northwest residents brace for an unprecedented heat wave that has temperatures forecasted in triple-digits. Credit: AP Photo/Manuel Valdes

"We don't want anyone to be making the dangerous decision between leaving their pet behind or not," he said.

Unusually hot weather was expected to extend into next week for much of the region.

Columbia Basin fisheries managers are worried about how the heat wave will affect endangered Snake River sockeye and other species of protected salmon.

State, tribal and [federal officials](#) are trying to mitigate rising [water temperatures](#) in the lower Snake River, the Lewiston Tribune reported, in part by releasing 42 F (5.56 C) water from Idaho's Dworshak Reservoir. They began releasing the water earlier this week, hoping to keep the water temperature at the Lower Granite Dam on the Snake River at or below 68 F (20 C). Officials fear a repeat of 2015, when water temperatures in Columbia and Snake river reservoirs reached lethal levels for sockeye salmon.



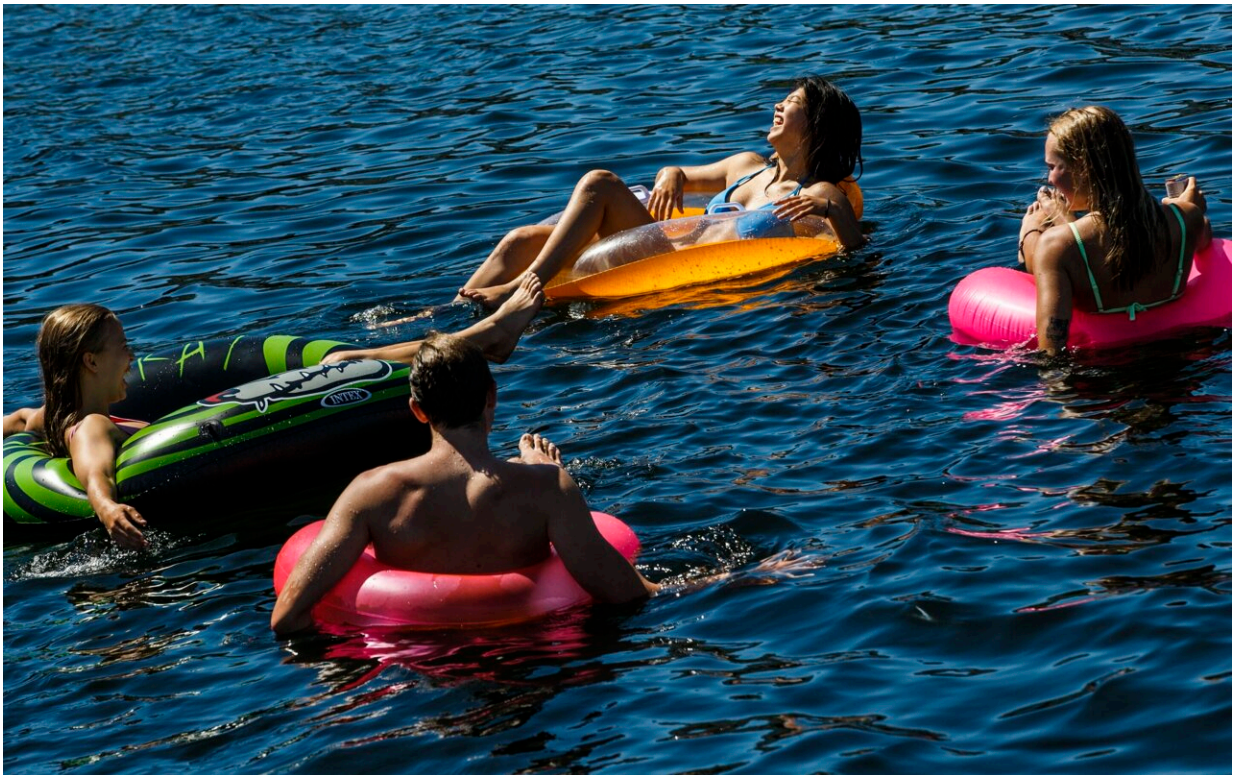
Grant Holloway wins the first heat in the men's 400-meter hurdles at the U.S. Olympic Track and Field Trials Friday, June 25, 2021, in Eugene, Ore. Credit: AP Photo/Ashley Landis

In eastern Washington, berry farmer Jason Morrell said the sun was rapidly drying out his strawberries, leaving them at risk of rotting if they aren't picked fast. Morrell, the owner of Walters' Fruit Ranch near Spokane, told television station KREM that normally farmers have about three weeks to get their strawberry crop picked. With Spokane expected to reach 109 F (42.78 C) on Monday, he expects to have just a few days to get the job done.

Washington Gov. Jay Inslee lifted COVID-19 capacity restrictions on publicly owned or operated and non-profit cooling centers in light of the

heat. Capacity is currently limited to 50% until the state fully reopens next Wednesday. In Oregon, Gov. Kate Brown suspended capacity limits for movie theaters and shopping malls—places with air-conditioning—as well as swimming pools ahead of a statewide reopening Wednesday.

In Seattle, a few new city lifeguards went through last-minute training at a beach on Lake Washington. Case Berrysmith has been a lead lifeguard for 15 years. This is the hottest stretch he has ever seen.



Thea DeBroux , left to right, Matthew Ryan, Anna Matsumoto and Maia Buswell enjoy the water at Lake Union Park, Thursday, June 24, 2021 in Seattle. The Pacific Northwest sweltered Friday and braced for even hotter weather through the weekend as a historic heat wave hit Washington and Oregon, with temperatures in many areas expected to top out up to 30 degrees above normal. Credit: Amanda Snyder/The Seattle Times via AP



A family orders ice cream at a food truck on Friday, June, 25, 2021, in the Sellwood neighborhood of Portland, Ore. The Pacific Northwest sweltered Friday as a historic heat wave hit Washington and Oregon, with temperatures in many areas expected to top out 25 to 30 degrees above normal in the coming days. Credit: AP Photo/Sara Cline



A chalk drawing on the sidewalk in a residential neighborhood in Southeast Portland, Ore., Friday, June 25, 2021, represents a funny take on how hot the temperature is supposed to be during the weekend. The Pacific Northwest sweltered Friday as a historic heat wave hit Washington and Oregon, with temperatures in many areas expected to top out 25 to 30 degrees above normal in the coming days. Credit: AP Photo/Sara Cline



Carl Goodwin, manager of Seattle Sausage, takes a water break while selling bottles of water to baseball fans leaving the Mariners game on a warm Wednesday afternoon, June 23, 2021, in the SoDo neighborhood of Seattle. Forecasts say extreme heat will roast the Puget Sound region from Saturday through Monday. Credit: Amanda Snyder/The Seattle Times via AP

"Most rescues are going to be over-estimated ability," Berrysmith said. "Stay safe. Stay hydrated."

The sweltering temperatures expected on the final weekend of the U.S. Olympic Track and Field trials in Eugene, Oregon, also prompted USA Track and Field to reschedule several weekend events to times earlier in the day to avoid the peak heat.

Roughly 3,000 people signed up to compete in the Ironman race in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, on Sunday, when temperatures could reach a record 101 F (38 C). The triathlon includes a 2.4-mile (3.9-km) swim, a 112-mile (180-km) bike ride and a marathon run.

The extended "heat dome" over the Pacific Northwest was a taste of the future as climate change reshapes weather patterns worldwide, said Kristie Ebi, a professor at the University of Washington who studies global warming and its effects on public health.

"We know from evidence around the world that climate change is increasing the frequency, intensity and duration of heat waves. We're going to have to get used to this going forward," she said.

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Citation: Portland records hottest day ever amid Northwest scorcher (2021, June 27) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2021-06-portland-hottest-day-northwest-scorcher.html>

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