

# Europe's record 2022 wildfires sent carbon emissions soaring: monitors

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Fires in France have led to the highest levels of carbon pollution since records began.

Wildfires that scorched across Europe this year burned a record land area and stoked carbon emissions, according to an update released on

Tuesday by Europe's forest fire and satellite monitors.

The summer of 2022 was the hottest in Europe's recorded history. The continent suffered blistering heatwaves and the worst drought in centuries, as climate change drives ever longer and stronger hot spells.

That created tinderbox forests, increasing the risk of devastating and sometimes [deadly wildfires](#).

"The length and intensity of the heatwaves to hit Europe during the summer, combined with the general dry conditions on the continent during 2022, contributed to record-breaking wildfire activity," the Copernicus Atmosphere Monitoring Service (CAMS) said.

It said the European Forest Fire Information System (EFFIS) put the total cumulative burnt area in the 27-nation European Union from the start of the year to mid-November at over 785,000 hectares (1.9 million acres).

That is more than double the average of just over 317,000 hectares in the 2006-2021 period.

CAMS said that result aligns with its data, estimating total wildfire emissions from the EU plus the United Kingdom from June 1 to August 31 at 6.4 megatonnes of carbon, the highest level for these months since the summer of 2007.

While the global trend is a decline in emissions from wildfires because of a reduction in savanna fires in [tropical regions](#), some parts of the world are seeing emissions rise, CAMS said.

"We also continue to identify and monitor significantly increased fire emissions in different parts of the world, where hotter and drier

conditions are leading to increased flammability of the vegetation," said CAMS Senior Scientist Mark Parrington.

Huge fires that raged across Spain and France meant that the countries saw the highest [carbon emissions](#) from June to August since the satellite monitor's records began in 2003.

"This had a major impact on air quality in the region," CAMS said.

EFFIS has said that 2022 is likely to have seen the highest number of fires recorded in Europe since 2006.

"Wildfires raging from west to east and across northern, central and southern European countries offer clear evidence of the effects of climate change," it said in its report on 2021 wildfires, which was published in November and included details of the 2022 burned area.

EFFIS said it would be necessary to prepare populations to "live with wildfires, as they become more frequent and intense because of climate change".

In September, the United Nations' World Meteorological Organization said the interaction between pollution and [climate change](#) would impact hundreds of millions of people over the coming century, and urged action to rein in the harm.

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