

Forest fires burn in Colombia amid record heat

January 24 2024



A military helicopter in Colombia dumps water on a forest fire burning outside Bogota on January 23, 2024.

At least 21 forest fires are burning in Colombia as it endures record temperatures, in some cases prompting wild animals to seek shelter in

urban areas, authorities said Wednesday.

The heat is being blamed on the weather phenomenon known as El Niño, which is typically associated with increased temperatures worldwide, drought in some parts of the world and heavy rains elsewhere.

The National Disaster Risk Management Unit said fires are burning around the country, including outside the capital Bogota.

There, a blaze in mountains to the west of the city has been burning since Monday and [wild animals](#) have been spotted sheltering in built-up areas. These creatures include racoon-like animals called coatis, porcupines, birds including owls, and frogs, authorities said.

This fire is now 70 percent controlled, mayor Carlos Fernando Galan said on X, formerly Twitter.

For months Colombia has been suffering from record high temperatures and [drought conditions](#) in the southern hemisphere winter, as climate change wreaks havoc.

These conditions are expected to last through June, forecasters said.

Nine towns in the north, center and east of Colombia posted record temperatures Tuesday of up to 40.4 degrees Celsius (105 Fahrenheit).

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