

Planet sees 10 straight months of record-breaking heat

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Credit: Markus Spiske from Pexels

Californians have had weekend after weekend of cool, stormy weather and the Sierra Nevada has been blessed with a healthy snowpack. But the

reality is that even the last few months have been more than 2 degrees hotter than average.

The planet is experiencing a horrifying streak of record-breaking heat, with March marking the 10th month in a row that the average global temperature has been the highest ever recorded.

It would be shocking if it wasn't so predictable. Despite everything we know about the effects of burning [fossil fuels](#), humanity is still going in the wrong direction with self-destructive abandon. Last year greenhouse gas pollution climbed to a new high, a 1.1% increase over the prior year.

If 10 months of record heat isn't enough to jolt world leaders into crisis mode, it's hard to say what will.

It should be a flashing, red warning light that we are entering dangerous new territory and need to change course. We have the [renewable energy technology](#), but it's being adopted at a pace that's too slow to protect people, animals and plants from unacceptable levels of suffering.

The concept of a higher average global temperature doesn't paint a true picture of the effects that severe heat waves, drought, storms, wildfires and other climate-fueled disasters are having on the ground. Some communities are doing significantly worse than average. And examples aren't hard to find.

Phoenix last year recorded 31 consecutive days of temperatures of 110 degrees. Maricopa County officials have confirmed more than 600 heat-related deaths in 2023, shattering the previous year's record.

The Texas Panhandle this year experienced its largest wildfire in state history, which burned more than 1 million acres and killed thousands of cattle. In the Horn of Africa, communities experiencing a hunger crisis

after three years of drought were pummeled with [torrential rains](#) and flooding last year that killed hundreds of people across Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia and Tanzania.

While these disasters are in line with scientists' predictions about rising temperatures, some are worried that the spike in global temperatures that began last summer is an indication that warming may be accelerating. We are already on the edge of blowing past the 2.7-degree (1.5 degrees Celsius) rise in [global temperatures](#), a limit virtually every nation on Earth has agreed to try to stay below to prevent catastrophic climate impacts.

One of the most important things Americans can do right now is to exercise their [political power](#) at the ballot box, by demanding that leaders at all levels of government deliver serious climate action or stay out of office.

The stakes are especially high this year. A former president who has arguably the worst climate record in U.S. history, having rolled back more than 100 environmental protections, is polling neck and neck with a president who has done more to fight climate change than anyone before him, even if it's still not enough.

Still, the choice should be clear if we want to stop setting records, month after month and year after year.

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