

Brazil's Pantanal wetlands see record fires even before dry season

June 21 2024



This handout photo released by the Mato Grosso do Sul Fire Department shows firefighters battling to control a wildfire in the Pantanal.

Brazil's Pantanal, one of the world's largest tropical wetlands, is seeing record fires in June, even before the arrival of the dry season, satellite

data showed Friday.

The Brazilian Institute of Space Research (INPE) released data showing some 1,700 fires since the start of the month in a region teeming with one of the greatest concentrations of wildlife in South America.

This is more than four times the previous record for fires in June, set almost two decades ago.

"This resurgence of fires in the Pantanal even before the [dry season](#) (which usually begins in the second half of the year) is extremely worrying," Claudio Angelo, a member of the Climate Observatory collective, told AFP.

The worst year on record for the Pantanal, a region slightly bigger than England, was 2020, when 30 percent of the wetlands were affected by flames.

This year so far, is looking worse.

"Everything suggests that we are facing another extreme climate event, which makes us fear for the future of the biome in the coming months, when the drought reaches its peak," said Angelo.

The Pantanal, which extends into Bolivia and Paraguay, is home to millions of caimans, parrots, giant otters and the world's highest density of jaguars.

Environment Minister Marina Silva has sounded the alarm in recent weeks over the looming "severe" [drought](#) in several parts of the country, including the Pantanal and the Amazon rainforest.

Brazil has been battered by a series of extreme weather events, most

recently once-in-a-century flooding in the state of Rio Grande do Sul that left more than 170 people dead.

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Citation: Brazil's Pantanal wetlands see record fires even before dry season (2024, June 21) retrieved 26 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2024-06-brazil-pantanal-wetlands-dry-season.html>

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