

Searing heat scorches US from Chicago to East Coast

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People cool off at Crown Fountain in Chicago's Millennium Park, as temperatures soar and officials warn of extreme heat.

Extreme heat and high humidity smothered the central and northeastern United States on Tuesday, with temperature records expected to melt

away in the coming days, authorities warned, as wildfires sizzled in the west.

"A heat wave will settle and persist across the Great Lakes, Ohio Valley and the Northeast through the next few days," the National Weather Service said, explaining that the early arrival of summer heat wave made it more dangerous.

Forecasters predicted that the mercury could hit 100 degrees Fahrenheit (about 38 Celsius) in parts of New England by Thursday.

"Widespread, numerous record-tying/breaking high temperatures are possible," it said, adding that the heat would not abate significantly overnight and warning that those without air conditioning could suffer in particular.

In Chicago, such an early and prolonged [heat wave](#) has not been seen since 1933, the Illinois state climatologist's office said on X, formerly Twitter. City officials have opened community cooling centers for those in need.

Human-caused climate change is heating up the planet at an alarming rate, the global scientific community agrees.

Dramatic climate shifts have begun taking a heavy toll worldwide, fueling [extreme weather events](#), flooding and drought, while glaciers are rapidly melting away and sea levels are rising.

The year 2023 was the hottest on record, according to the European Union's climate monitor, Copernicus.

A coalition of environmental, labor and health advocacy groups have called on the administration of US President Joe Biden to unblock

federal disaster aid funds to tackle both [extreme heat](#) and wildfires, particularly the smoke they generate.

Neither situation is currently covered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as a disaster eligible for relief funding.

As the East Coast prepared for searing heat, firefighters in California were battling a major wildfire, and 7,000 residents of the small resort town of Ruidoso in New Mexico were forced to evacuate in the face of a spreading, uncontained [wildfire](#).

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