

July was Earth's hottest month in modern times: NOAA

17 August 2016

Soaring temperatures worldwide made July the Earth's hottest month in modern times, setting a new high mark for global heat in 137 years of record-keeping, US government scientists said Wednesday.

The report from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration came just two days after the US space agency NASA released its climate data, which also found July was a record-breaking month.

"July is typically the hottest month for the globe, and last month didn't disappoint," said a summary of the monthly report by NOAA.

"July 2016 was 1.57 degrees Fahrenheit (0.87 degree Celsius) above the 20th-century average, breaking last year's record for the warmest July on record by 0.11 degrees."

Scientists say the heating trend is being driven by fossil-fuel burning, and is made worse by the ocean warming phenomenon known as El Nino, which came to an end last month.

July's global average of temperatures taken over land and ocean surfaces was the "highest for any month in the NOAA global temperature dataset record, which dates back to 1880."

July also marks the 15th consecutive month of breaking monthly temperature records, "the longest such streak in the 137-year record," NOAA said.

Scorching Gulf

The report found above-average warmth across most of the Earth, with new records observed in parts of Indonesia, southern Asia, and New Zealand.

Scorching temperatures were seen in part of the

Gulf region, with several locations across Kuwait experiencing temperatures higher than 113 F during July.

"The highest maximum temperature during July 2016 was recorded in Mitribah, Kuwait when temperatures soared to 126.5 F on July 22," it said.

In Bahrain, the average temperature of 96.8 F for the month was the nation's highest July temperature since national records began in 1902.

New Zealand, Spain and Hong Kong were also unusually warm.

Places that saw near-average or cooler-than-normal temperatures last month included the northwestern United States, eastern Canada, southern South America, southwestern Australia, north central Russia, Kazakhstan, and India.

Ocean temperatures were also at a record high, amid concerns that warming waters are contributing to the spread of coral bleaching worldwide.

NOAA said the 13 highest monthly global ocean temperature departures have all occurred in the past 13 months.

Heat records were broken even though El Nino has ended, and neither the warming trend of El Nino or the cooler La Nina prevailed across the tropical Pacific Ocean during July 2016.

La Nina is "slightly favored to develop during August-October 2016, with about 55-60 percent chance of La Nina during the northern hemisphere fall and winter 2016/17," NOAA said.

But even a break in El Nino, which contributed to the surging global temperatures this year, is not likely to sway 2016 from its track toward becoming the hottest year in the contemporary era for global heat.

NOAA said the first seven months of the year are the "warmest such period on record at 1.85 F above the 20th century average."

That is one-third of a degree F above the previous record set in 2015.

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