

# Report: Can't blame El Nino as global temps spike in March (Update)

19 April 2017, by Seth Borenstein



In this March 28, 2017 file photo, a bee flies over daisies in a park in Frankfurt, Germany. As weather forecasts predict sunny weather for most parts of Germany. In what scientists call a clear sign of a warming world, Earth's temperatures in March were the most above normal on record without an El Nino spiking temperatures. (AP Photo/Michael Probst, File)

In what scientists call a clear sign of a warming world, Earth's temperatures in March were the most above normal on record without an El Nino spiking temperatures.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration calculated that the average global temperature in March was 56.8 degrees Fahrenheit (13.8 Celsius), only behind last year's El Nino-goosed record.

France, Germany and other parts of Europe saw record heat while most of the Arctic—except Alaska and Canada—was unusually warm, NOAA climate scientist Ahira Sanchez-Lugo said Wednesday.

It's the first time the Earth was more than 1 degree

Celsius (1.8 degrees Fahrenheit) warmer than normal without an El Nino. Sanchez-Lugo said it looks like the planet is getting to the point where it'll likely be that much warmer than the 20th century average.

El Nino is a natural warming of the Pacific that alters weather worldwide. Both 2015 and 2016 set repeated warmth records during an El Nino. Earth is in a neutral condition in the Pacific.

"It's quite impressive; it's just climate change" not natural variability like El Nino, Sanchez-Lugo said. "We typically expect the next year after El Nino to be slightly cooler."

The first three months of 2017 are almost a full degree Celsius (1.8 Fahrenheit) warmer than normal, making it the second hottest start of a year.

Records go back to 1880. NASA, which calculates global temperatures a bit differently, found similar results for March.

Since 1980, temperatures during El Ninos and La Ninas—the cooling of the Pacific—are getting warmer. Temperatures during neutral periods like now are also getting warmer, Sanchez-Lugo said.

"If El Nino were the main driver of record warmth, there is no way the last three months (of this year) would have been as warm as they have been," said University of California, Berkeley climate scientist Zeke Hausfather.

Computer models are forecasting another El Nino is likely to begin sometime later this year, which would be in addition to the record heat.

"These records are going to continue for the rest of our lives," said climate scientist Andrew Dessler of Texas A&M University.

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