

Death Valley sets tentative world record for hottest month (Update)

1 August 2018, by John Antczak



In this April 11, 2010 file photo, tourists walk along a ridge at Death Valley National Park, Calif. Preliminary data show that Death Valley set the world record for hottest month in July, 2018. National Weather Service meteorologist Todd Lericos says the month's average temperature at Furnace Creek in Death Valley was 108.1 degrees Fahrenheit (42.28 Celsius). That eclipses the previous record, set in Death Valley during July 2017 when the average was 107.4 degrees F (41.89 C). (AP Photo/Brian Melley, File)

The natural furnace of California's Death Valley was on full broil in July, tentatively setting a world record for hottest month ever.

The month's average temperature was 108.1 degrees (42.28 Celsius), said Todd Lericos, a meteorologist in the Las Vegas office of the National Weather Service.

That roasted the previous record, set in Death Valley in July 2017 when the average was 107.4 degrees (41.89 Celsius).

"It eclipsed the record by quite a bit," Lericos said, adding that the data is considered preliminary and needs to be reviewed before it goes into official record books.

The temperatures are measured at Furnace Creek in Death Valley National Park, a vast, austere and rugged landscape in the desert of southeastern California that includes Badwater Basin, which at 282 feet (85.9 meters) below sea level is the lowest point in North America.

The valley got its morbid name from a group of pioneers who got lost there in 1849-1850 and thought it would be the end, according to the National Park Service. Only one died, however, before they found their way out.

Summer heat is so routinely extreme that tourists are warned to drink at least a gallon (4 liters) of water each day, carry additional water in their cars, stay close to their vehicles and watch themselves and others for dizziness, nausea and other symptoms of potentially deadly heat illness.



Death Valley National Park HEAT SAFETY 

HEAT SAFETY TIPS

WATER
 Drink at least one gallon (4 liters) of water per day.
 Carry plenty of extra water in your car.
 Get wet! Use water to wet your clothing and cool down via evaporative cooling.

SUN PROTECTION
 Wear sunscreen and reapply.
 Wear protective, light-weight, loose-fitting clothing.
 Wear a hat.

HEAT AND DEHYDRATION
 If you feel dizzy, nauseous or have a headache, get out of the sun immediately and drink plenty of water.
 Dampen your clothing to lower body temperature.
 Call emergency services if you feel ill.

TRAVEL PREPARED TO SURVIVE
 Stay on paved roads in the summer.
 If your car breaks down, stay with it until help comes, and ask a passing motorist alert emergency services.
 Carry plenty of water in case of emergency.

LIMIT TIME OUTDOORS
 We do **NOT RECOMMEND** hiking in the lower elevations in the summer.
 We recommend staying out of your car (A/C) for only 10 - 15 minutes before cooling down again.

COOLEST time of the day: **4 AM — 7 AM**
HOTTEST time of the day: **2 PM — 6 PM**

Death Valley is the hottest place on Earth.
 In the summer months (May-September) temperatures average over 100°F (38°C), and often exceed 120°F (49°C).

Even with that history, July was exceptional as a weather pattern stoked temperatures.

A very persistent high pressure system set up over the Southwest, restricting the movement of air vertically in the atmosphere and creating a heat wave, Lericos said. "It was fairly intense for this time of year," he said.

Among the extreme conditions were four consecutive days reaching a high of 127 degrees (52.7 Celsius) and overnight lows that remained over the century mark.

© 2018 The Associated Press. All rights reserved.

This warning appears on the National Park Service's Death Valley Twitter page, seen Wednesday, Aug. 1, 2018. Preliminary data show that Death Valley set the world record for hottest month in July. National Weather Service meteorologist Todd Lericos says the month's average temperature at Furnace Creek in Death Valley was 108.1 degrees Fahrenheit (42.28 Celsius). That eclipses the previous record, set in Death Valley during July 2017 when the average was 107.4 degrees F (41.89 C). (National Park Service via AP)

Visitors are urged to "travel prepared to survive," avoid hiking at low elevations and return to their air-conditioned cars for a cool-down after just 10 to 15 minutes of exposure outdoors.

And amid the heat, thunderstorms bring the threat of flash floods.

The location holds the world record for highest temperature ever recorded—134 degrees (56.67 Celsius)—set on July 10, 1913.

APA citation: Death Valley sets tentative world record for hottest month (Update) (2018, August 1) retrieved 17 November 2019 from <https://phys.org/news/2018-08-death-valley-tentative-world-hottest.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.