

# Weather forecast: Heat waves may now get names. The first is Zoe—in Spain

15 August 2022, by Saleen Martin



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After temperatures reached 112 degrees Fahrenheit in Spain, scientists for the first time gave a heat wave a name—all in the name of protecting public health.

The heat wave, named Zoe, was recorded July 24-27 in the city of Seville in southwestern Spain, said José María Martín Olalla, an associate professor in the department of condensed matter physics at Sevilla University.

The naming of heat wave Zoe came about because of the proMETEO Sevilla Project, a [pilot program](#) officially launched in June to rank [heat waves](#) and teach the public about them. Collaborating on the initiative is the Adrienne Arsht-Rockefeller Foundation Resilience Center of the Atlantic Council, a Washington-based research center and [nonprofit organization](#).

The group created the naming and ranking system to alert [local communities](#) and "prevent the hazards of exposure to the heat during the afternoon," Martín Olalla told U.S. TODAY. It eventually could be a model for other cities and

governments.

Weather experts usually alternate between female and male names and start in alphabetical order, but in reverse. That's how this first heat wave got the name Zoe.

Although the people of Seville are accustomed to heat, the hot temperatures seem to be happening more frequently and lasting longer, he said. There has also been a drought in Spain and other parts of Europe over the past few months.

Seville experienced a heat wave because recent temperatures matched or surpassed 106 degrees, a mark higher than 95% of the daily highs over more than the past 20 years, Martín Olalla said.

On July 24-25, the maximum daily temperature in Seville was about 112 degrees. Even the minimum daily temperature was 84 degrees, he said.

"Every summer there are some days in Seville with temperatures above this threshold," Martín Olalla said. "It is not incredibly rare."

But this summer, the city has experienced daily maximum temperatures above or close to 106 degrees for about two weeks. "In this sense, what is incredibly rare was the amount of days above the threshold," he said.

The team issued alerts, warnings and other messages on [social media](#) to let people know how they could protect themselves. In one tweet, the organization stressed that staying hydrated is important during high temperatures because it can prevent heatstroke.

Seville may be getting a break in the weather now. Over the next few days, temperatures should be fine, and the past week was much more comfortable than in late July, Martín Olalla said.

Martín Olalla compares heat-related illnesses to car accidents. Both can be devastating, but they are preventable—if you "take care of yourself."

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