

Northeast sees record temps in spring and summer

Cornell University

By [Kate Engler](#) [1]

No doubt about it, it was a scorcher this spring and summer. In the Northeast, 26 cities broke their records for average temperature between March and August this year, reports the Northeast Regional Climate Center at Cornell.

New York City, for example, had an average temperature of 66.3 degrees Fahrenheit between March and August, 1.7 degrees higher than its previous record in 1991. Philadelphia beat its record, also from 1991, of 67.7 degrees by 1.2 degrees. Even Caribou, Maine, saw an all-time high average temperature of 54.5 degrees, one degree higher than its last warmest period in 1971.

Of the 26 warmer than ever cities, 16 exceeded their previous high temperatures by at least a degree, with Atlantic City reporting a 2.3 degree higher average temperature than its last record-breaking period in 1991. Seven other cities reported their second or third hottest period on record.

"The thing that surprised me the most was the spatial extent of the top one or two rankings," said Art DeGaetano, Cornell professor of climatology and the director of NOAA's Northeast Regional Climate Center at Cornell. "Typically in looking at statistics like this, you get just a few stations that had their hottest or second hottest seasons. Here almost everyone across a large region, even extending beyond the Northeast, has seen the warmth."

He was also surprised by the fact that the heat extended from March until August.

DeGaetano explained that the dry weather in areas south of New York City this summer may have contributed to some of the sweltering temperatures in Philadelphia, Newark, N.J., and Washington, D.C. In addition, while cool air occasionally passed through some of the northern areas this spring and summer, the weather pattern generally did not allow it to reach farther south than New York City.

However, DeGaetano cautions against predicting that the record-breaking temperatures this spring and summer will extend into fall and winter. "There is no relationship between warm summers and warm winters. I am not packing away my skis just yet!"

Graduate student Kate Engler is a writer intern for the Cornell Chronicle.

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