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Russia Records Second Straight Year of Historic May Heat

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Average temperatures from the Volga River to the Pacific Ocean were 4-6 degrees Celsius higher than historic norms. **Sergei Karpukhin / TASS**

Russia has recorded the highest average May temperatures in its 130-year recorded history in the past two years, the country's weather monitor Rosgidromet has said.

Last month, average temperatures from the Volga River to the Pacific Ocean were 4-6 degrees Celsius higher than historic norms, Rosgidromet said.

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May 2021 is now officially the second-hottest May in Russia since measurements began in 1891 — second only to May 2020, whose average temperatures were 0.5 degrees Celsius warmer. Temperatures were above average in most regions of the country, with parts of the Pskov region and the Far East the only exceptions.

“The temperature change in Russia over the last couple of centuries is staggering,” meteorologist Scott Duncan tweeted on Monday.

According to data from Berkeley Earth, this May’s heatwave penetrated further southwest than last year’s, covering the European part of Russia where the majority of Russians live.

While places like St. Petersburg saw record precipitation levels, the heatwave was accompanied by drought around the Volga river, Ural mountains and western Siberia, creating conditions for wildfires. Last year’s spring heatwave contributed to record-breaking wildfires in Siberia.

Russia is warming 2.5 times faster than the planet as a whole.

Extreme heat in the European part of Russia is expected to intensify in the coming week, the head of Rosgidromet Roman Vilfand told the state-run RIA Novosti news agency Tuesday.

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