

Russia Sees Record Wildfire Spread as Siberian Blazes Rage On

August 04, 2021



This year's wildfires have hit particularly hard in the Siberian republic of Sakha. **Ivan Nikiforov / AP Photo / TASS**

Russia's forest fires spread by a record margin on Monday, making the current wildfire season the country's third-largest this century as smoke from the blazes wafts over huge expanses of Siberia, experts from Greenpeace Russia [reported](#).

The fires grew by 0.6 million hectares — 98% of which were located in the far northeastern republic of Sakha, also known as Yakutia — on Aug. 2, a record for 2021 so far, the environmental group said.

Related article: [Russian Wildfire Smog Turns Northern Siberian Day to Night](#)

Colossal forest fires have now devastated 13.4 million hectares of land — an area roughly the size of Greece — in Russia so far in 2021, Greenpeace wrote, [citing](#) official data. Only 2003 and 2012 experienced more widespread wildfires by the same point in the season.

This year's wildfires have hit particularly hard in Sakha, where a state of emergency has been in place in several districts including its capital of Yakutsk for over a month and where firefighting planes were unable to take off this week due to thick smoke.

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Thick [#smoke](#) from the [#wildfires](#) in [#Siberia](#), [#Russia](#) ☒☒ currently covers an area of about 5.3 million km² (\approx 2 million sq. miles). That is larger than the area of EU ☒☒, or more than half of the area of the USA ☒☒! [#NASAWorldview](#):
<https://t.co/obPXPBouhx> [pic.twitter.com/niblFUKk5v](https://t.co/niblFUKk5v)

— Antti Lipponen (@anttilip) [August 4, 2021](#)

Smoke from the Sakha forest fires now [covers](#) an area of 5.3 million square kilometers, an area larger than the European Union, according to NASA.

While wildfires are an annual occurrence in Siberia, the accelerating effects of climate change are believed to be making them increasingly devastating.

“[Growth in forest fires] is linked to accelerating climate changes. The fire seasons get longer and longer, while droughts become more frequent, long and intense,” the environmental group's forestry expert Alexei Yaroshenko said.

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