

The Great Labor Day Heatwave of 2022

By Don Sutherland

Labor Day 2022 arrives with another extreme heatwave—this time in the western United States and Canada—providing a fresh reminder of how much the climate has changed from 30 years ago and a warning of what could increasingly become the “normal” 30 years in the future. Out West, monthly high temperature records are melting in the withering heat. Today and tomorrow, additional records are likely. Monthly records could be challenged or broken in Sacramento and Salt Lake City, the latter of which has already broken its September record twice.

Already, 2022 has seen historic spring heat in Pakistan, the hottest summer on record in parts of Texas, record-shattering heat in western Europe, an extreme heat event in the Pacific Northwest, and now the ongoing heatwave.

Some highlights from the United States (through September 4):

Abilene, TX: 25 105° or above days (old record: 21 days, 2011)

Boise: 25 100° or above days (old record: 20 days, 2003)

Casper, WY: First 100° temperature in September. The previous latest such temperature occurred on August 12, 2018

Galveston: Warmest April, May, June, and July and hottest summer on record. Record-tying 48-day heatwave. 29 85° or above minimum temperatures (old record: 13 days, 2019 and 2020)

Great Falls, MT: First 100° reading on record for September (102°, September 3, 2022)

Phoenix: Earliest 90° low temperature on record (90°, June 11, 2022)

Portland, OR: 5 100° or above days (tied record set in 1941 and tied in 1977 and 2021)

Salt Lake City: 31 100° or above days (old record: 21 days, 1960, 1994 and 2021)

Seattle: Longest heatwave on record: 6 days (old record: 5 days, August 7-11, 1981 and July 1-15, 2015)

Tampa: 95° or above days: 25 (old record: 24 days, 1990); 36 days with low temperatures of 80° or above (old record: 27 days, 2020)