

# Summer 2023 Lingers Deep into October

By Don Sutherland

In parts of Europe, October 21<sup>st</sup> was yet another day of unprecedented heat in a year in which the world has experienced unprecedented warmth. Romania saw the thermometer top out at 95° at two locations. Bulgaria and Moldova came close with 94° temperatures. Yet, as jarring as the unseasonable heat was, one could find little notice of it in the headlines. That is, in part, a big reason why the scale of public support needed to bring about decisive policy changes aimed at phasing out fossil fuels remains lacking.

In the United States, just as happened during the long summer of 2020, Phoenix experienced a late-season encore of heat. October 15-21, 2023 saw the temperature reach 100° or above for seven consecutive days, tying the record for longest such streak after the first week of October. That record was set during October 17-23, 2003. Even more impressive, Phoenix recorded its latest season 104° and 105° temperatures.

Prior to 2023, the latest 104° or above temperature occurred on October 10, 1991 when the mercury sizzled at 105°. On October 16, the temperature reached 105°. On October 19 and October 20, the temperature topped out at 104°. The two consecutive 104° days was the latest such streak by two weeks.

Despite a late start to the 100° heat compared to recent years, 2023 has registered 133 such days. That ranks as the third highest figure on record. Seven of the top ten years have occurred since 2000, even as Phoenix's full-year records go back to 1896.

Overall, October 2023 is on track to become the warmest October on record globally. Moreover, through October 21, ocean temperatures have maintained a streak of setting daily record highs that began on March 14, 2023.

All of this is noteworthy. In a world that prioritized information with impact and implications, there would be broad, visible, and sustained coverage. Policymakers would be responding aggressively, as they had following scientific evidence that refrigerants were damaging the Earth's ozone layer. On account of a leadership and policy vacuum, even as renewable energy expands rapidly, fossil fuel burning is also expanding instead of retreating. What this means is that more global heating and its extreme weather impacts lie ahead.