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Extreme Weather Summer Scorecard – How Did You Fare?

By [Gemma Alexander](#)NOV 8, 2023 [Climate Change](#), [community resilience](#), [extreme weather](#),[heatwaves](#)**20% off for
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Remember when summertime meant living was easy? Summer used to be the season of [backyard barbecues](#), trips to [the beach](#), and [vegetable gardens](#) full of fresh produce. Those things aren't gone, but these days summer seems more likely to be about dealing with [heat waves](#), Category 5 [hurricanes](#), and [wildfires](#).

It's not just your imagination that things are getting worse. The Union of Concerned Scientists' [Danger Season Tracker](#) reported that this summer, 96% of Americans lived through at least one extreme weather alert from the National Weather Service. Only a handful of counties in the United States went all summer without receiving a warning.

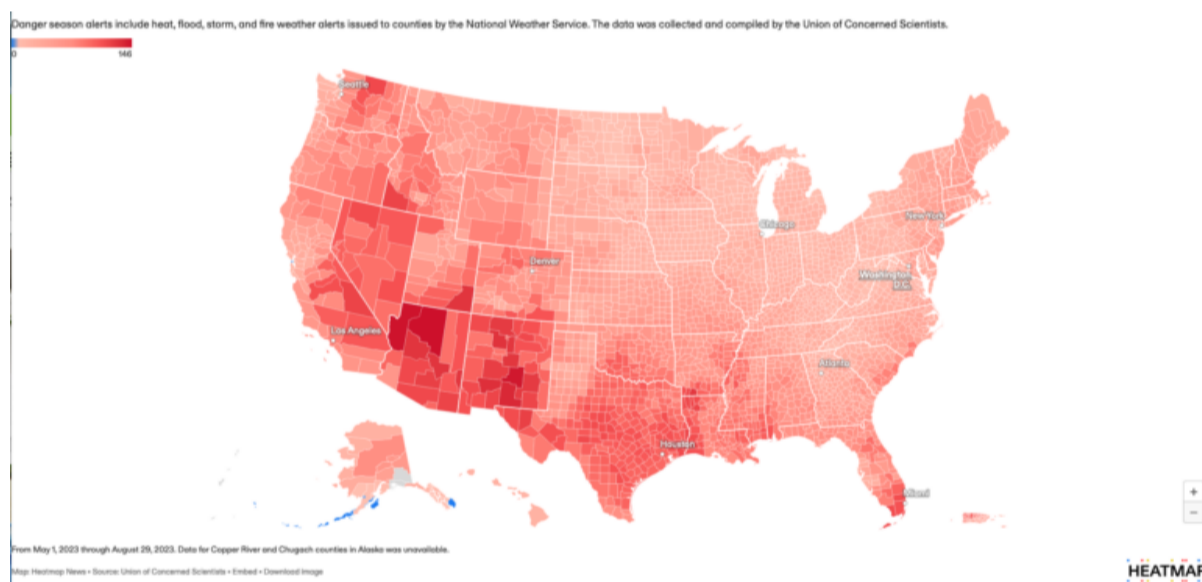
How did your county fare this year?

Danger Season Report

If you are one of the nearly 855,000 people who live in San Francisco County, Alaska's Aleutians East Borough, Aleutians West Census Area, Ketchikan Gateway Borough, Kodiak Island Borough, or Norton City, Virginia, congratulations on a pleasant summer. Even though San Francisco has [been rated](#) the most climate-vulnerable city in the country, they had no extreme heat, flood, fire, or storm warnings between May 1 and August 29 in 2023.

But if you live in any of the United States' remaining 3,224 counties and territories, you are among the 96% of Americans who faced at least one extreme weather warning this summer. The two counties with the most warnings were in Arizona – Coconino County with 146 alerts and Mojave County with 145. Together they faced heat waves, floods, and wildfires. Although these warnings include wildfire danger, they do not include associated air quality warnings resulting from wildfire smoke. In June alone, up to [one third of Americans](#) experienced hazardous air quality from wildfires. If air quality advisories had been included in UCS report, San Francisco would have been eliminated from the list of weather winners. Wildfire smoke resulted in [hazardous air quality](#) in San Francisco during the summer. That would have left [only 39,500](#) Americans whose summer was never impacted by extreme weather in 2023.

The Danger Season Tracker is updated daily and does not show historical data. But you can find your county's extreme weather summer score using Heatmap's interactive graphic.



A visualization of the frequency of extreme heat alerts during the summer of 2023, by U.S. county. Source: [Data compiled by the Union of Concerned Scientists](#)

Extended Risks

Climate change is making summer begin earlier and last longer. First and last frost dates have been [shifting](#), and [one study predicts](#) that by 2100, summer weather could last for six months while winter will have shrunk to only two. Wildfire season in the Western states is already [two months longer](#) than it was in the 1970s.

Weather disasters are also getting bigger. Since 1980, the average number of billion-dollar disasters after adjusting for inflation had been 8.1 per year, but during the past five years the average more than doubled to 18. By mid-September 2023, the nation eclipsed the record for the greatest number of [billion-dollar natural disasters](#) in a single year.

The increase is alarming. At summer's end, 24 billion-dollar disasters had struck the U.S., including a drought, floods, 20 severe storms – including both a tropical cyclone and a winter storm – and one wildfire that caused a billion dollars in

damages. These disasters took the lives of 373 people. Two events, Tropical Storm Hilary and hailstorms in Texas, had occurred too recently for total cost calculations but were likely to be added to the list.

What to Do

Scientists used to say that individual weather events could not be directly attributed to climate change. But that is no longer true. A study indicated that the temperatures reached during Portland's 2021 heat dome were virtually [impossible to account for](#) without anthropogenic climate change. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration concluded that climate change was a factor in 18 billion-dollar disasters in 2022. The most important things that any of us can do to prevent weather-related disasters are to [shrink our carbon footprint](#) and [advocate for meaningful federal climate legislation](#).

But we can and should also work to prevent damage from climate change-induced disasters. [Adapting to climate change](#) means learning about the risks specific to your region and working to create [community climate resilience](#).

When you are moving, consider the climate risks – such as [sea level rise](#), inland [flooding](#) and [drought](#) – in your new community. Homebuyers should also consider a home's current [source of electricity](#) or [suitability for solar](#) power and look for [disaster-resilient construction](#).

No matter where you live, make your [home more climate resilient](#) and [be prepared](#) for a natural disaster. Now more than ever, no place is safe.



Reading time: 3 mins

[Good, Better, Best: Cutting Carbon From Home Heating and Cooling](#)



By [Gemma Alexander](#)

Gemma Alexander has an M.S. in urban horticulture and a backyard filled with native plants. After working in a genetics laboratory and at a landfill, she now writes about the environment, the arts and family. See more of her writing [here](#).

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