

WORLD'S NORTHERNMOST SETTLEMENT HIT BY RECORD 'ARCTIC HEAT WAVE'

Relevant for: Environment | Topic: Environmental Degradation - GHGs, Ozone Depletion and Climate Change

Alert, the northernmost permanently inhabited spot on the planet, has a military base and a weather station.

Temperatures hit a record 21 degree Celsius in Alert, the northernmost permanently inhabited spot on the planet less than 965 km from the North Pole, the Canadian meteorology service said on Tuesday.

"It's quite phenomenal as a statistic, it's just one example among hundreds and hundreds of other records established by global warming," said Armel Castellan, a meteorologist at the Canadian Environment Ministry.

The temperature was recorded on Sunday at Alert, a permanent military base on the 82nd parallel which intercepts Russian communications and which has been home to a weather station since 1950.

In October, a landmark United Nations report warned that time is running out to avert global disaster and that avoiding climate chaos will require an unprecedented transformation of society and the world economy.

"It's an absolute record, we've never seen that before," said Mr. Castellan.

Such highs so far north are "completely staggering," he said, noting that "for a week and a half we have had much higher temperatures than usual."

The previous record of 20 degrees Celsius was set on July 8, 1956, but since 2012 there have been several days where the temperature has risen to 19 or 30 degrees Celsius at the base on the shore of the Arctic Ocean.

The average daily temperature in Alert in July is 3.33 degrees Celsius, with average maximum temperatures of 6.11 degrees Celsius.

"It is not exaggerated to call it an Arctic heat wave," said David Phillips, a senior climatologist at Environment and Climate Change Canada, a government office.

All these temperatures "are records for each of those days," said Mr. Phillips.

"The north, from Yukon right to the Arctic islands was the second or third warmest spring on record," he said.

Furthermore, Canadian government forecast models "are showing that that is going to continue through July and then into August and early September," he said.

The current heatwave is due to a high pressure front over Greenland, which is "quite exceptional" and feeds southerly winds on the Arctic Ocean, said Castellan.

The Arctic is heating up three times faster than other parts of the planet, he .

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