

The weather in Germany in summer 2018

Exceptionally warm, dry and sunny – many new regional records

Offenbach, 30 August 2018 – It was almost like being on the Mediterranean, when this year heat, lack of rainfall and plenty of sun created conditions in Germany that equalled holiday destinations in southern Europe. June started with sultry air, bringing severe thunderstorms to some places. Around the middle of the month, however, high pressure systems over north-western Europe brought dry weather and generally pleasant temperatures. From the end of July, the high pressure moved eastwards, allowing the hot air over southern Europe to spread to Germany almost until the end of August. Continuous sunshine and extremely high temperatures with a lack of rainfall caused catastrophic drought in many areas, particularly in central, northern and eastern Germany, and established many regional records. This is what the initial analysis by the Deutscher Wetterdienst (DWD) of data from its around 2,000 weather stations shows.

Only summer 2003 was even hotter

With a temperature of 19.3 degrees Celsius (°C), the average temperature nationwide was around 3.0 degrees warmer than the long-term average for the international reference period 1961–1990. Looking at the comparative period 1981–2010, the deviation was still 2.2 degrees above normal. This made summer 2018 the second hottest since regular measurements started to be recorded in 1881. Top position is still held by 2003 with 19.7 °C. Temperatures in June and, for the main part, in July as well were still relatively pleasant and did not exceed 34 °C. Summer 2018 then moved up a gear, bringing high continuous heat at the end of July and early August. Temperatures of over 30 degrees were recorded for 18 days in succession in Frankfurt am Main. Bernburg an der Saale reported a total of twelve days with temperatures above 35 °C. It was here, too, that the highest individual figure nationwide of 39.5 °C was recorded on 31 July. An early sign of the coming winter arrived on 26 August, when -0.1 °C and the first frost was recorded in Meßstetten on the Swabian Alb.

Only summer 1911 was even drier

With around 130 litres of precipitation per square metre (l/m²), rainfall in summer 2018 was just 54 per cent of the normal figure of 239 l/m². Only summer 1911 was drier, when the figure was 124 l/m². Some places saw some heavy rainfall, particularly at the start of June. On 12 June, Mauth-Finsterau reported the highest daily amount nationwide (166.5 l/m²). Apart from this, the widespread severe drought prevailed. Some regions received less rain than they would otherwise expect in two weeks. In August, the pasture land was ravaged by drought, trees shed their leaves and smaller rivers dried up. The astronaut Alexander Gerst was shocked when he saw Germany from the international space station: "Everything is dried out and brown, when really it should be green!" In agriculture, the losses were counted in billions of euros.

Endless sunshine

At around 770 hours, summer 2018 was one of the three sunniest since measurements started in 1951. In the super summer of 2003, the sun shone for 793 hours. The sunniest place was Rügen and the surrounding area, with some places receiving over 900 hours of sunshine. By contrast, some places in western Germany and Upper Bavaria enjoyed less than 650 hours of sunshine.

All the monthly values stated in this press release are provisional figures. The data used for the last two days of the season are based on forecasts. Some of the measurements from DWD's network of stations were not yet available at the time of publication.

