

# The Washington Times

## The fizzling summer sizzle

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“April is the cruellest month,” wrote T.S. Eliot, the poet, literary critic and aspiring weatherman. Anyone, without a muse but with a thermometer, would beg to differ. April is a stroll in the park compared to the sweat-fest that is July this year. This month is not much different from the month in recent years, except for the relative dearth of media hysterics attributing the sultry weather to global warming. The specter of the planet on fire that has frightened Americans for 30 years shows signs of burning out at last.

The sudden sound of a door slamming can make the bravest man jump, but repetition of loud noises becomes merely annoying, like the insistent warnings of dangers that don’t come true, as Chicken Little learned. When President Obama used his State of the Union speech in 2015 to tell Americans that “No challenge — no challenge — poses a greater threat to future generations than climate change,” everybody fainted, if not from the heat, from the fear. In a Pew Research Center poll of public priorities, respondents clucked their tongues and put “dealing with climate change” next to last on a list of 19 things to worry about, after such old reliables as “improving transportation” and “cutting the budget deficit.”

The summer of 2018 has brought misery aplenty in some places. The National Weather Service advised Texans to stay indoors until sunset last week when the mercury hit 108 degrees in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, and electric-power demand broke records on multiple days. The Northeast has already weathered a span of 90-plus degree days this summer that turned chilly lakes into lukewarm bathtubs. Other than localized heat spikes, North America’s hottest month has so far been normal. Ho hum.

Patrick Michaels, Cato Institute scholar and a former Virginia state climatologist, points out that while the combination of heat and humidity hit a maximum heat index of 125 degrees in Northern Virginia on the day before Independence Day, nothing this summer comes close to matching the misery that befell the nation in the summers of the ‘30s when, Babe Ruth set home-run records, Bonnie and Clyde set bank-robbing records and the heat set records that stand today. John Christy, a University of Alabama climate scientist, observes that 11 of the 12 hottest years on record occurred before 1960. That was before the rapid rise in the supposed source of human-caused climate change — carbon dioxide released by industrialization.

Americans weary of the seasonal sauna should pity the creatures that inhabit the planet’s chillier latitudes. In the *Scientific American*, ecologist Daniel Ackerman writes that millions of arctic shorebirds have been unable to breed normally this summer because the Greenland tundra in

which they customarily nest was completely snow-covered in June, and still 80 percent covered in July. You might think, with frigid weather like that, the shorebirds could easily get in the mood.

The unseasonable cold defies the rapid melting of arctic ice that Al Gore warned in 2009 could inundate coastal cities worldwide within five years. Instead, it appears to be simply the natural oscillation of the weather pattern leading to the regular expansion and contraction of ice, reflected in the measurements published by the Danish Meteorological Institute, that changes the weather.