

When days and nights get too hot

By Aimee Cunningham, Science News

Some victims were found at home. An 84-year-old woman who'd spent over half her life in the same Sacramento apartment died near her front door, gripping her keys. A World War II veteran succumbed in his bedroom. Many died outside, including a hiker who perished on the Pacific Crest Trail, his water bottles empty.

The killer? Heat. Hundreds of others lost their lives when a stifling air mass settled on California in July 2006. And this repeat offender's rap sheet stretches on. In Chicago, a multiday scorcher in July 1995 killed nearly 700. Elderly, black residents and people in homes without air conditioning were hardest hit. Europe's 2003 heat wave left more than 70,000 dead, almost 20,000 of them in France. Many elderly Parisians baked to death in upper-floor apartments while younger residents who might have checked in on their neighbors were on August vacation. In 2010, Russia lost at least 10,000 residents to heat. India, in 2015, reported more than 2,500 heat-related deaths.

Year in and year out, heat claims lives.

Read the whole story