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Headline: Beyond record hot, February was 'astronomical' and 'strange'

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In this Feb. 16, 2016 file photo, a girl takes pictures of her dog, back dropped by freshly sprung snowdrops and other spring flowers during an unseasonably warm winter day, in Bucharest, Romania. AP

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WASHINGTON— Earth got so hot last month that federal scientists described the temperatures as “astronomical,” “staggering” and “strange,” warning that the climate may have moved into a new, hotter neighborhood.

This was not just another of the drumbeat of 10 straight broken monthly global heat records, triggered by a super El Nino and man-made global warming. February 2016 obliterated old marks by such a margin that it was the most above-normal month since meteorologists started keeping track in 1880.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said Earth averaged 56.08 degrees (13.38 Celsius) in February, 2.18 degrees Fahrenheit above average, beating the old record for February set in 2015.

NOAA climate scientist Jessica Blunden said records were smashed on the land, the oceans and the lower and middle atmosphere.

In this Feb. 9, 2016 file photo, Lebanese men play cards and smoke water pipe, as they sunbath during unusually warm weather at the Mediterranean Sea off the Corniche, or waterfront promenade, in Beirut, Lebanon. AP

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