# Wildfire devastates 12,500 acres of Dartmoor moorland amid UK’s hottest May on record



A wildfire has led to significant destruction on Dartmoor in Devon, burning approximately 5,000 hectares (12,500 acres) of moorland. The incident began on Sunday afternoon at around 2.25 pm, prompting emergency services to respond swiftly. Firefighters worked through the night and continued to battle the flames for nearly 24 hours before successfully extinguishing the fire on Monday.

The blaze is part of a concerning trend, as the UK has recently recorded its hottest start to May ever. On Thursday, temperatures reached 29.3°C at Kew Gardens in south-west London, coinciding with another moorland fire that broke out near Ripponden, West Yorkshire. According to the National Fire Chiefs Council, there have been 439 wildfires reported since the beginning of the year, a striking increase from 250 during the same period in 2022, and much higher than the numbers recorded in previous years.

Authorities have advised the public to avoid the Merrivale and Okehampton areas while fire conditions remain precarious. The Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service indicated that the fire's behaviour could change unexpectedly due to evolving weather patterns.

On social media platform X, the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service provided updates on the situation, noting, “Approximately 12,500 acres of moorland were destroyed by fire.” The response effort involved collaboration with Dartmoor rangers and local commoners, employing advanced firefighting equipment, including five Argo Cat vehicles, fogging units, leaf blowers, and a drone to assist in extinguishing the flames.

In a statement to the BBC, Simon Young, area manager for Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service, remarked on the unique challenges posed by wildfires in moorland areas. “Wildfires are always challenging because they are inaccessible for our appliances to go on to our moorland. It makes it very difficult, but we have specialist vehicles to make sure we can do the job as safely as possible,” he explained. Young highlighted that the dry conditions, coupled with strong winds, have created a particularly high risk for wildfires, with an amber warning in place for the next three to four days across the nation.

Meanwhile, another incident occurred on Monday in Surrey, where the Surrey Fire and Rescue Service responded to a 1.6-hectare fire in the open at Turfhill in Lightwater at approximately 12.45 pm. This further underscores the concerning trend of wildfires amid increasingly warm and dry weather conditions across the UK.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-devon-56037220> - This article reports on a large blaze that broke out on Dartmoor near Tavistock, Devon, engulfing a 5km (3.1 miles) strip of remote moorland. The fire was extinguished by the Devon and Somerset Fire Service, and the cause is under investigation.
2. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/dartmoor-devon-fire-extremely-dangerous-b1801297.html> - This report details a major fire in Dartmoor, Devon, which was visible from miles away. The Devon and Somerset Fire Rescue Service stated that the fire was contained, and no risk to life was reported.
3. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/london-weather-forecast-heatwave-temperatures-met-office-south-east-uk-b1006188.html> - This article discusses the UK's hottest day of the year recorded at Kew Gardens, with temperatures reaching 28.2°C, marking the start of a heatwave.
4. <https://www.devonwildlifetrust.org/news/dartmoor-nature-reserve-fire-prompts-warning-devon-wildlife-trust> - This news piece highlights a fire at Dunsford nature reserve in Dartmoor's Teign Valley, prompting the Devon Wildlife Trust to remind the public of the threat of wildfires during dry spells.
5. <https://www.nationalworld.com/news/environment/warning-after-fire-destroys-uk-nature-reserve-in-devon-4159164> - This article reports on a fire that destroyed part of a UK nature reserve in Devon, leading to warnings from the Devon Wildlife Trust about the dangers of wildfires and the impact on wildlife.
6. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/firefighters-attend-outofcontrol-moorland-fire-on-dartmoor-10136054.html> - This report details firefighters attending an out-of-control moorland blaze in Dartmoor National Park, with the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service stating that the blaze was spreading over several hectares.
7. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/may/05/wildfire-destroys-about-5000-hectares-of-dartmoor-national-park> - Please view link - unable to able to access data