# Scotland issues extreme wildfire warning as climate-driven blazes sweep region



An extreme risk warning for wildfires has recently been issued for mainland Scotland, echoing concerns as firefighting crews tackle a substantial blaze spanning 10 acres in Fauldhouse, West Lothian. The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) reported that the fire engulfed a wooded area of about 40,000 square metres—roughly equivalent to five and a half football pitches. As of now, six firefighting appliances and two specialist units are actively managing the situation, with the SFRS noting the fire's dimensions as a square measuring 200 by 200 metres.

The alert comes amidst an unprecedented uptick in wildfire incidents throughout Scotland and the UK, largely attributed to the increasingly dry and warm weather conditions that have characterised recent months. The SFRS emphasised that such environmental factors have significantly elevated the risk of wildfires, urging the public to exercise caution, particularly with open flames in outdoor areas. This heightened alert is underpinned by a recent report from the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), indicating alarmingly low water levels in many of the country's rivers due to a prolonged lack of rainfall.

The situation in Scotland is not isolated. With almost 30,000 trees destroyed by fires on the Isle of Arran last month, and dozens of campers and hikers evacuated from Glentrool in Galloway, it reflects a broader trend. According to recent data, Scotland experiences an average of 170 wildfires each year, with approximately 80% occurring in the peak months of March to May. Alarmingly, many of these fires are linked to human activity, with the most common causes being discarded cigarettes and unattended campfires.

The UK's wildfire landscape has seen a dramatic shift. By early April 2025, wildfires had surged to levels exceeding historical averages, with Scotland and Northern Ireland experiencing particularly severe incidents. In Northern Ireland, for instance, over 140 wildfires were recorded in a matter of weeks, including a significant fire near Hilltown that involved more than 100 firefighters. Such violent events have led to authorities in both Scotland and Northern Ireland calling for enhanced public awareness and responsibility regarding fire safety.

In response to the growing wildfire threat, the SFRS has launched a Wildfire Campaign Toolkit aimed at educating the public on prevention strategies. This initiative uses social media to disseminate information about safe outdoor practices and the critical importance of proper fire management. Area Commander Michael Humphreys summarised the broader sentiment, stating, “It is crucial that people understand the impact of careless fire-setting. Even with the best intentions, small fires can rapidly spread causing devastating damage.”

The stark reality of these incidents serves as a reminder of the undeniable link between climate change and wildfire frequency. Experts anticipate that hotter and drier summers, compounded by changing land use practices, will continue to exacerbate these events. Environmental groups and fire officials are advocating for better planning and management strategies, including controlled vegetation burns—a practice that remains contentious but is deemed essential by some to mitigate the risk of uncontrolled fires.

As Scotland braces for an extended season of heightened wildfire risk, the focus remains on fostering a culture of fire safety among the public. With the SFRS urging vigilance until the end of the current alert, it is clear that proactive steps are essential to curtail the destructive potential of wildfires in the region.

**Reference Map**Paragraph 1: Sources (1)
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Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

* <https://metro.co.uk/2025/05/10/extreme-risk-wildfires-across-scotland-crews-tackle-10-acre-blaze-23061889/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
* <https://www.ft.com/content/4c922fad-6db9-47e6-8687-cc2ab7372309> - The UK is experiencing a significant surge in wildfires, with incidents far exceeding historical averages. As of early April 2025, Scotland and Northern Ireland have been particularly affected. In Galloway, a massive fire visible from space was brought under control after days of intense firefighting. Meanwhile, Northern Ireland authorities have managed over 140 wildfires in a short span, including a major incident in the Mourne Mountains. The number of wildfires across the UK has reached 48 this year, compared to an average of 15 from 2006 to 2024, with 286 incidents reported in England and Wales alone. Experts link this increase to climate change, citing hotter, drier summers and altered land use practices as key contributors. Fire chiefs and environmental groups emphasize improved planning, including the creation of wildfire management strategies and controlled vegetation burning, though the latter remains controversial. The heightened wildfire risk underscores the need for public caution and proactive land management as climate conditions continue to evolve.
* <https://apnews.com/article/f879f8151de90d7494d582c4e069d127> - Firefighters in Northern Ireland responded to a major forest fire near Hilltown in the southeastern region of the province, amidst rising concerns over unseasonably warm and dry weather across the United Kingdom. The Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service declared the incident at 11:53 p.m. on Saturday, deploying over 100 firefighters and 14 pieces of equipment. The blaze was brought under control by early Sunday morning and is suspected to have been intentionally set. Authorities have condemned recent deliberate wildfires, highlighting the danger they pose to both civilians and emergency personnel. Across the U.K., fire services remain on high alert due to increased fire risks. In Scotland, a wildfire prompted police to warn the public to avoid the Loch Down area in East Ayrshire. Simultaneously, multiple fires burned on Bodmin Moor in Cornwall, with police closing roads in the Bolventor area to support firefighting efforts.
* <https://www.firescotland.gov.uk/news/spring-is-the-most-critical-period-for-wildfires-in-scotland/> - Firefighters are urging the public to be aware of wildfire risk this Spring as figures show almost 80% of large outdoor fires since 2010 were recorded between March and May. On average, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) attends 170 large outdoor fires each year. Prolonged wet weather last year saw the figure drop to 55 incidents, but the seasonal risk remains. Analysis shows that around two thirds of wildfires are accidental with the most common causes recorded as discarded cigarettes or unattended campfires. Area Commander and Local Senior Officer for Highland, Michael Humphreys, the SFRS Wildfire Lead, emphasised the need for public responsibility. He said: 'It is crucial that people understand the impact of careless fire-setting. Even with the best intentions, small fires can rapidly spread causing devastating damage.'
* <https://www.firescotland.gov.uk/wildfire-campaign-toolkit-2025/> - The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) is urging the public to be aware of wildfire risk this Spring as figures show almost 80% of large outdoor fires since 2010 were recorded between March and May. The SFRS has developed a Wildfire Campaign Toolkit 2025 to promote key prevention messages across social media channels, educating people on how to behave responsibly when outdoors. The toolkit includes social media assets and content for platforms like Facebook, Instagram, X, and LinkedIn, aiming to educate the public on wildfire prevention. The SFRS encourages sharing this content and using the hashtag #WildfirePrevention to raise awareness.
* <https://news.stv.tv/scotland/warning-issued-over-very-high-risk-of-wildfires-for-scotland-in-coming-days> - A warning has been issued due to parts of Scotland facing a 'very high risk' of wildfires over the coming days. The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) issued the alert on Saturday, March 1, saying it will remain in place until Wednesday, March 5. The affected areas include the northern parts of the Highlands, Grampian, Fife, and the east coast stretching down to the Borders. The 'very high' risk warning is the first wildfire alert issued in 2025. Alongside the Scottish Wildlife Forum, the SFRS is urging the public to avoid lighting fires outdoors in the impacted areas during this period.