

Dog Days of Summer: How Hot Is It Really?

By Kim Miles

Anyone who has lived in the South knows about humidity and those hot and sweltering summer months. Have you ever wondered why some days seem hotter than others—even though the temperatures were about the same?

Humidity factors greatly in how hot it feels outside. Recognizing this, the National Weather Service created the Heat Index—Summer’s equivalent to the Winter Wind Chill Factor.

Humidity extremes can play an even more important role in temperature than the actual heat can. A nice spring day at 86 degrees can feel over 100 degrees if the humidity level exceeds 70%. And a hot summer day around 92 degrees can feel over 132 degrees if the humidity level is 90%.

In the dog days of summer, southern states regularly sees temperatures in the mid 90’s and humidity levels in excess of 80%—especially during the month of August. Such conditions make it feel like it’s over 130 degrees outside and are classified in the danger zone, according to the National Weather Service.

While people escape to their air-conditioned havens, what kind of relief can be provided for our pets? The most important safety tips are to make sure the animals have plenty of shade




and water. To make their lives a little more bearable in the heat of summer, consider buying a kiddie pool or the more indestructible pond liners at your local feed store, Home Depot, or Lowes. If that still isn’t sufficient, horse and cattle troughs work quite well. Have something deep enough for the animal to lay down in and remember to add and change the water regularly.



HUMIDITY

TEMPERATURE

	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%
104	98	104	110	120	132	>	>	>	>
102	97	101	108	117	125	>	>	>	>
100	95	99	105	110	120	132	>	>	>
98	93	97	101	106	110	125	>	>	>
96	91	95	98	104	108	120	128	>	>
94	89	93	95	100	105	111	122	>	>
92	87	90	92	96	100	106	115	122	>
90	85	88	90	92	96	100	106	114	122
88	82	86	87	89	93	95	100	106	115
86	80	84	85	87	90	92	96	100	109
84	78	81	83	85	86	89	91	95	99
82	77	79	80	81	84	86	89	91	95
80	75	77	78	79	81	83	85	86	89
78	72	75	77	78	79	80	81	83	85
76	70	72	75	76	77	77	77	78	79
74	68	70	73	74	75	75	75	76	77

Information from Heat Index obtained from the National Weather Service, online at <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/>.

Danger Category	Heat Index (How hot it feels)	Health Risks
Extreme Danger	Greater than 130°	Serious risk of heatstroke and/or sunstroke with prolonged exposure.
Danger	105°—131°	Heat exhaustion, cramps and sunstroke are serious risks and heat stroke is possible risk with prolonged exposure/activity.
Extreme Caution	90°—104°	Heat exhaustion, cramps and sunstroke are possible risks with prolonged exposure/activity.
Caution	80°—89°	Fatigue is possible with prolonged exposure/activity.