

[DOC](#) > [NOAA](#) > [NESDIS](#) > [NCDC](#)Search Field: [Climate Monitoring](#) | [State of the Climate](#) | [National Overview](#) | [Help](#)

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# State of the Climate National Overview January 2011

## National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration National Climatic Data Center

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[« Annual 2010  
National Overview Report](#)Report: [February 2011 »  
National Overview Report](#)Year:  Month: 

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### Maps and Graphics

#### Temperature and Precipitation Ranks

[January 2011](#) | [Nov 2010 - Jan 2011](#) | [Aug 2010 - Jan 2011](#) | [Feb 2010 - Jan 2011](#)

#### U.S. Percentage Areas

[Very Warm/Very Cold](#) | [Very Wet/Very Dry](#)

#### More Information

[Climate at a Glance](#) | [U.S. Climate Extremes Index \(CEI\)](#) | [Climatological Rankings](#)

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### National Overview:

The [weather pattern](#) over the contiguous United States during January 2011 consisted of a broadscale high pressure ridge over the West and a low pressure trough over the East. Temperatures averaged above normal in the Pacific Coast states under the upper ridge, while cooler-than-normal temperatures dominated east of the Rockies under the upper trough.

Strong storm systems moving in this flow pattern brought rain and snow to many areas. Pacific extra-tropical cyclonic systems moved across the Northwest and northern Rockies then intensified as they moved into the Great Plains states. Nebraska and North Dakota each had the 12<sup>th</sup> wettest January on record. Other winter storm systems developed over the Southern Plains, tapping Gulf of Mexico moisture as they moved across the southern states and intensified and finally tracking up the Atlantic Seaboard. Several of the low pressure systems and associated cold fronts brought severe weather to the Gulf Coast, including several tornadoes to central Florida. The northern systems and Gulf systems exited the country in the Northeast.

The combination of Gulf moisture and cold Canadian air resulted in widespread snowfall. January began with about 50 percent of the contiguous U.S. under snow cover and ended with about 42 percent snow covered, but the snow cover area varied with each snowstorm during the month, reaching a maximum of about 71 percent of the country on January 12<sup>th</sup>. Based on the 45-year satellite record, January 2011 had the 5<sup>th</sup> largest January snow cover extent for the country. Snow has a lower moisture content than rain, so it takes more snow (on average, about ten times as much) to equal the same amount of precipitation (meltwater equivalent) that would fall as rain. These winter storm systems brought above-normal snowfall but below-normal rain to many areas, giving the impression of wet conditions when, in fact, total precipitation was below normal. The southwestern U.S. was unusually dry beneath the upper ridge, with New Mexico having the driest January in the 117-year record and Arizona and Nevada ranking 2<sup>nd</sup> driest. Many states along the Mississippi River and eastward were drier than normal, with Virginia ranking 5<sup>th</sup> driest and North Carolina 9<sup>th</sup> driest. For the nation as a whole, January 2011 ranked as the 9<sup>th</sup> driest January in the 117-year record.

Cold fronts and low pressure systems moving in the storm track flow are influenced by the broadscale atmospheric circulation. Two such large-scale atmospheric circulation patterns were dominant during January. The first was the [La Niña](#), which is the phenomenon created by cooler-than-average sea surface temperatures in the eastern tropical Pacific Ocean. [La Niña](#) is typically associated with [wet conditions](#) in the northwest states and Ohio Valley this time of year, [cooler-than-normal conditions](#) in the Far West and North Central states, and [warm](#) and [dry](#) conditions in the southern tier states and Atlantic Seaboard. The second atmospheric circulation index was the [Pacific/North American](#) (PNA) pattern, which was [positive during much of January](#). A positive PNA is typically associated with [colder-than-normal temperatures](#) over the southeastern half of the country and [warmer-than-normal temperatures](#) along the Pacific Coast at this time of year (December-February). The typical [precipitation pattern](#) associated with a positive PNA is drier than normal along and east of the Mississippi River, parts of the interior West, and in the Pacific Northwest. The temperature pattern for January 2011 matched what is expected for a positive PNA, while the precipitation pattern was a combination of positive PNA in the East and La Niña in the West.

### Temperature Highlights

- Across the contiguous United States, the average January temperature was 30.0°F (-1.1°C) which is 0.8°F (0.4°C) below the 1901-2000 average. [January 2011](#) was the coolest January since 1994 when the average temperature was 28.3°F (-2.1°C), breaking a long string of warm or near-normal Januaries.
- [Cooler-than-normal](#) conditions dominated most areas east of the Rocky Mountains while the western coastal states of California, Oregon and Washington were above-normal in January.
- The past three months (November-January) were especially cool in the [Southeast](#)

climate region, which experienced its seventh coolest such period. [Five states](#) had top-ten-coolest such periods: [Georgia](#) (4<sup>th</sup> coolest), [North Carolina](#) (5<sup>th</sup>), [South Carolina](#) (6<sup>th</sup>), [Florida](#) (8<sup>th</sup>), and [West Virginia](#) (9<sup>th</sup>).

- Looking at a rolling twelve-month period ([February 2010-January 2011](#)), average temperatures were record warm in [Maine](#) (3.5°F [1.9°C] above normal), [New Hampshire](#) (3.1°F [1.7°C] above normal) and [Rhode Island](#) (3.1°F [1.7°C] above normal-tied with 2002). Eight other states, in the Northeast and Great Lakes areas, averaged a temperature for the period among their ten warmest. The [Northeast](#) climate region experienced its [fourth warmest](#) such period.

### Precipitation Highlights

- Despite several large winter storms across the contiguous United States, [January](#) was the ninth driest on record, much drier than normal. Average precipitation across the contiguous United States was 1.48 inches (38 mm), which is 0.74 inch (19 mm) below the 1901-2000 average.
- [Precipitation](#) for the month of January was record dry for [New Mexico](#) (0.55 inch [14 mm] below normal), while both [Arizona](#) and [Nevada](#) had their second driest January. Notably, Nevada's extreme dryness followed a record-wet December for the state. Other states whose precipitation averages were much below normal were: [Virginia](#) (5<sup>th</sup> driest), [Oklahoma](#) (8<sup>th</sup>), [North Carolina](#) (9<sup>th</sup>), and [California](#) (10<sup>th</sup>). Meanwhile, much above normal precipitation fell in [North Dakota](#) and [Nebraska](#).
- The lack of precipitation across the Four Corners region tied with 2003 as the driest January on record for the [Southwest](#) climate region. Its January precipitation of 0.23 inch (6 mm) was nearly 0.7 inch (18 mm) below the 20th century average. The [West](#) climate region also had very low precipitation, resulting in its eighth-driest January.
- January extended a pattern of continued dryness and drought across a wide band of the southern United States. The three-month period ([November-January](#)) was the 3<sup>rd</sup> driest such period for [North Carolina](#), 4<sup>th</sup> driest for [South Carolina](#), 7<sup>th</sup> driest for [Arkansas](#), and 9<sup>th</sup> driest for [New Mexico](#). Average precipitation in [Montana](#) (8<sup>th</sup> wettest) and [North Dakota](#) (10<sup>th</sup> wettest) was much above normal.
- For the twelve months since February 2010, the [Southeast](#) climate region had its tenth driest such period. Within the [region](#), [Georgia](#) and [South Carolina](#) had their seventh and eighth driest such period, respectively. In the South, [Arkansas](#) was fourth driest, [Louisiana](#) seventh driest, and [Mississippi](#) ninth driest. In contrast, many northern locations have seen a very wet twelve-month period. [North Dakota](#) (6.3 inches [160 mm] above normal) had its wettest such period, while [Iowa](#) (11.6 inches [41 mm] above normal) and [Minnesota](#) (7.8 inches [198 mm] above normal) had their second wettest.

### Other Items of Note

- Several winter storms impacted the northeastern U.S. during January, causing New York City and Hartford, Connecticut to break January snowfall records. The 57.0 inches (145 cm) which fell at Hartford's Bradley International Airport was the city's

all-time snowiest month on record.

- The snowstorm that traversed the northern plains, Great Lakes and Northeast United States on [January 9-13](#) ranked as a Category 3, or "Major" snowstorm, according to preliminary analysis on the Northeast Snowfall Impact Scale ([NESIS](#)). The NESIS score of 5.31 was slightly greater than the "[Christmas 2010](#)" blizzard and slightly less than the storm of late [February 2010](#).
- Drought coverage, as indicated by the U.S. Drought Monitor, continued to expand during [January](#). As of February 1, 24.1 percent of the United States was affected by D1-D4 (Moderate-Exceptional) drought. At this point last year ([Feb 2, 2010](#)), only 8.5 percent of the United States was affected. Dry conditions across southern Arizona and New Mexico led to the development of severe drought conditions. Rainfall across the Gulf Coast of Texas and Louisiana improved drought conditions there by one category from extreme drought to severe drought.

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## Alaska Temperature and Precipitation:

- [Alaska](#) had its 26<sup>th</sup> warmest January on record, with a temperature 3.8°F (2.1°C) above the 1971–2000 average.
- [Alaska](#) had its 35<sup>rd</sup> warmest November–January on record, with a temperature 0.9°F (0.5°C) above the 1971–2000 average.
- [Alaska](#) had its 42<sup>nd</sup> wettest January since records began in 1918, with an anomaly that was 4.1 percent above the 1971–2000 average.
- [Alaska](#) had its 24<sup>th</sup> wettest November–January on record, with an anomaly that was 13.0 percent above the 1971–2000 average.

For additional details about recent temperatures and precipitation across the U.S., see the [Regional Highlights](#) section below and visit the [Climate Summary page](#). For information on local temperature and precipitation records during the month, please visit NCDC's [Records page](#). For details and graphics on weather *events* across the U.S. and the globe please visit [NCDC's Global Hazards page](#).

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## Regional Highlights:

*These regional summaries were provided by the six [Regional Climate Centers](#) and reflect conditions in their respective regions. These six regions differ spatially from the [nine climatic regions of the National Climatic Data Center](#).*

[Northeast](#) | [Midwest](#) | [Southeast](#) | [High Plains](#) | [Southern](#) | [Western](#)

### **Northeast Region:** *(Information provided by the [Northeast Regional Climate Center](#))*

- The first month of 2011 averaged cooler than normal in the Northeast. January's regional temperature average was 21.6 degrees F (-5.8 degrees C). This was 1.4 degrees F (0.8 degrees C) below normal and 3.3 degrees F (1.8 degrees C) cooler than January 2010. Two states, Maine and Vermont, ended up with above normal temperatures. The departure in Maine was +2.6 degrees F (+1.4 degrees C), and in Vermont, +0.1 degree F (+0.1 degree C). Of the 10 states that were cooler than normal, departures ranged from -3.3 degrees F (-1.8 degrees C) to -0.6 degrees F

(-0.3 degrees C). In general, the warmest temperatures occurred on the 1st and 2nd, while the third week of the month saw the coldest readings.

- The region's monthly precipitation total averaged 2.14 inches (54 mm), which was 64 percent of normal. This was the driest January since 2001 and the 18th driest since records began in 1895. Departures ranged from 53 percent of normal in Maine to 95 percent of normal in Rhode Island. Although the region averaged less than normal precipitation, snowfall totals were above normal. This was due to a persistent weather pattern that resulted in frequent storms, large and small. Measureable snow fell over large portions of the region at least once a week during January. By the 31st, parts of every state except Maryland and Delaware had snowfall totals that exceeded 2 feet (61 cm). New daily records were set during the month, including two that went back to the late 1800's: Central Park's 6.1 inches (15.5 cm) on the 12th beat the 5.0 inches (12.7 cm) that fell in 1893; and Newark, NJ's 6.7 inches (17.0 cm) on the 27th topped the 6.5 inch (16.5 cm) record set in 1894. Six cities saw their snowiest January on record: Bridgeport, CT (42.0 inches, 106.7cm); Hartford, CT (57.0 inches, 144.8 cm); Newark, NJ (37.4 inches, 95.0 cm); Central Park, NY (36.0 inches, cm); Islip, NY (34.3 inches, 87.1 cm); and LaGuardia Airport, NY (32.6 inches, 82.8 cm).
- The most significant snowfall events occurred on the 11th-12th and the 26-27th. Each of the storms dumped at least 6 inches (15.2 cm) of snow along the I-95 corridor from Philadelphia, PA to Portland, ME, with many areas reporting over two feet (61 cm). Each event resulted in thousands of cancelled flights, public transportation delays, school closing, and numerous fender benders. The storm on the 26th and 27th caused travel nightmares in the Washington, DC area with reports of commuters stuck for up to eight hours. At least 6 weather related deaths were reported in Maryland, Delaware and New York during this storm. As the snow piled up, reports of roof collapses started coming in at month's end. State and municipal snow removal budgets, strained after the late December blizzard, were depleted with half the winter left on the calendar. Also in short supply were places to dump the snow collected from city streets. Environmental regulations prohibit dumping snow in waterways so densely populated east coast cities have turned to dumping snow in parks, playing fields and parking lots or trucking the snow to snow-melting companies.

For more information, please go to the [Northeast Regional Climate Center Home Page](#).

**Midwest Region:** *(Information provided by the [Midwest Regional Climate Center](#))*

- January temperatures were below normal across all but a small portion of the region. Temperatures ranged from near normal over a small portion of the upper Midwest to 5 to 6 degrees F (2.8 to 3.3 degrees C) below normal from western Minnesota south into western Missouri. The coldest weather of the month occurred on January 20-21, when temperatures plummeted to -30 to -46 degrees F (-34 to -43 degrees C) across the northern half of Minnesota and northwestern Wisconsin, and -20 degrees F (-29 degrees C) or lower as far south as northern Iowa. In Minnesota, low temperatures dropped to -46 degrees F (-43 degrees C) at International Falls and Babbitt and from -40 to -43 degrees F (-40 to -42 degrees C) at six other locations in the northeastern part of the state. Elkader, IA recorded a low of -30 degrees F (-34 degrees C) on the morning of January 21st. On the other side of the coin, temperatures across parts of southern Missouri pushed into the 70s (20s C ) near the end of the month as warm air was pulled northward ahead of a developing storm in the southern Plains.

- January precipitation was below to much below normal. The exception was the area from northwestern Minnesota south through northwestern Missouri, where precipitation was 100 to 200 percent of normal. Most of the region received less than 75 percent of normal precipitation, with an area from southwestern Missouri into the Ohio Valley receiving less than 50 percent of normal.
- Snow was a frequent occurrence during the month across most of the region. The highest totals were found in the lee of Lakes Superior and Michigan, and in northwestern Ohio as northwest and west winds favored frequent lake-effect snows. Snowfall was more than twice normal this month from northwestern Minnesota south through northwestern Missouri, where snowfall was more than three times normal. Snowfall was also 200 percent of normal or more in the Ohio Valley. In Kentucky, snowfall was well above normal for the second consecutive month with more than 12 inches (30.5 cm) of snow falling in the Bluegrass Region and eastern Kentucky. The back to back snowy winters of 2010 and 2011 are the snowiest in Kentucky since the snowy winters of 1977-1979. In Iowa, Des Moines recorded snowfall on all but five days during the month. The South Bend, IN airport measured 32.6 inches (82.8 cm) in 24 hours and a storm total 38.6 inches (98.0 cm) for a lake-effect snow event on January 7-8. The biggest large-scale snow event this month was a storm that moved across the central Midwest on January 19-20. Six to 12 inches (15.2 to 30.4 cm) of snow fell in a wide band across central Missouri. On January 22nd snow covered the entire Midwest region, but by the end of the month the southern extent of the snow had retreated to a line from Kansas City, MO to Bloomington, IN

For details on the weather and climate events of the Midwest, see the weekly summaries in the [MRCC Midwest Climate Watch page](#).

**Southeast Region:** *(Information provided by the [Southeast Regional Climate Center](#))*

- For the second consecutive month, mean temperatures were below normal across the Southeast region. The greatest departures occurred across northern Florida and eastern sections of Georgia and the Carolinas, where monthly average temperatures were 4 to 7 degrees F (2.2 to 3.9 degrees C) below normal. Interior portions of Alabama, Georgia, the Carolinas, as well as the Florida Keys were 2 to 4 degrees F (1.1 to 2.2 degrees C) below normal, while most of Virginia and the Florida Peninsula were 1 to 2 degrees F (0.5 to 1.1 degrees C) below normal for the month of January. Monthly temperatures were slightly above normal across Puerto Rico, while the U.S. Virgin Islands experienced their third consecutive month of below normal temperatures. In contrast to December, which saw over 1,000 daily record low maximum and minimum temperatures, there were only 142 daily record low maximum and 126 daily minimum temperature records tied or broken across the Southeast in January. Many of these occurred in the southern tier of the region and along the Atlantic coast. Cherry Point, NC, located near the Outer Banks, recorded a low temperature of 9 degrees F (-12.8 degrees C) on the 23rd of the month, which ranked as the 4th coldest minimum temperature for any January date in a record extending back to 1945.
- Precipitation totals for January were below normal across a large portion of the Southeast. Precipitation totals were less than 75 percent of normal across most of Alabama, Georgia, and southern Florida, and less than 50 percent of normal across the Carolinas and Virginia. The driest locations (less than 25 percent of normal) were

found across western Virginia and local portions of the Carolinas and Alabama. Roanoke, VA received only 0.82 inches (20.8 mm) of precipitation for the month, making it the 4th driest January in a record extending back to 1912. In contrast, monthly precipitation totals were between 100 and 150 percent of normal across the northern tier of Florida and as much as 300 percent of normal across the central Peninsula. Orlando, FL and Tampa, FL recorded their 5th wettest January with 5.92 and 6.28 inches (150.4 and 159.5 mm), respectively. Monthly precipitation was below normal across much of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

- There were 42 reports of severe weather across the Southeast in January, and all but one occurred in Florida. On the 17th of the month, thunderstorm winds brought down power lines in Key West, FL and blew cars off a highway in Manatee County, FL. A weak tornado was also reported along I-95 in Brevard County, FL. On the 25th of the month, a line of strong storms spawned six tornadoes and produced damaging winds across central Florida. At least a dozen mobile homes were destroyed by a tornado in Lee County, FL with no injuries reported. Numerous reports of felled trees and structural damage resulting from these storms were reported across central Florida. At least one person was injured following a 90 mph (144 km/hr) wind gust at a gas station that was damaged in Pinellas County, FL.
- The Southeast region was affected by four winter storms in January. On the 7th and 8th of the month, an Alberta Clipper moved across the Great Lakes and dropped 2 to 4 inches (50.8 to 101.6 mm) of snow across northern Virginia. A few days later, a low pressure system developed in the Gulf of Mexico and produced frozen and freezing precipitation across the region as it moved up the East Coast. Snowfall totals of 6 to 10 inches (152.4 to 254 mm) were observed across northern and central portions of Alabama and Georgia, northwest South Carolina, and western North Carolina. According to the Georgia State Climate Office, Athens, GA recorded an all-time 24-hr snowfall total of 8.8 inches (223.5 mm). Ice accumulations ranged from 0.1 inches (2.54 mm) across eastern South Carolina and central North Carolina to 0.75 inches (19.1 mm) across central Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina. An extended period of cold temperatures following the storm and a lack of snow removal equipment caused severe disruptions across parts of the region. Some schools in northern Georgia and northwestern North Carolina were closed for an entire week due to the storm. On the 22nd of the month, a low pressure system off the Southeast coast produced 6 to 7 inches (152.4 to 177.8 mm) of snowfall along portions of North Carolina's Outer Banks. The 6 inches (152.4 mm) of snow reported at Cape Hatteras, NC broke both the 24-hr and monthly snowfall totals for January by 2.5 inches. On the 26th of the month, a low pressure system tracked through the Southeast and dropped 5 to 7 inches (127 to 177.8 mm) of snow across the Washington D.C. area. With respect to monthly snowfall totals, Huntsville, AL recorded 9.2 inches (233.7 mm), which registered as the 3rd snowiest January in a record extending back to 1894.
- Widespread drought continued across the Southeast in January. The most notable change in the U.S. Drought Monitor was an expansion of moderate drought (D1) conditions through central portions of North Carolina and Virginia. The lack of precipitation over the past several months lead to record low stream flows across several watersheds in January, preventing recharge to reservoirs. As a result, minimum releases were ordered out of several North Carolina reservoirs to help maintain water levels. The persistence of cold temperatures this winter has resulted in sufficient chill hours for a number of winter crops, including blueberries and peaches.

As a result, farmers are concerned that warm February temperatures could cause the crops to bloom and thus be susceptible to an early spring freeze.

For more information, please go to the [Southeast Regional Climate Center Home Page](#).

**High Plains Region:** *(Information provided by the [High Plains Regional Climate Center](#))*

- The temperatures this January were full of ups and downs. The year started off with extreme cold across Colorado and Wyoming. In the middle of the month, after a brief warm up, the High Plains Region experienced some of the coldest temperatures of the month. According to the South Dakota State Climate Office, South Dakota had the coldest temperatures in the lower 48 states on January 19th when several locations were -20 degrees F (-28.9 degrees C) or colder. While not record breaking, Pollock, South Dakota did have a low of -32 degrees F (-35.6 degrees C) that day. The warmest temperatures of the month occurred about 10 days later when temperatures ranged from 60-75 degrees F (15.6-23.9 degrees C) across Kansas and Colorado. These warm temperatures did not last long as a blast of cold Arctic air plunged south into the Region at the very end of the month.
- Overall, temperatures were slightly warmer than normal across much of Wyoming, central Colorado, western Kansas, and the western edge of the panhandle of Nebraska and cooler than normal in the northern and eastern areas of the Region. Although average temperatures were 6-8 degrees F (3.3-4.4 degrees C) below normal from eastern North Dakota south through eastern Kansas, the cold weather was not record breaking. Many places did rank in the top 20 coldest Januaries on record, however. Seward, Nebraska, which is located just west northwest of Lincoln, tied for its 10th coldest January on record (period of record 1900-2011). The average temperature for Seward was 16.6 degrees F (-8.6 degrees C) this month which was 7.8 degrees F (4.3 degrees C) below normal. The coldest January on record occurred in 1940 with an average temperature of only 8.2 degrees F (-13.2 degrees C).
- Precipitation varied across the Region this month. Colorado, Wyoming, and Kansas were generally drier than normal with some isolated areas receiving above normal precipitation. Enough snow fell in the higher elevations in western Wyoming to eliminate the moderate drought conditions which have been in place for months. Several rounds of snow impacted the northern and eastern portions of the Region this month. Many locations in northeast Nebraska and southeast South Dakota had snowfall totals that ranked in the top 10 snowiest Januaries on record and a few even broke monthly records. A long-standing January snowfall record was broken in Oakdale, Nebraska where 23.2 inches (59 cm) of snow fell this month. The previous record was 17.6 inches (45 cm) and occurred in 1936 (period of record 1893-2011). Interestingly, two days this month ranked as top one-day January snowfalls for Oakdale. The fifth highest one-day snow total occurred on January 23rd with 7.0 inches (18 cm) and the second highest one-day snow total occurred on January 10th with 9.5 inches (24 cm). January 2011 was also the second snowiest month of all time in Oakdale. Only March of 1911 had more snow (27.0 inches/69 cm).
- Concerns of major flooding along the Red River have started again this winter. According to the National Weather Service in Grand Forks, North Dakota, the combination of a wet 2010, higher than normal snowfall this winter season, and a La Niña forecast of a cool and wet spring could lead to major spring flooding. Snowfall

totals across the area have been impressive, although not near those preceding the historical flood of 1997. For instance, Fargo, North Dakota has received 59.2 inches (150 cm) of snow so far this season. This amount has already surpassed the entire 2009-2010 seasonal snowfall total of 46.6 inches (118 cm)!

- The U.S. Drought Monitor remained largely unchanged since last month. In western Wyoming, a good snow pack and high precipitation caused the moderate drought conditions (D1) to be eliminated and the abnormally dry conditions (D0) to be trimmed slightly. The D0 in the southwest corner of Colorado were also eliminated. However, severe drought conditions (D2) remained over south-central Colorado and western Kansas. D1 across eastern Colorado, western and southeastern Kansas, and the panhandle of Nebraska were also unchanged. According to the U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook released January 20th drought conditions across Colorado, Kansas, and Nebraska were expected to persist and drought conditions were expected to develop in south central Nebraska.

For more information, please go to the [High Plains Regional Climate Center Home Page](#).

**Southern Region:** *(Information provided by the [Southern Regional Climate Center](#))*

- January temperatures in the Southern Region were consistently below normal by 0 - 4 degrees F (0 - 2.22 degrees C), with little spatial variation among temperature anomalies. The average temperatures for the six states were: 37.40 degrees F (3.00 degrees C) in Arkansas, 46.8 degrees F (8.22 degrees C) in Louisiana, 41.8 degrees F (5.44 degrees C) in Mississippi, 34.50 degrees F (34.5 degrees C) in Oklahoma, 34.10 degrees F (1.17 degrees C) in Tennessee, and 44.80 degrees F (7.11 degrees C) in Texas. Although it was a generally cooler than normal month for the region, none of the state temperature values were close to setting records. The rankings for the above values ranged from the twenty-third coldest January on record (1895-2011) in Mississippi, to the the thirty-eighth coldest January on record (1895-2011) in Texas.
- With the exception of southern Texas, much of the Southern Region experienced its fourth consecutive drier than normal month. The Southern Region continues to struggle through a strong drought, and little to no precipitation through much of the northwestern tier of the region did little to help that cause. The driest areas of the region included Oklahoma, the northern two thirds of Arkansas and much of north western Texas. The majority of stations in those regions received only a quarter of the precipitation that is normally expected in January. In fact dozens of stations reported no precipitation at all. In Arkansas, most stations received between 25 and 50 percent of normal precipitation. In total, Oklahoma averaged only 0.29 inches (7.37 mm) of precipitation for the month, making it the eighth driest January there on record (1895-2011). Arkansas averaged 1.62 inches (41.15 mm) for the month, which was their fifteenth driest January on record (1895-2011). In Texas, the January average precipitation total was a near average value of 1.52 inches (38.61 mm). The state average is somewhat skewed by the fact that it was extremely dry in the northern half of the state, and quite wet in the southern half. Louisiana also had a near average month for precipitation. The state average precipitation total was 4.71 inches (119.63 mm), which is only slightly below average. In Mississippi, the state average precipitation total was 4.33 inches (109.98 mm), which like Louisiana, is a little on the dry side of average. Tennessee averaged 3.10 inches (78.74 mm), which was the

twenty-seventh driest January on record (18-95-2010).

- Drought conditions did not change much over the month of January in the Southern Region. Extremely dry conditions in the western Texas panhandle has led to a one category deterioration to severe drought. Similar dryness in western Mississippi has also led to the introduction of severe drought. Anomalously high January precipitation totals in southern Texas has led to some improvements. For instance, much of the gulf coast in Texas is now drought free. There are still, however; some small pockets of moderate drought in the extreme southern tip of the state. Similar improvements also occurred in south central Louisiana and central Mississippi. Based on the February 1 report of the United States Drought Monitor, 6.59 percent of the Southern Region is experiencing extreme drought, which is an improvement of 3.58 percent from last month. In addition, only 58.97 percent of the region is classified as moderate drought or worse. Last month, this value was 67.65 percent.
- There were few instances of severe weather impacts for the Southern Region in the month of January. On January 31, a wind report in Brazos County, Texas indicated that a roof was blown off a mobile home. On the same day, strong winds resulted in roof damage for residents of Burnet County, Texas. Reports indicate that roofs were blown off or damaged. Numerous trees and power lines were also damaged.

For more information, please go to the [Southern Regional Climate Center Home Page](#).

**Western Region:** *(Information provided by the [Western Regional Climate Center](#))*

- Temperatures were near normal throughout the West except for isolated basins and valleys where strong inversions persisted through the month keeping temperatures well below normal. Vernal, UT, in the snow covered Uinta Basin, was nearly 8 degrees F below normal for January as a strong inversion remained solid for most of the month, while nearby mountain locations 3000 feet higher averaged 10-15 degrees F (6-10 C) warmer. In California's Central Valley frequent fog kept average maximum temperatures mostly below normal while coastal and mountain locations basked in sun and above normal temperatures.
- Precipitation was below to well below normal in the throughout most of the West except for portions of northwest Washington and northeast Montana. Glasgow, MT, set a new all time monthly snowfall record going back 95 years with 41.6 inches (105.7 cm) shattering the old record of 32.9 (83.6 cm) inches set in January 2004. It was also the second wettest January in Glasgow. Much of the desert Southwest received no precipitation at all.
- Mountain snowpack dropped significantly in the Sierra Nevada from January 1st to February 1st, with snowpack dropping from 215% of normal to 130% of normal around Lake Tahoe. Although mountain snowpack remains fairly healthy throughout the west, many locations lost snow during the dry January. The Pacific Northwest and the mountains of the Southwest are below normal even though precipitation in the Northwest is above normal for the winter as snow levels have been relatively high for many storm events. Crater Lake, Oregon, received only 17.5 inches (44.4 cm) of snow, its 2nd lowest January total (record, 9 inches / 22.9 cm in 1985, average about 90 inches / 229 cm) during what is normally the snowiest month. The snow depth on the ground there decreased from 100 inches (254 cm) on the 1st to a mere 66 inches (168 cm) on the 31st, normally increasing from 65 inches (165 cm) to 93 inches (236

cm) during that span.

- December 25-26, 2010 - January 3, 2011: Freezing Spray in Alaska: Strong winds combined with blizzard conditions, cold temperatures and a lack of sea ice caused very heavy freezing spray to build up on power lines in the village of Savoonga on St. Lawrence Island leading to widespread power outages to over half the town. With furnaces shut down numerous homes reported water pipes bursting. Power was finally restored on January 3rd.
- January 11: Freezing Rain and Snow in Pacific Northwest: A cold winter storm brought snow and freezing rain to parts of western Washington and Oregon. Up to 3 inches (7.6 cm) of snow fell in the Seattle area before turning to freezing rain. Interstate 84 east of Portland was closed several times on the 11th from the icy conditions. Seattle-Tacoma Airport had numerous delays and about a dozen flights were diverted.
- January 15-17: Heavy Rain in Flooding in Oregon and Washington: A rather warm storm hit the Pacific Northwest with heavy rain and high snow levels causing widespread flooding in the region. Numerous highways were closed due to landslides, flooding or avalanches. Some evacuations were in place in parts of northwest Oregon. One person was killed by a falling tree about 20 miles east of Seattle.
- January 23: Blizzard in Southwest Alaska: A 14-year old boy from Kipnuk, AK, in southwest Alaska, died while trying to walk home from a friend's home in a blizzard. He apparently became disoriented in the blowing snow. Winds were gusting to 60 mph at the time combined with a temperature of -10 F (-23.3 C) leading to wind chill factors of -50F (-46 C).

See [NCDC's Monthly Records web-page](#) for weather and climate records for the most recent month. For additional national, regional, and statewide data and graphics from 1895-present, for any period, please visit the [Climate at a Glance](#) page.

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**PLEASE NOTE:** All of the temperature and precipitation [ranks](#) and values are based on preliminary data. The ranks will change when the final data are processed, but will not be replaced on these pages. Graphics based on final data are provided on the [Temperature and Precipitation Maps](#) page and the [Climate at a Glance](#) page as they become available.

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## Citing This Report

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*<http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/sotc/index.php>*

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