

# Drought Resources

By: Samantha Borisoff, Climatologist



Northeast Regional Climate Center



# Weekly Drought Update



Northeast Regional Climate Center

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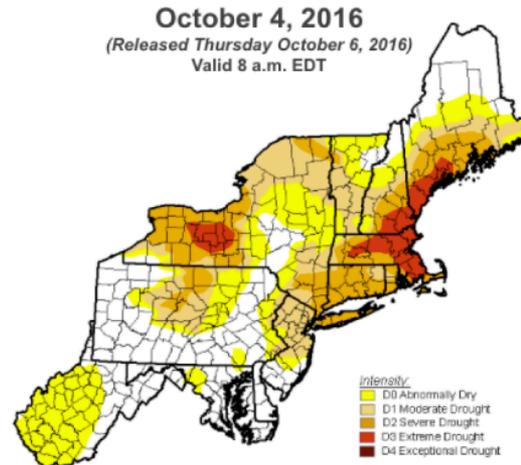
Northeast Drought Update

## Northeast Drought Update

Posted October 6, 2016

### U.S. Drought Monitor

The U.S. Drought Monitor released on October 6 shows 41% of the Northeast in a drought, which is similar to last week. Extreme drought improved in portions of New York, but remained in New England. Severe drought expanded in Connecticut and southeastern New York and was introduced in a portion of northeastern New York and northwestern Vermont. Moderate drought also expanded in portions of New York and northern New Jersey. Southern portions of the region received beneficial rain, so moderate drought and abnormally dry conditions eased there. This week's Drought Monitor shows 24% of the Northeast is abnormally dry compared to 38% last week.



For more information watch this video on [Assessing Drought in the United States](#).



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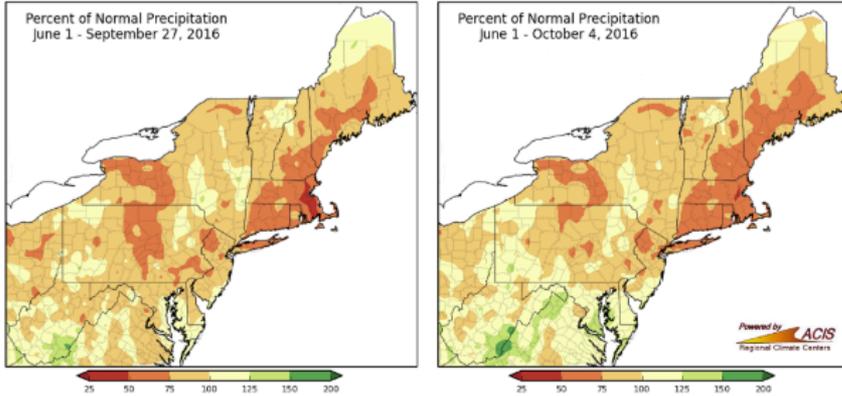
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# Weekly Drought Update

Rain that fell last week, particularly in southern portions of the region, increased the percent of normal precipitation since June. A larger area of Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware are now at near-normal precipitation amounts for this time frame.



Percent of normal precipitation since June 1.

As extreme drought has spread in New England, we have added stations to our lists below. Almost all stations listed have had less than three quarters of their normal March-to-date (March 1 through October 4) precipitation.

March 1 - October 4 Precipitation (inches)				
Station	2016	Normal	% of Normal	Rank
Lawrence, MA	15.03	29.38	51%	1*
Reading, MA	16.29	29.98	54%	2
Boston, MA	14.94	25.96	58%	6
Elmira, NY	14.09	24.48	58%	4
Epping, NH	16.55	28.53	58%	2
Walpole, MA	17.26	28.95	60%	2
Hingham, MA	18.28	30.53	60%	3
Isillip	17.06	28.30	60%	2
Geneva, NY	13.80	22.35	62%	2
Norfolk, CT	20.07	32.39	62%	2

## Water Resources

Streamflow continued to be below normal for many of the drought-stricken areas. In New England, nine waterways with at least 30 years of data reported record low 7-day average streamflow for the September 28-October 5 period, while another 22 had near record low streamflow. Five other waterways (three in New York and two in Pennsylvania) had record or near record low streamflow. Groundwater and reservoir levels also continued to be below normal for many of the drought-stricken areas, with preliminary data indicating near to record-low daily water levels at several USGS well sites. Worcester, MA's reservoir was at 50% of capacity on October 1, compared to the October 1 average of 77%. Connecticut state officials declared a rare public water supply emergency for Darien, Greenwich, New Canaan, and Stamford. The declaration allows the water supplier to divert water from some of their other sources and supply it to those towns for up to 30 days.

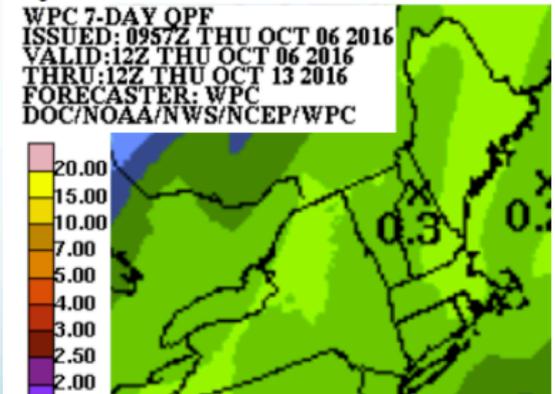
## State Declarations

The Drought Watch in New Jersey was expanded to include six additional counties. State officials will hold a public meeting on drought conditions on October 20.

State	Drought Status
Massachusetts	Drought Warning for central, northeastern, southeastern MA Drought Watch for Cape & Islands and CT River Valley Drought Advisory for western MA <b>181 public water suppliers with restrictions or bans (as of 9/28)</b>
New York	Drought Warning for 22 counties Drought Watch for rest of New York Some towns with restrictions or bans
New Jersey	<b>Drought Watch expanded to include northern, central, and southwestern NJ</b> Some towns with restrictions or bans
Connecticut	Statewide Drought Advisory Statewide voluntary 10% reduction in use
New Hampshire	Abnormally dry to extreme drought central and southern NH <b>157 community water systems &amp; 12 towns with restrictions or bans (as of 9/29)</b>
Rhode Island	Statewide Drought Advisory Some water suppliers with restrictions or bans
Pennsylvania	Drought Warning for Potter County Drought Watch for 38 counties <b>39 counties &amp; 9 water systems with restrictions</b>

## Outlooks

Hurricane Matthew is expected to stay south, but moisture from the system will reach southern parts of the region. This moisture combined with a cold front will bring around 1.5" to eastern West Virginia. Precipitation totals will drop significantly going northward, with less than half an inch expected in New England.



# NRCC Website



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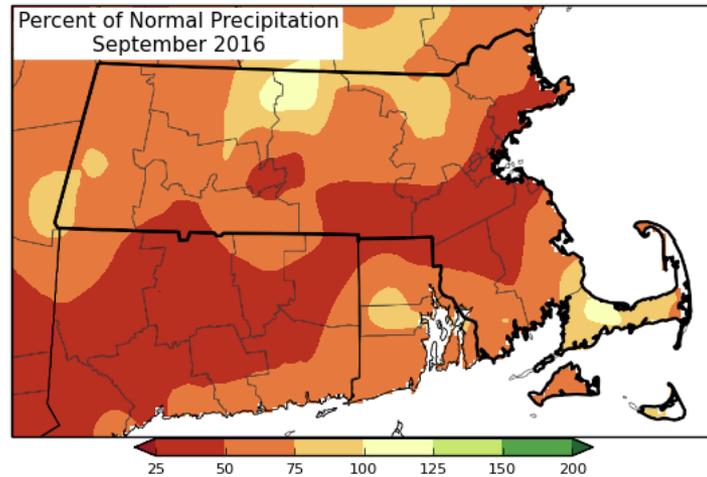
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Massachusetts

2016

September

- Monthly Precipitation Total
- Last 3-Months Total
- Last 6-Months Total
- Last 12-Months Total
- 
- Monthly Precipitation Departure
- 3-Month Departure
- 6-Month Departure
- 12-Month Departure
- 
- Percent of Normal Monthly Precipitation
- 3-Month Percent of Normal
- 6-Month Percent of Normal
- 12-Month Percent of Normal
- 
- Monthly Snowfall Total
- Season-to-date Total
- 
- Monthly Snowfall Departure
- Season-to-date Departure
- 
- Monthly Temperature Departure
- 3-Month Temperature Departure

### About State and Regional Maps

This map represents ACIS climate data interpolated to a 5km by 5km grid. Additional information about ACIS can be found on the [ACIS web page](#). These maps are created at 6:00 am on the 2nd day after the end of each month and updated several times during the course of the month as additional data become available.



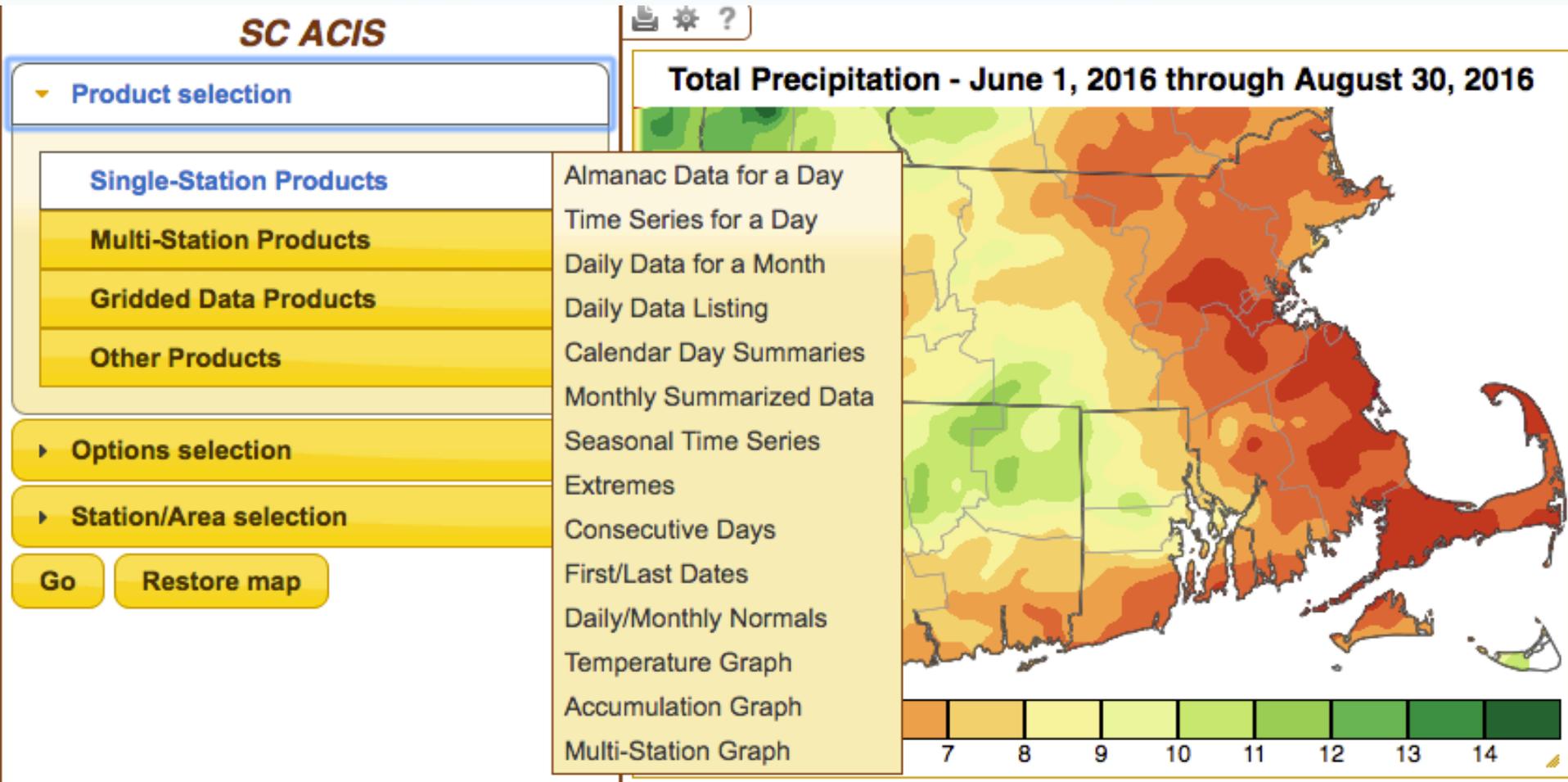
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Maps, products for industry, data



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# SC ACIS

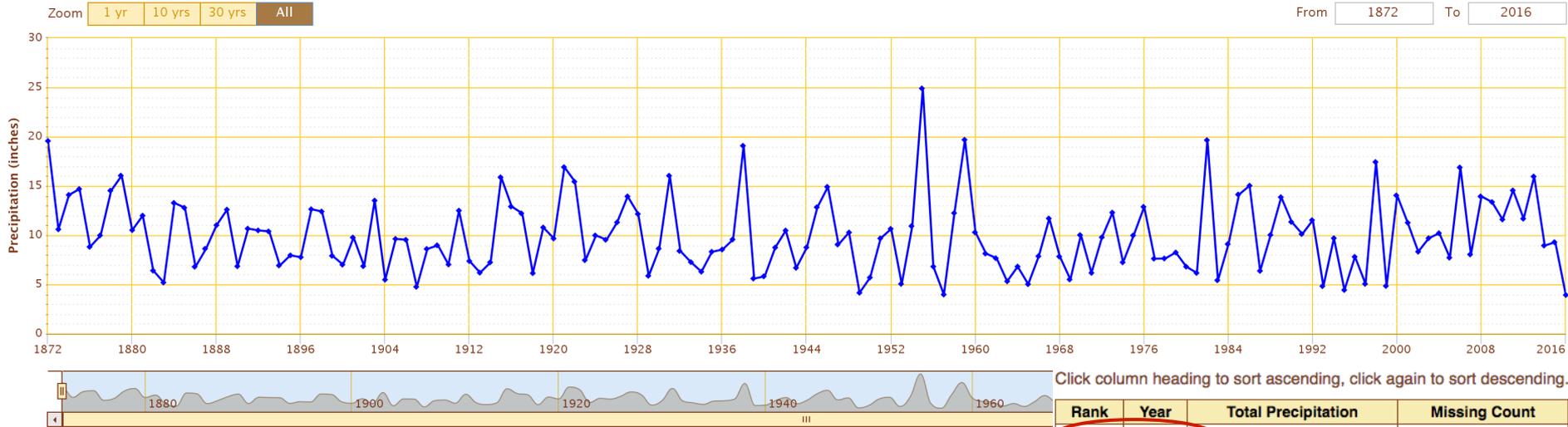


- NRCC climate database: 20+ customizable products

# SC ACIS

Total Precipitation – Jun through Aug – Boston Area, MA (ThreadEx)

Use navigation tools above and below chart to change displayed range



Rank	Year	Total Precipitation	Missing Count
1	2016	3.92	0
2	1957	3.97	0
3	1949	4.15	0
4	1995	4.43	0
5	1907	4.75	0
6	1993	4.82	0
7	1999	4.84	0
8	1965	5.02	0
9	1997	5.05	0
-	1953	5.05	0
11	1883	5.19	0
12	1963	5.31	0
13	1983	5.42	0
14	1904	5.48	0
15	1969	5.50	0
16	1939	5.59	0
17	1950	5.69	0
18	1940	5.82	0
19	1929	5.87	0
20	1918	6.14	0

- Seasonal time series – creates a graph and data table for a specified variable and period for each year (Boston summer precipitation)
- Rank data (Boston's driest summer)



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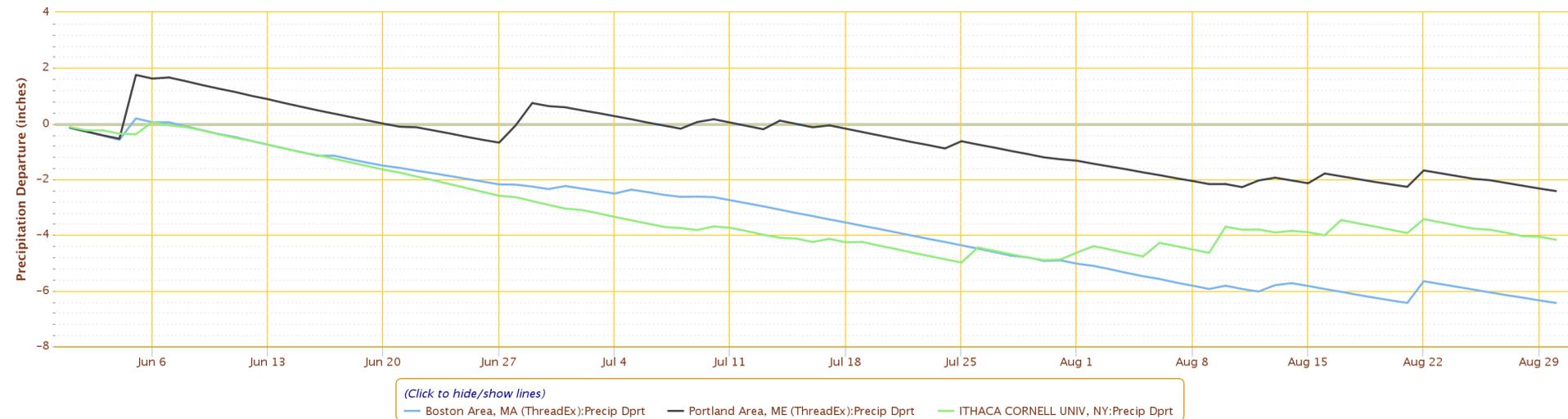


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# SC ACIS

## Accumulated Precipitation Departure from Normal

Green/black diamonds represent subsequent/missing values



- Multi-station graph – graph the accumulated value or departure of a variable for a specified period of time for multiple sites (summer precipitation departure for Boston, Portland, and Ithaca)



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# SC ACIS

## Precipitation Summary for Period Ending September 30, 2016 for MA COASTAL Climate Division

Name	ID	Station Type	Latitude	Longitude	Last 30 Days	Last 60 Days	Last 90 Days	Last 180 Days	Since Jan 1	Since Oct 1
BOSTON	14739	WBAN	42.36	-71.01	-2.06	-3.57	-6.27	-10.54	-10.42	-14.04
CHATHAM	14684	WBAN	41.66	-69.96	-1.53	-3.82	-5.52	-7.84	-4.46	1.19
CHATHAM MUNI AP	94624	WBAN	41.69	-69.99	-0.79	-3.82	-5.69	-9.46	-6.17	-6.88
NANTUCKET MEM AP	14756	WBAN	41.25	-70.06	-0.06	-3.20	-1.23	-4.60	-0.09	0.07
NEW BEDFORD MUNI AP	94726	WBAN	41.68	-70.96	-0.58	-3.78	-4.64	-7.69	-8.80	-8.87
BRIDGEWATER	198101	COOP	41.95	-70.96	-2.76	-5.62	-6.42	-11.28	-12.80	-12.60
BROCKTON	190860	COOP	42.05	-71.00	-2.26	-4.87	-7.78	-13.07	-15.30	-15.43
EDGARTOWN	192501	COOP	41.39	-70.52	-1.64	-4.80	-3.75	-6.59	-3.09	-0.03
HINGHAM	193624	COOP	42.23	-70.91	-2.19	-5.00	-6.97	-12.42	-12.48	-16.01
JAMAICA PLAIN	193890	COOP	42.30	-71.12	-2.31	-4.81	-7.59	-12.35	-13.15	-15.38
MARBLEHEAD	194502	COOP	42.50	-70.86	-2.58	-3.96	-6.28	-9.00	-9.25	-10.27
MIDDLEBORO	194711	COOP	41.88	-70.91	-2.20	-4.23	-6.37	-10.61	-11.10	-8.90
MIDDLETON	194744	COOP	42.59	-71.02	-1.92	-3.05	-5.62	-11.99	-12.51	-15.26
NEWBURYPORT 3 WNW	195285	COOP	42.86	-70.90	-1.93	-3.43	-5.39	-12.27	-13.93	-14.52
ROCHESTER	196938	COOP	41.78	-70.92	-2.10	-4.66	-6.90	-11.00	-10.66	-8.90

- Precipitation summary – table of accumulated precipitation or precipitation departure for multiple sites



# Partnerships

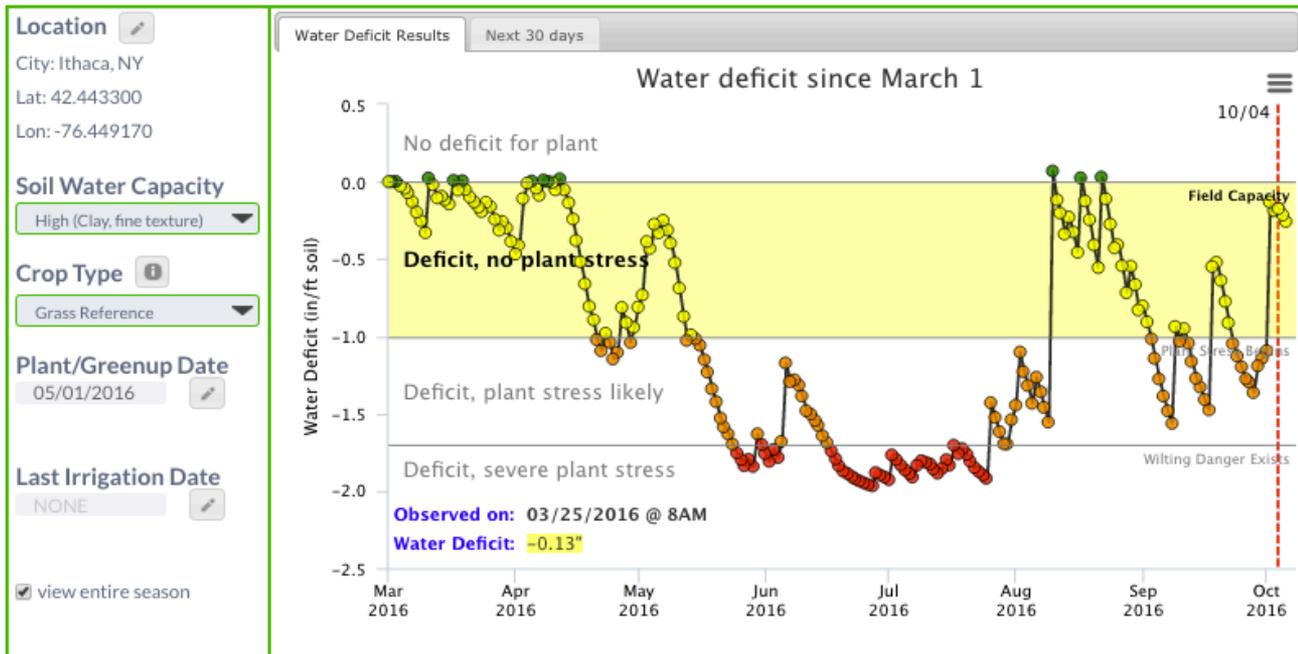


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Powerful and user-friendly climate tools for farmers in the Northeast

## CSF Irrigation Scheduler

Climate Tools Team Resources Forum Videos



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NRCC supplied data and built the tool



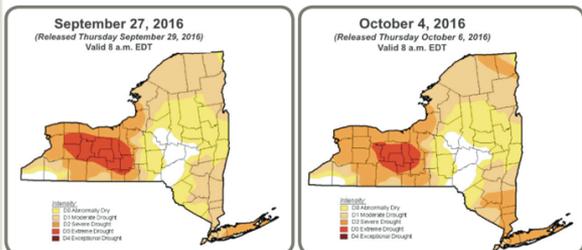
Northeast Regional Climate Center

# NY Drought Update



**New York Drought Update**  
October 6, 2016

## U.S. Drought Monitor



The U.S. Drought Monitor released on October 6 showed 67% of New York was in a drought, with another 24% of the state abnormally dry. Extreme drought conditions improved in western New York and parts of the Southern Tier, but remained in the Finger Lakes. Severe drought expanded in portions of the Hudson Valley, Catskills, and Long Island and was introduced in parts of northern New York. Moderate drought also expanded slightly in those areas.

## Precipitation & Records

September 28 - October 4 Precipitation (inches)					June 1 - October 4 Precipitation (inches)				
Station	2016	Normal	% of Normal	Rank	Station	2016	Normal	% of Normal	Rank
Batavia	0.80	0.83	96	53	Batavia	11.20	14.53	77	25
Watertown Ap	0.85	0.91	93	45	Watertown Ap	11.33	12.87	88	31
Highmarket	1.10	1.42	77	49	Highmarket	18.55	20.34	91	39
Hemlock	1.72	0.78	221	100	Hemlock	10.25	15.18	68	21
Geneva	1.87	0.77	243	44	Geneva	9.37	14.09	67	5
Ithaca	1.15	0.82	140	94	Ithaca	10.08	15.59	65	15
Islip	0.23	0.87	26	12	Islip	8.34	15.74	53	2

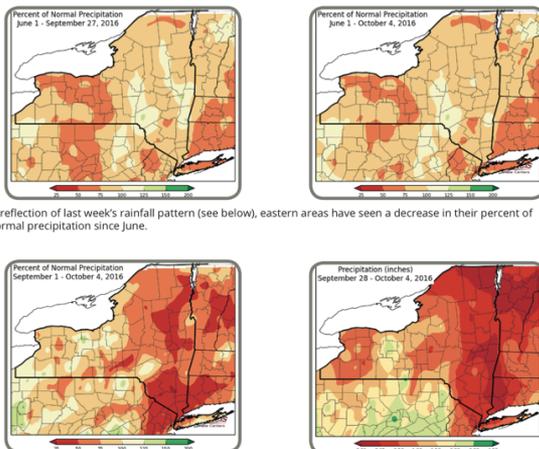
  

September 1 - October 4 Precipitation (inches)					March 1 - October 4 Precipitation (inches)				
Station	2016	Normal	% of Normal	Rank	Station	2016	Normal	% of Normal	Rank
Batavia	3.10	4.28	72	37	Batavia	16.82	23.05	73	10
Watertown Ap	3.30	4.22	78	31	Watertown Ap	16.52	21.14	78	19
Highmarket	4.43	6.61	67	25	Highmarket	28.17	32.32	87	21
Hemlock	4.15	4.06	102	79	Hemlock	16.69	24.03	69	18
Geneva	4.32	3.90	111	34	Geneva	13.80	22.35	62	2
Ithaca	2.91	4.14	70	47	Ithaca	15.95	24.71	65	3
Islip	3.09	4.06	76	12	Islip	17.06	28.3	60	2

Period of Record: Batavia 1931-2016 Hemlock 1899-2016 Islip 1984-2016  
 Watertown Ap 1949-2016 Geneva 1969-2016  
 Highmarket 1924-2016 Ithaca 1893-2016

Hemlock and Geneva both received over 200 percent of their normal precipitation last week. This brought their rainfall total since the beginning of September to over four inches. Other areas of the state did not have as much rainfall last week, and still show precipitation deficits since September, June, and March.

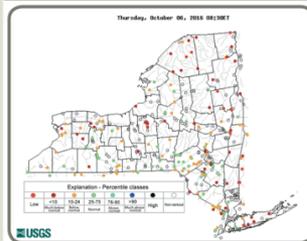
Contacts: Northeast Regional Climate Center ([nrcc@cornell.edu](mailto:nrcc@cornell.edu))



A reflection of last week's rainfall pattern (see below), eastern areas have seen a decrease in their percent of normal precipitation since June.

Rainfall over the last week was not widespread, but some areas did receive over two inches of precipitation. Northern and eastern areas of the state had less than half an inch.

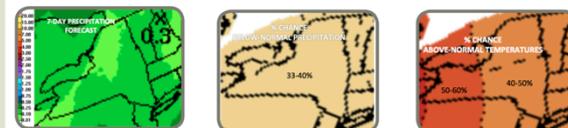
## Water Resources



Streamflow continued to be below normal for many of the drought-stricken areas. For the September 28-October 5 period, preliminary USGS data showed three waterways (with more than 30 years of data) had near record low 7-day average streamflow: Tenmile River in eastern Dutchess County, Keuka Lake outlet at Dresden in Yates County, and Massapequa Creek at Massapequa in Nassau County. Groundwater also continued to be below normal in many of the drought-stricken areas, with preliminary data indicating near to record-low daily water levels at several USGS well sites.

Contacts: Northeast Regional Climate Center ([nrcc@cornell.edu](mailto:nrcc@cornell.edu))

## Outlooks



- 7-Day Forecast:** As Hurricane Matthew is expected to stay well to our south, the only rain New York will see is from a passing cold front this weekend. Precipitation amounts are forecast to be a quarter inch or less.
- 8-14 Day Outlook:** NOAA's Climate Prediction Center (CPC) forecast for October 13-19 slightly favors below-normal precipitation. The CPC is forecasting an increased chance of above-normal temperatures. Tropical Storm Nicole is currently south of Bermuda and is not expected to have any impacts on the Eastern Seaboard.
- Week 3 & Beyond:** The CPC outlook for the mid to late October shows no indication of above- or below-normal precipitation.

Contacts: Northeast Regional Climate Center ([nrcc@cornell.edu](mailto:nrcc@cornell.edu))

• Weekly drought update specific to New York



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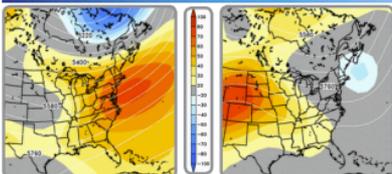
# Special Reports

## Drought Impacts and Outlook

## Northeast Region

July 2016

### Weather Patterns & Drought Monitor

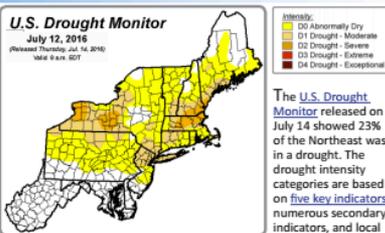


Maps of monthly average upper-level (500 mb) circulation patterns and anomalies (in meters). Ridging occurred over the eastern U.S. in March (top left), while a trough was present over the Northeast in June (top right). Credit: NOAA.

In March, a stronger-than-normal Bermuda High weakened low pressure systems as they moved through the eastern U.S., contributing to drier-than-normal conditions. A combination of dry Canadian air masses and upper-level ridges led to below-normal precipitation in April and May. Dry conditions continued in June. The weather pattern featured an upper-level trough much of the month, which helped keep the drought from becoming worse. Low relative humidity, windy conditions, and warm temperatures contribute to greater evaporation, but the biggest contributor is increased solar radiation due to clear skies, which the region also experienced.

### U.S. Drought Monitor

July 12, 2016  
(Released Thursday, Jul. 14, 2016)  
Vicki Law, DSI



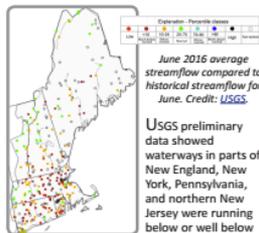
The U.S. Drought Monitor released on July 14 showed 23% of the Northeast was in a drought. The drought intensity categories are based on five key indicators, numerous secondary indicators, and local reports from expert

observers. Droughts in the Northeast tend to be seasonal, lasting less than 6 months. The current drought is expected to be seasonal. Seasonal droughts are more common than the severe drought of the mid-1960s, which persisted for several years.

The current drought is focused in three main areas. Drought conditions have occurred in Essex County, MA seven of the past 17 years, with a drought every year since 2012. Tompkins County, NY, is experiencing a severe drought for the first time since the U.S. Drought Monitor began in 2000. Bergen County, NJ has experienced drought conditions nine of the past 17 years, with extreme drought in 2002.

## Impacts

### Water Resources



June 2016 average streamflow compared to historical streamflow for June. Credit: USGS

USGS preliminary data showed waterways in parts of New England, New York, Pennsylvania, and northern New Jersey were running below or well below normal levels in late

June and early July, with near to record low 1-, 7-, 14-, and 28-day average streamflows on some waterways. Groundwater was also at below to well below normal levels.

June reservoir levels in Massachusetts were generally near to below normal. The reservoir system for the city of Worcester, MA was at 85.3% of capacity on June 1, marking the lowest June 1 capacity since 1966. As of July 1, reservoir capacity was at 75.3%. Despite dry conditions, most of the reservoirs that provide water to the New York City metro area were at near normal levels.



Holden Reservoir No. 1—June 25, 2016

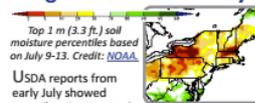
Credit: City of Worcester, MA

### Fire Danger

The fire danger rating is usually low once greenup (when leaves appear on plants) occurs in June, but this year dry conditions led to an above-normal number of days with a fire danger rating of moderate or higher. The number of fires once greenup arrived has also been above normal in parts of the region. Information compiled by NWS Burlington indicated that larger fires were burning deeper into the ground and were taking longer than normal to suppress in Maine and Massachusetts.

### Agriculture & Forestry

Top 1 m (3.3 ft.) soil moisture percentiles based on July 9-13. Credit: NOAA



USDA reports from early July showed topsoil moisture rated short or very short for 51% of New York and 60% of New England, while subsoil moisture rated short or very short for 47% of New York and 56% of New England. Many farmers irrigated as the dry conditions hindered growth and stressed crops. For example, pastures were stunted and corn was curling in parts of central New York. Several farms in northeastern Massachusetts reported crop losses due to non-irrigated fields being too dry to plant or seed sprouts not emerging after planting.

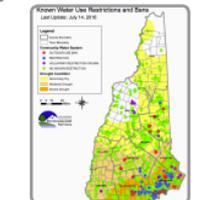
A fungus that kills gypsy moth caterpillars needs springtime moisture to grow. Without adequate rainfall, the caterpillar population thrived and in turn decimated tree foliage in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut. The defoliated trees also heightened fire danger because more sun is able to reach the forest floor, creating drier conditions that contribute to the rapid spread of fire.

### Drought Advisories



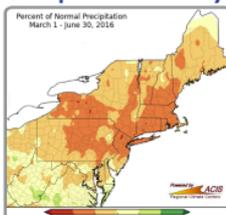
Connecticut issued a [Drought Advisory](#) on June 27, asking residents to conserve water. The state most recently declared a [Drought Advisory](#) in 2010. On July 8, a [Drought Watch](#) was declared for central and northeastern Massachusetts and a [Drought Advisory](#) was declared for southeastern Massachusetts and the Connecticut River Valley (map above). The most recent Drought Advisory was during Fall 2014, while the most recent Drought Watch was 2002. Both states use precipitation, streamflow, groundwater, fire danger, Crop Moisture Index, and reservoirs as drought indicators. Additionally, Massachusetts uses SPI, while Connecticut uses Palmer Drought Index.

Voluntary and mandatory [water restrictions](#) were implemented in numerous towns in New England and New York.



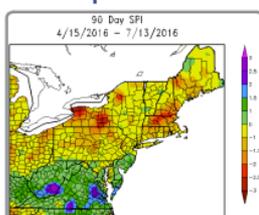
## Precipitation

### Precipitation Anomaly



A majority of the Northeast is experiencing below normal precipitation departures. Precipitation from March through June has been below 75 percent of normal for all of Rhode Island and a majority of Connecticut and Massachusetts. Connecticut has had 10.07 inches of precipitation during this time period, which is only 59 percent of normal. Large areas of New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania have also had less than three quarters of their normal precipitation amounts. In contrast, parts of West Virginia had record-breaking rainfall in June.

### Standardized Precipitation Index



The [Standardized Precipitation Index \(SPI\)](#) was negative over the last 90 days, indicating dry conditions, for portions of the Northeast. The SPI uses historical station data to calculate the probability of a precipitation event. The index value directly corresponds to the standard deviation based on the historical data and can be directly related to U.S. Drought Monitor categories. A larger negative value indicates drier conditions. Areas in central and western New York have SPI values of -2 to -3. SPI values this low are expected to occur fewer than two times in 100 years.

### Records

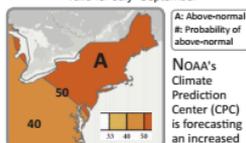
Station	2016	Normal	% of Normal	Rank
Lawrence, MA	7.96	17.46	46	6
Lawrence, MA	8.90	19.25	46	7
Hemmerington, NJ	8.58	17.83	50	3
Shaw, NY	9.21	19.17	48	5
Kennedy Airport, NY	7.59	15.49	55	1
Ithaca, NY	6.94	13.11	53	3
Acorn, NY	6.55	10.10	53	3
Hartford, CT	9.98	18.07	55	4
Amherst, MA	8.94	15.98	57	5
Other Brook Lake, NH	8.95	15.35	58	3
Oliver Hazard Perry, PA	20.50	35.97	60	4
Tully Lake, MA	10.59	17.63	60	5
Borro Falls Dam, MA	10.90	18.36	60	6
West Stockport, VT	14.69	24.25	61	3

The lack of precipitation from March through June has broken records in New York, Elmira, Batavia, Kennedy Airport, and Ithaca have had their driest March through June period on record. Other reporting stations from Pennsylvania to Maine have ranked in their top five or top ten driest for the same time period. Lawrence, MA only had 46 percent of their normal precipitation. June was particularly dry. Batavia's June rainfall only totaled 0.60 inches, ranking as their second driest June, and Lawrence had a similarly low total of 0.62 inches, ranking as their fourth driest. Ithaca had their second driest June with 1.07 inches.

## Outlooks

### Temperature and Precipitation

Valid for July–September

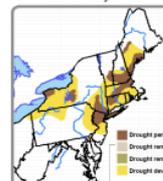


above-normal temperatures for the Northeast (map above) for July–September.

As for precipitation, equal chances were forecast for the entire region for July–September. According to CPC, "equal chances are forecast in areas where the likelihood of seasonal accumulated precipitation amounts are expected to be similar to climatological probabilities."

### Drought & Wildland Fire

Valid for July 2016



The NOAA Climate Prediction Center's Monthly Drought Outlook for July (above) calls for drought conditions to persist or develop in parts of the Northeast.

There is near normal potential for significant wildland fires for most of the region this summer, according to the [National Interagency Fire Center](#).

## Regional Partners

- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
[www.noaa.gov](http://www.noaa.gov)
- National Centers for Environmental Information  
[www.ncei.noaa.gov](http://www.ncei.noaa.gov)
- National Weather Service  
[www.weather.gov](http://www.weather.gov)
- NOAA Research, Climate Program Office and Geophysical Fluid Dynamics Lab  
[www.research.noaa.gov](http://www.research.noaa.gov)
- NOAA's North Atlantic and Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Teams  
[www.regions.noaa.gov](http://www.regions.noaa.gov)
- Climate Prediction Center  
[www.cpc.noaa.gov](http://www.cpc.noaa.gov)
- Northeast Regional Climate Center  
[www.nrcr.cornell.edu](http://www.nrcr.cornell.edu)
- National Integrated Drought Information System  
[www.drought.gov](http://www.drought.gov)
- Northeast Regional State Climatologists  
[www.statedclimate.org](http://www.statedclimate.org)
- USDA Northeast Regional Climate Hub  
[www.climatehubs.usda.gov/northeast](http://www.climatehubs.usda.gov/northeast)

Contact: Ellen McCreary ([Ellen.L.McCreary@noaa.gov](mailto:Ellen.L.McCreary@noaa.gov))  
Northeast Regional Climate Center ([nrcr@cornell.edu](mailto:nrcr@cornell.edu))



Northeast Drought Impacts and Outlook July 2016  
[www.drought.gov/drought/resources/reports](http://www.drought.gov/drought/resources/reports)

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[#Regionaldroughtoutlooks](https://twitter.com/Regionaldroughtoutlooks)



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Briefing on conditions, impacts, and outlooks



Northeast Regional Climate Center

# Webinars



## Northeast Regional Climate Center

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Climate Change and  
Agriculture

Coastal Adaptation

Climate Change in the Urban  
Northeast

Spring Flood Outlook

Winter Review & Observation  
Networks

Transportation & Climate

2015

Quarterly Outlooks

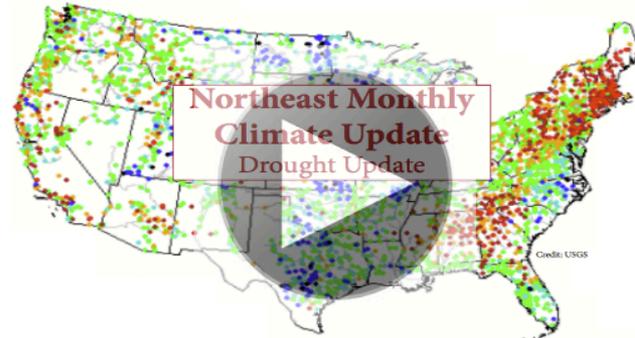
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### Drought Update



### Individual presentations (pdf):

[September Review \(Samantha Borisoff - NRCC\)](#)

[Streamflow & Groundwater Levels \(William Coon - USGS\)](#)

[Cornell's Climate Smart Farming Irrigation Scheduler \(Jonathan Lambert - CICS\)](#)

### About Monthly Webinars

The Northeast Regional Climate Center hosts a monthly webinar with NOAA affiliates to address timely weather and climate concerns. These webinars are available to watch live. To receive notifications about upcoming webinars, e-mail us at [nrcc@cornell.edu](mailto:nrcc@cornell.edu). Recorded versions are available within a week after the live webinar.

Upcoming webinars:

Date/Time	Topic	Registration Link
October 27, 2016, 9:30am	Mid-Atlantic Regional Integrated Sciences & Assessments Program	Forthcoming
November 29, 2016, 9:30am	TBD	Forthcoming
December 20, 2016, 9:30am	TBD	Forthcoming



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