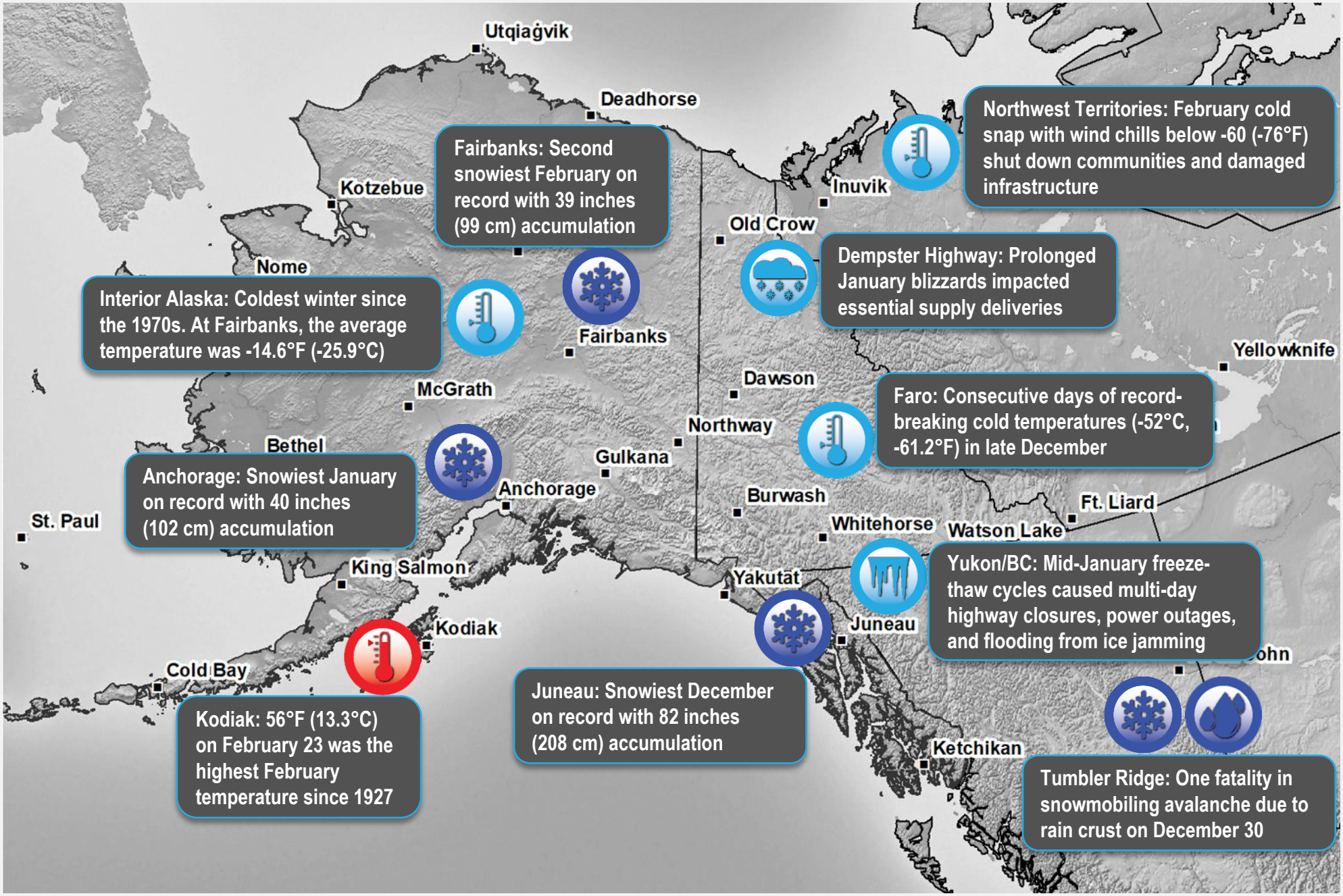
ALASKA and NORTHWESTERN CANADA

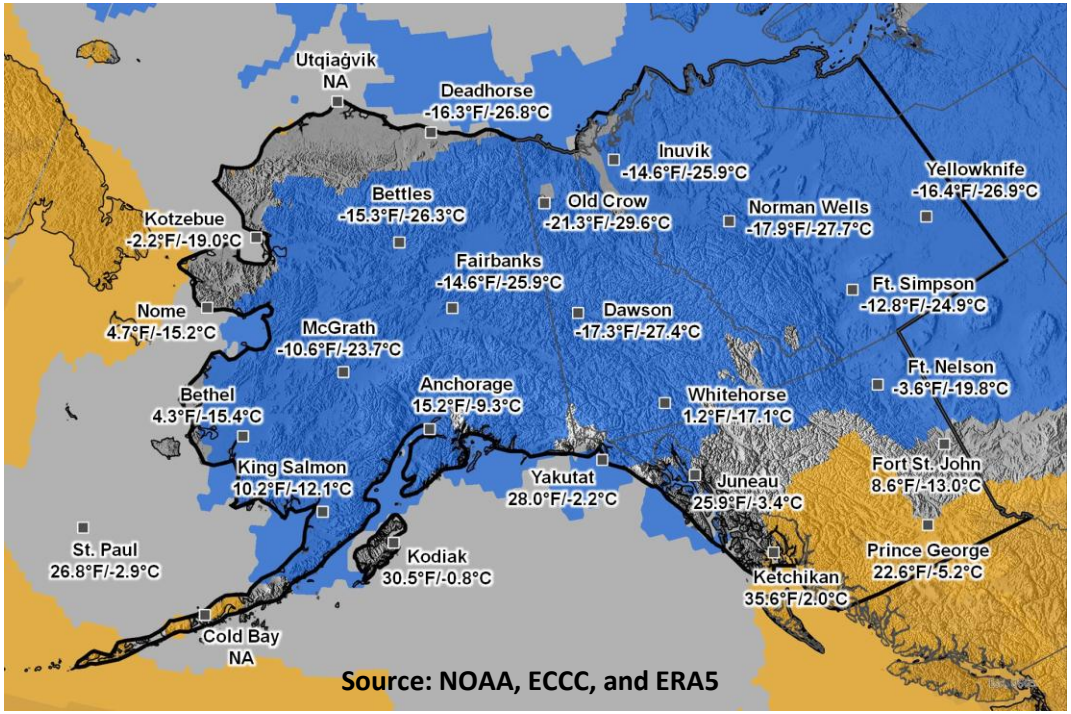
Weather and Climate Highlights and Impacts, December 2025 to February 2026
Climate Outlook, April 2026 to June 2026

ACCAP Alaska Center for Climate Assessment and Policy
A NOAA CAP/RISA Team

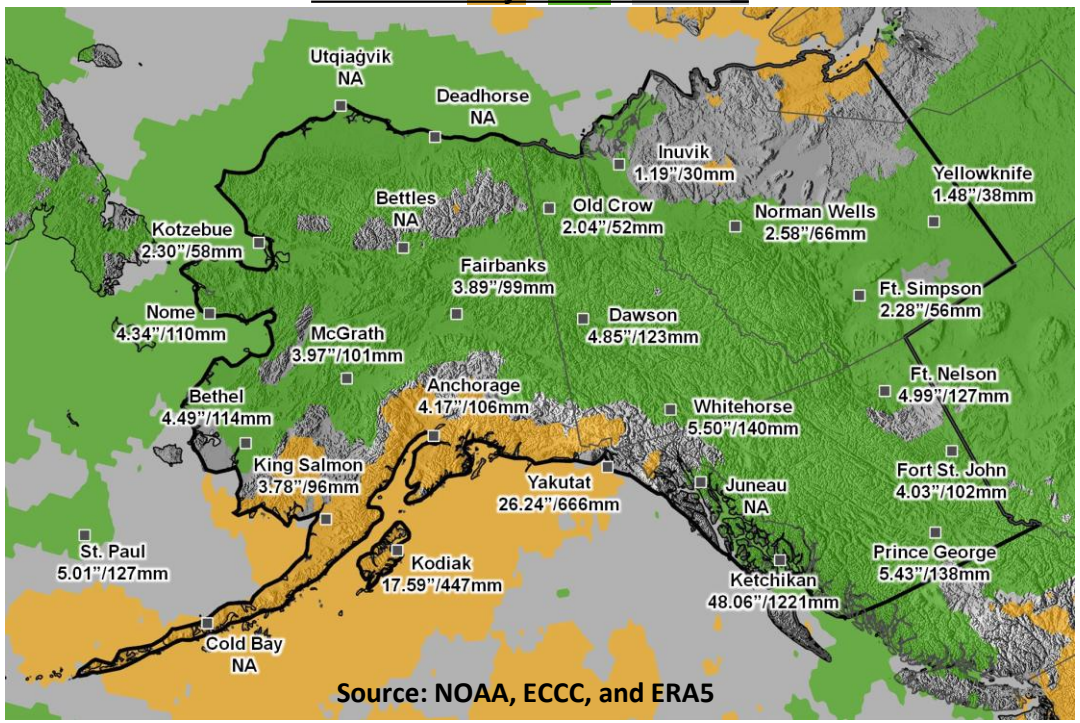
Environment and Climate Change Canada | Environnement et Changement climatique Canada



December 2025 to February 2026 Temperature Averages (°F/°C) & Anomalies Below / Above / Normal



December 2025 to February 2026 Precipitation Totals (inches/mm) & Anomalies - Dry / Wet / Normal



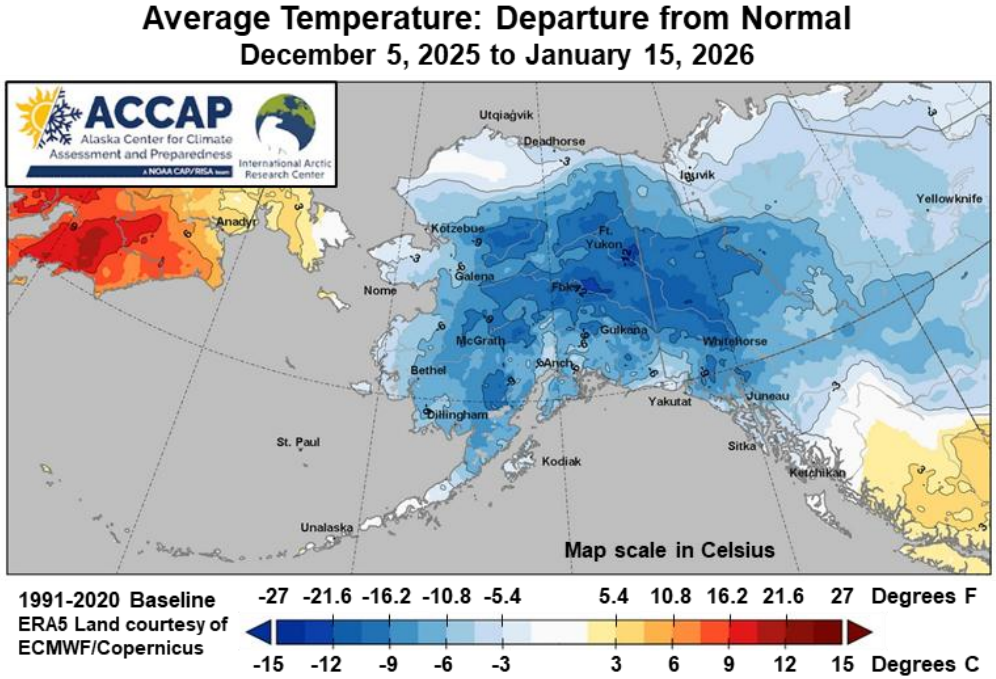
Record Snow for Alaskan Cities this Winter

Sunken boat due to snow load in Juneau Harbor.
Photo credit: Mikko Wilson/KTOO

Alaska is a large state and most of the population resides in three distinct and widely separated locations. Having each of the population centers set, or nearly set, a monthly snowfall record is highly unusual. Beginning in December, Juneau smashed their record for snowiest December and nearly broke their record for snowiest overall month. A remarkable 82.0 in (208.3 cm) fell during the month, breaking the December record by 27.3 in (69.3 cm) (1943-present). Significant impacts were noted all around the northern half of Southeast Alaska including sinking boats, collapsing building roofs, and school and business closures.

In January, it was Anchorage's turn to receive record snow. A January record total of 40.2 in (102.1 cm) fell in January 2026. This was the 5th snowiest month overall for Alaska's largest city (1954-present). Not to be outdone, Fairbanks got in on the action in February, when 39.9 in (98.8 cm) fell on the Golden Heart City – the 2nd most for any February on record and the 7th largest total for any month (1905-present). The snow in Anchorage and Fairbanks caused numerous school closures and impacted operations of state and local governments.

Persistent December – January Cold Spell



Temperature anomaly for Dec 5, 2025 – Jan 15, 2026. Credit: ACCAP

From early December through mid January, most of Alaska and northwest Canada saw an unusually long period of very cold weather. From December 5 – January 15, the entire region spent nearly every day below the normal temperatures for this time of year. In the Yukon, Faro recorded −52.2°C (−62°F) on December 23, its coldest temperature since records began in 1966, while Beaver Creek reached −50.2°C (−58.4°F) and Carmacks −51.8°C (−61.2°F), their lowest since the late 1990s. Both Tok and Chicken, Alaska, with lows of −63°F (−52.8°C), recorded their lowest temperatures since January 2009. At several locations, records were either approached or broken for consecutive days of anomalously cold temperatures, including Fairbanks, Tanana, Eagle, Anchorage, and Dawson.

The extreme cold created many disruptions to community services, transportation, and infrastructure across the region. School buses and local events were cancelled in many communities and some schools and public offices were closed. Transportation was impacted by frozen gas pumps, dead car batteries, and dense ice fog frequently reducing visibility, and some northern communities feared supply shortages as conditions were too harsh for transport to reach remote locations. Finally, high demand for electricity and fuel prompted Yukon Energy to urge residents to reduce consumption. Equipment failures, including a generator leak in Haines Junction and an overloaded breaker at the Aishihik Dam, caused outages during −40°C (−40°F) conditions.

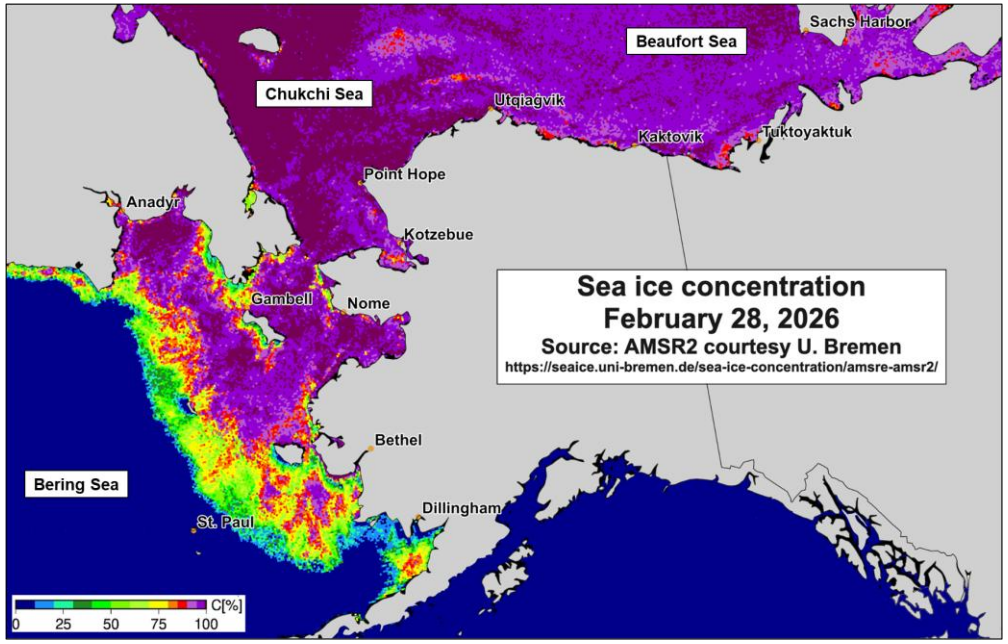
Low Snow Start to the Winter for Northwest Alaska

Low snow cover made for rough travel across the land in the Nome area until mid-February. Photo taken December 17, 2025. Credit: Nome Nugget/Diana Hacker

While the major population centers of Alaska received record high snowfall at some point during the winter, it was a different story in northwest Alaska, where snowfall this season was well below normal until a series of storms hit the region the second half of February. The snowpack snow-water equivalent in the area from the central Seward Peninsula northeast into the western Interior was generally only 50 – 75% of the 1991-2020 baseline average at the end of January. For a few weeks in late January and early February, the U.S. Drought Monitor classified a small area east of Kotzebue to be in moderate drought. Snowfall was low enough on the Seward Peninsula and much of the Northwest Arctic Borough to cause some difficulties in cross country travel.

This “snow drought” ended in spectacular fashion as five separate storms in mid and late February brought copious snow to most of the region, mostly or entirely eliminating snowpack deficits. At Nome, unofficial estimates put the snowfall for the second half of February at about three feet (one meter), which is close to the all-time high snowfall record for a two-week period.

Sea Ice Concentration Conditions on February 28 2026 in the Bering, Chukchi and Beaufort Seas

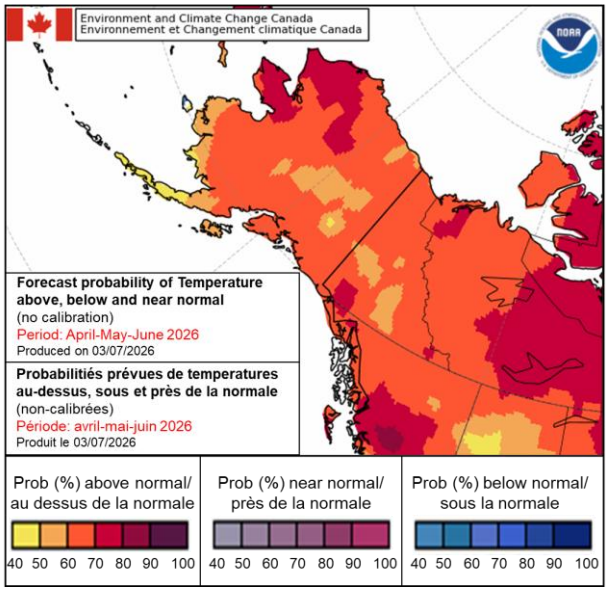


Freeze-up was slightly delayed this season, associated with above-normal temperatures during November. The Chukchi Sea become almost completely ice-covered on December 3, which is about 10 days later than was typical prior to 2001. The Beaufort Sea was also 1 – 2 weeks delayed, becoming fully ice covered by mid-November. Ice growth accelerated in December as colder conditions developed.

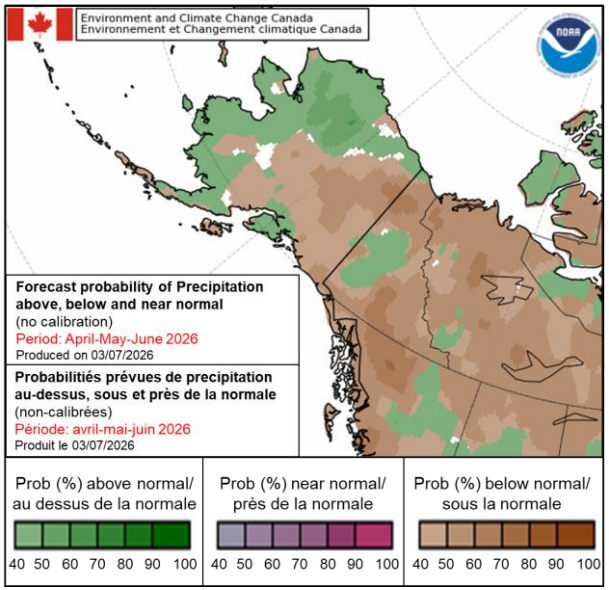
In the Beaufort Sea, there was less old ice than normal in the northwest, which persisted throughout the season. Thickness was normal, except for in the south and southeast, which fluctuated between normal and thinner than normal. Ice in the south ended the season thinner than normal.

In the Bering Sea, ice extent was below normal for most of December before increasing late in the month. During January and February, ice extent was quite variable as the edge of the ice pack was repeatedly moved by the prevailing winds. Ice briefly reached St. Paul in the Pribilofs Islands the first week of February only to retreat to well north of the island during the stormy weather during mid-February.

Temperature Outlook: April to June 2026



Precipitation Outlook: April to June 2026



For April – June 2026, most of Alaska and northwest Canada have a 60 – 70% chance of above normal temperatures, with small areas of lower and higher probabilities. There is slightly lower probability of warm temperatures around the Alaska Peninsula, parts of central Alaska, and parts of southern Yukon. The highest probability of 80 – 90% is in northwestern Alaska, eastern Northwest Territories, and parts of northern British Columbia.

The precipitation outlook shows modest probabilities of below normal precipitation for much of the region. The highest chance (60 – 70%) of drier than normal conditions is in northern and southeastern Yukon, parts of the Northwest Territories, and northwestern British Columbia. In contrast, western and northern Alaska, parts of central Yukon, and parts of northeastern British Columbia have a 40 – 60% chance of above normal precipitation.

Content and graphics prepared by NOAA's National Weather Service and National Center for Environmental Information; the Alaska Center for Climate Assessment and Policy at the University of Alaska; and Environment and Climate Change Canada, as well as our regional partners: Alaska Climate Research Center, Alaska Climate Science Center, National Snow and Ice Data Center, and Scenarios Network for Alaska + Arctic Planning.

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