



Gulf of Maine Significant Events – December 2025–February 2026

Winter featured **below- to near-normal temperatures** and **below- to near-normal precipitation** for much of the region. It was the **coldest winter in over 10 years** for some New England sites and the **second-driest winter** on record for Fredericton, N.B. **Winter snowfall varied**, with Boston, MA, having its ninth-snowiest winter. There were **several notable storms** including a strong wind event in mid-December, a significant snowstorm in late January, and a blizzard in February. **Drought conditions persisted** in the region, with groundwater levels **remaining below normal** in New England and farmers in the Maritimes reporting **hay and feed shortages** for livestock due to drought conditions in summer and autumn 2025.

December

December temperatures were as much as 4°C (7°F) below normal, making it the **coldest December in the past 5- to 10-years** for many areas and tying as the 10th-coldest December for Bas-Caraquet, N.B. The cold weather created good conditions for **ice fishing** and led to an **early start** to the ski season, as well as allowed for early formation of sea ice in sheltered bays in the Maritimes. December **precipitation was below or near normal** for most areas. **Monthly snowfall varied**, with below-normal totals in places like New Brunswick but above-normal totals in places like Maine.

January

The second week of January was **warmer than normal**, but January 23 to February 1 was **particularly cold**. The coldest highs in New England were near -18°C (0°F), while the coldest lows region-wide were down to -30°C (-22°F). With the wind, it felt as cold as -37°C (-35°F) at times. Many areas **had not seen such a cold spell in at least 10 years**. During this period, Portland, ME, had nine consecutive days with a high less than -4°C (25°F), its longest such stretch since 1981 and tying its **fifth-longest such streak**. Similarly, Yarmouth, N.S., had 11 consecutive days below 0°C (32°F), its longest such stretch since 2014 and tying its **ninth-longest such streak**. **High demand** for electricity **strained the power grid** in the Maritimes, where customers were asked to reduce their usage. Some warming shelters in Maine saw an **uptick in visitors**. Driven by this event, Portland saw 13 days with a high less than -4°C (25°F), tying as its ninth-greatest number for January. The full month averaged out to be as much as 2°C (4°F) **colder than normal** in Massachusetts and New Hampshire but **near normal** in Maine and the Maritimes. While **January precipitation** totals were **below or near normal**, monthly snowfall totals were below or near normal in the Maritimes but near or above normal in New England.

February

February was **colder than normal** for most of New England but was warmer than normal for much of the Maritimes, where Bas-Caraquet and Charlo, N.B. had one of their **10 warmest Februaries** on record. This February was dry region-wide, ranking as the **driest February on record** for Fredericton and Woodstock, N.B., and Truro, N.S., and the fourth driest for Caribou, ME. Monthly snowfall was below normal in Maine and New Brunswick but near to above normal elsewhere in the region. In eastern Massachusetts, this snowfall surplus was driven by a late-month storm that dropped up to 91 cm (36 in.) of snow, gave Boston, MA, its **fifth-snowiest February day** and ninth all-time snowiest day, and produced **blizzard conditions**.

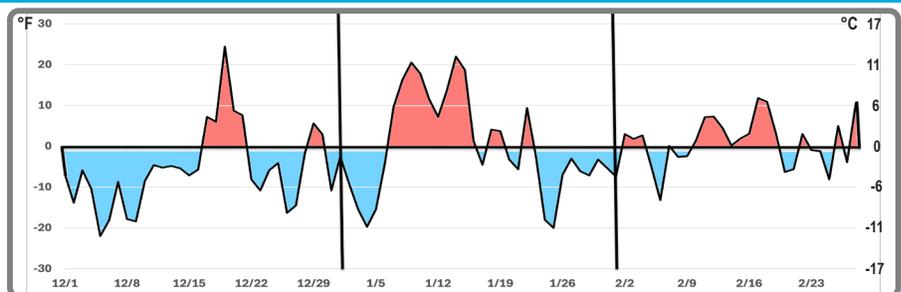
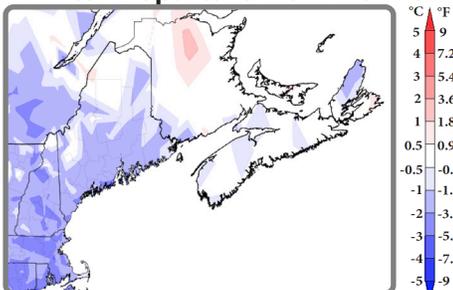
Winter was drier than normal for most areas, with a few Maritimes sites having a record-dry February.

An intense storm produced blizzard conditions in New England in late February.

Regional Climate Overview – December 2025–February 2026

Temperature

Winter Departure from Normal



Daily average temperature departure from normal during winter at Caribou, ME. Warmer-than-normal days are shaded red and colder-than-normal days are shaded blue.

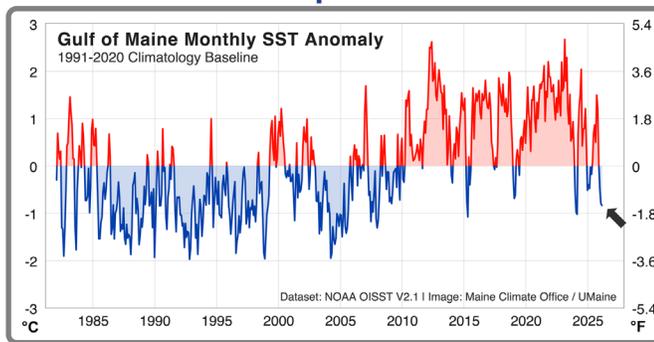
Winter temperatures (averaged over December, January, and February) ranged from 3°C (5°F) **above normal*** to **near normal** for most of the region. **December** was as much as 4°C (7°F) **below normal**, with Bas-Caraquet, N.B., having its 10th-coldest December. **January** was as much as 2°C (4°F) **below normal**, particularly in parts of New England. **February** ranged from 4°C (7°F) **below normal** in eastern Massachusetts to 3°C (5°F) **above normal** in northeastern New Brunswick and Cape Breton, N.S. It was among the 10 warmest Februaries for Bas-Caraquet and Charlo, N.B.

*Normals based on 1991–2020 data.

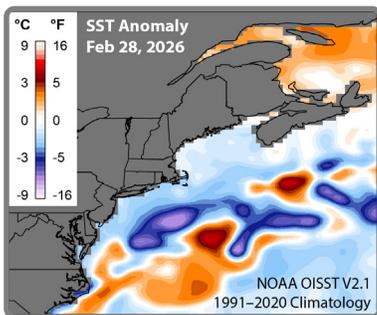
Regional Climate Overview – December 2025–February 2026

Sea Surface Temperature

Monthly mean sea surface temperature (SST) averaged across the Gulf of Maine was near the 1991–2020 climatological mean during December and below the mean

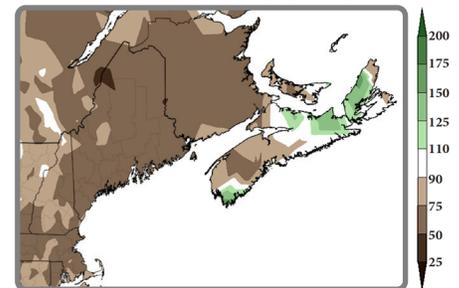


during **January and February**. The chart shows all monthly SST anomalies from January 1982 to February 2026, estimated from NOAA OISST version 2.1. The arrow on the right of the chart points to the December–February values.



The map at left shows preliminary data for February 28. **Cool SST anomalies** are found in parts of the Gulf of Maine shaded blue, while shades of orange indicate **warm anomalies**. Daily OISST data for the Gulf of Maine are available from the [Maine Climate Office](#).

Precipitation Winter Percent of Normal



Winter precipitation (accumulated from December to February) ranged from 50% of normal* to 150% of normal. Fredericton, N.B., had its **second-driest winter**. **December** precipitation ranged from 25% of normal to near normal for most areas. **January** precipitation ranged from 50% of normal to near normal for much of the region. **February** precipitation ranged from less than 25% of normal to near normal for most areas. February was **record dry** for a few Maritimes sites including Fredericton and the fourth driest for Caribou, ME.

*Precipitation normals based on 1991–2020 data.

Regional Impacts – December 2025–February 2026

Winter Conditions

Several storms affected the region during winter, with a few noted below.

- **December 19–20:** A strong storm system produced **wind gusts of up to 110 km/hr (68 mph)**, with locally higher gusts of up to 130 km/hr (81 mph). Downed trees and power lines [blocked roads](#) and resulted in [power outages](#). Nearly 300,000 customers in the Maritimes [lost power](#), with [restoration taking several days](#) in New Brunswick. The storm also brought warm temperatures and rain, generally 25 mm (1 in.) or less, to the region. This combination resulted in **rapid snowmelt**.
- **December 29–30:** This was one of several **mixed precipitation events** during winter, bringing up to 10 mm (0.40 in.) of ice accumulation from **freezing rain**, up to 20 cm (8 in.) of snow, some sleet, and up to 47 mm (1.85 in.) of rain. Wind gusts of up to 101 km/h (63 mph) affected coastal areas, with a Les Suêtes of 137 km/h (85 mph). Impacts included [power outages](#) and [hazardous driving conditions](#).
- **January 18–19:** A winter storm brought as much as 30 cm (12 in.) of **heavy, wet snow** to eastern P.E.I. and most of Nova Scotia. Power outages [exceeded 130,000 customers](#) in Nova Scotia as snow weighed down power infrastructure. Other impacts included [school closures](#) and travel delays.
- **January 25–27:** A massive storm brought snow to the region. The greatest storm snowfall totals of around 61 cm (24 in.) were [in New England](#). Boston, MA, had a two-day total of 59 cm (23.2 in.), its **fourth-largest two-day total** for January and ninth largest for any month on record. January 25 became Boston's **fourth-snowiest January day** and 10th all-time snowiest day with 42 cm (16.7 in.). Travel was difficult in many areas due to [hazardous road conditions](#), suspension of [ferry](#) and [bus](#) services, and flight delays and cancellations. For instance, on January 26, [only a few airlines were operating](#) at Boston's airport.
- **February 22–24:** An intense storm brought snow and strong winds to the region, with the greatest totals of 91 cm (36 in.) in [southeastern Massachusetts](#). Boston, MA, had 43 cm (17.1 in.) of snow on February 23, its **fifth-snowiest February day** and ninth all-time snowiest day. The highest wind gusts of 80 to 119 km/h (50 to 74 mph) occurred in eastern Massachusetts and southern Maritime coastal areas, with a Les Suêtes of 150 km/h (93 mph). **Blizzard conditions** were reported in [New England](#), with near whiteout conditions in parts of the Maritimes. In Massachusetts, a [travel ban](#) was issued for some areas, the Boston Globe [did not print its daily paper](#) for the first time in its 153-year history, and much of Cape Cod [lost power](#), with [restoration taking days](#). Across the region, there were business and [school closures](#), [flight cancellations](#) and delays, and [hazardous road conditions](#). Elevated water levels were reported in coastal areas, with [some beach erosion](#) noted in eastern Massachusetts.



Ice accretion from freezing rain in northern Maine in late December. Source: NWS CAR

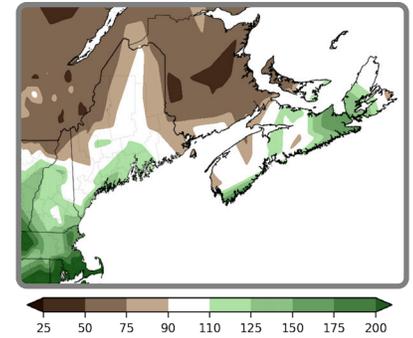


Snow in southeastern Massachusetts in late February. Source: E. Mecray

Regional Impacts – December 2025–February 2026

Winter Snowfall

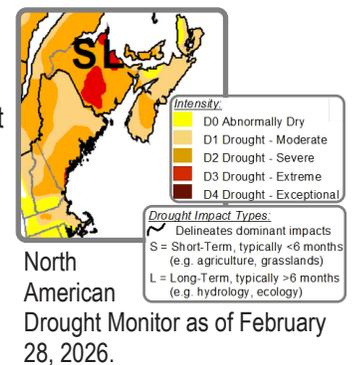
December snowfall ranged from less than 50% of normal in parts of the Maritimes to over 200% of normal in parts of New England. End-of-month snow depth for most areas was below to near normal. **January snowfall** ranged from less than 50% of normal in central New Brunswick to over 200% of normal in southeastern Massachusetts. End-of-month snow depth was below to near normal in much of New Brunswick and northern/western Maine but generally near to above normal elsewhere in the region. **February snowfall** ranged from less than 25% of normal in parts of Maine and New Brunswick, leaving end-of-month snow depth below to near normal, to over 200% of normal in parts of Massachusetts and Nova Scotia, resulting in well above normal end-of-month snow depth. **Winter snowfall** ranged from 25% of normal to over 200% of normal, with Boston, MA, having its **ninth-snowiest winter**. Cold temperatures kept **snow on the ground for an extended period** in Nova Scotia and Cape Breton, leading to a [good snowmobile season](#), increasing [winter recreation tourism](#), and possibly helping [replenish soil moisture and groundwater levels](#).



Drought

During December, **drought conditions persisted** in New England. In the Maritimes, **drought conditions generally improved** except in areas with longer-term precipitation deficits such as eastern New Brunswick, central P.E.I., and southwestern Nova Scotia. In January, **severe drought expanded** in central/southern New Brunswick, and moderate drought expanded in southeastern Massachusetts. However, **severe drought contracted** in Maine, New Hampshire, and Nova Scotia. During February, severe and extreme drought expanded in New Brunswick due to dry February conditions and long-term precipitation deficits. There was minimal change in drought conditions in the rest of the Gulf of Maine region.

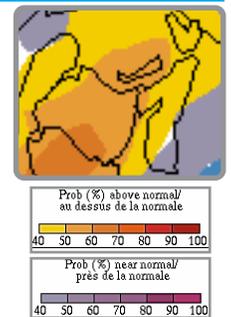
The few, major storms this winter generally **could not compensate** for an overall lack of precipitation during the rest of the season (and longer-term deficits in some locations). Also, [frozen ground](#) locked in [reduced groundwater levels](#) in New England and New Brunswick, helping drive drought through winter. Any recovery from melting snowpack in the region **would not happen until the spring thaw**. Mandatory [water restrictions](#) were in place in parts of Massachusetts.



Regional Outlook – Spring 2026

Temperature and Precipitation

For **March–May**, [Environment and Climate Change Canada \(ECCC\)](#) favors **above-normal temperatures** for most of the Maritimes and **near-normal temperatures** for western Nova Scotia. Meanwhile, [NOAA's Climate Prediction Center \(CPC\)](#) predicts **equal chances** of below-, near-, or above-normal temperatures for New England. For **precipitation**, the entire region falls into the **equal chances** category. For New England, the temperature and precipitation forecasts for equal chances are driven by a strong likelihood of ENSO-neutral conditions during spring and uncertainties due to conflicting climate signals.



ECCC temperature map (above) produced February 28.

Spring Flooding

According to [NOAA](#), flood potential is **below normal** for coastal Maine and **near normal** for the rest of New England through March. There is an **elevated risk of ice jam flooding** in central Maine [through late March](#). **Very heavy rain** can cause flooding at any time of the year, even in areas that have little to no snow cover. [NOAA's flood inundation mapping services](#) provide visualizations of flooding extent, along with a flood inundation forecast. The NRCC's webinar on March 26 will focus on the spring flood outlook. Register for the webinar [here](#).

Gulf of Maine Partners

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ENSO

La Niña conditions were still present in the equatorial Pacific Ocean in February. According to NOAA's [Climate Prediction Center](#), a transition to **ENSO-neutral conditions** is expected in the next month, with a 55% chance of ENSO-neutral conditions through May–July 2026 and a 62% chance of **El Niño** emerging during summer.

