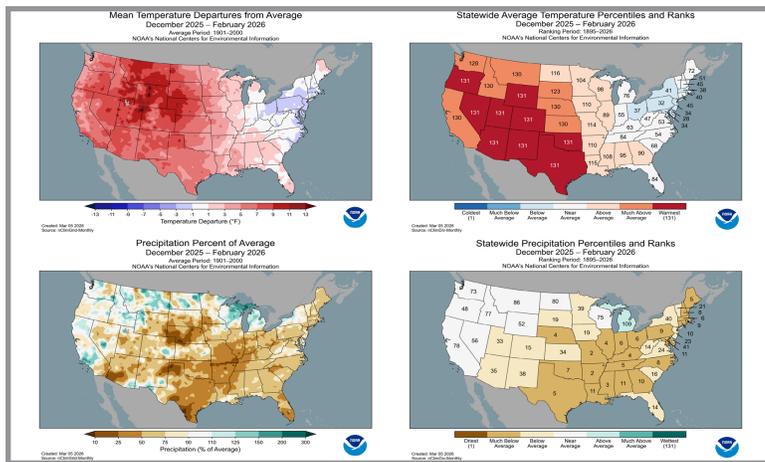




### National and Regional Weather Highlights for Winter 2025-2026



Temperatures in winter were **near average** across most of the Southeast, except Alabama and Georgia, which were **above average**. Regionally, it was the **9th driest winter on record** (since 1895), and the driest in 15 years. Every state in the region recorded **measurable snowfall**, with significant totals across eastern North Carolina. Temperatures were **above average** across the Caribbean with **above average precipitation** in Puerto Rico and **near average precipitation** in the Virgin Islands. Drought coverage **exceeded 90%** across the Southeast, while **conditions improved** across the Caribbean. For more information, see [NOAA's National Climate Report](#).

### Highlights for the Southeast

Many locations experienced their **warmest, or one of their warmest, Christmases on record**, with maximum temperatures as much as 25 degrees F above average

**Bitterly cold weather** was observed from January 25th to February 3rd, with temperatures falling **below 0 degrees F** across western Virginia and North Carolina and **subfreezing conditions** extending as far south as West Palm Beach, FL

Charlotte, NC recorded its **warmest winter temperature on record** (since 1878), reaching 83 degrees F on February 20th

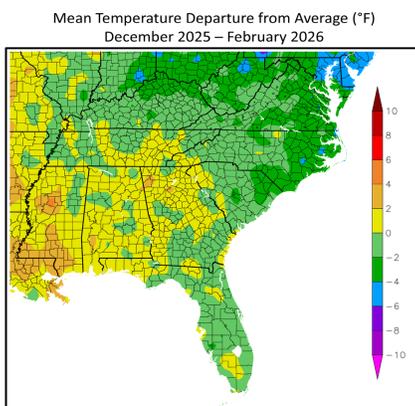
On February 24th, **moderate drought or worse covered the entire state of Florida** for the first time in the history of the U.S. Drought Monitor (since January 2000)

This winter marked **back-to-back years with measurable snow** in Savannah, GA, and the Pensacola, FL area

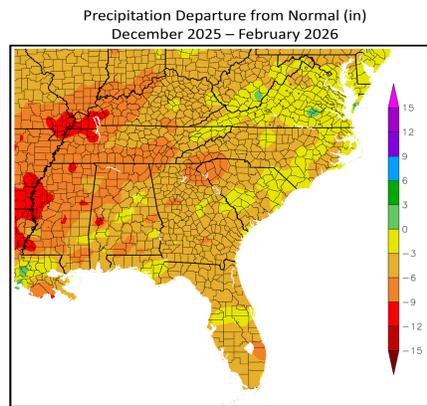
There were [eight surf zone fatalities](#) in the Southeast this winter

### Regional Weather Overview for Winter 2025-2026

#### Temperature and Precipitation Anomalies

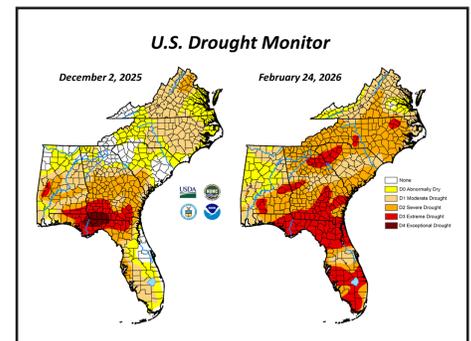


Temperatures were **below average** across the northern half of the region, with some parts of eastern VA and the Carolinas running **up to 4 degrees F below average** for the season. Temperatures were also below average across much of FL, where [many locations recorded long streaks of subfreezing temperatures](#). In contrast, temperatures were **above average** across AL, GA, and parts of the northern Gulf Coast.



Winter was **very dry** across the Southeast, with many locations running **3 to 6 inches below average**. The driest locations were found across northern portions of AL, GA, SC, and western NC, where seasonal totals were **more than 8 inches below average**. [Several locations recorded one of their top 10 driest winters on record](#), including West Palm Beach, FL (tied 2nd driest), Greenville-Spartanburg, SC (5th driest), and Atlanta, GA (5th driest).

#### Drought



Winter began with drought covering much of the Southeast. Persistent dry conditions led to rapid expansion, and by mid-January, **99.73% of the region was classified as either abnormally dry or in drought, the highest coverage since the U.S. Drought Monitor began in 2000**. Severe (D2) drought also expanded, reaching its greatest extent since 2008. Dry weather continued into February, and by the end of the season, **over 90% of the region was in at least moderate (D1) drought, the highest coverage on record**, with 23.64% experiencing extreme (D3) drought, the greatest extent since 2016.



# Regional Climate Impacts for Winter 2025-2026

## Ice, Snow, and Sleet, Oh My!



Heavy snow blankets eastern NC (source: [NWS MHX](#))

For the second straight year, there were **multiple rounds of significant winter precipitation** in the Southeast. The first storm, from [January 24-26](#), produced **4 to 6 inches of snow and sleet** across the Piedmont and Blue Ridge of VA, with up to **10 inches in higher elevations**. This system also brought up to **0.50 inches of freezing rain** across parts of AL, GA, and the Carolinas. A second storm from [January 30th to February 1st](#) brought measurable snowfall from eastern GA through the Carolinas into southern VA, with [flurries observed as far south as the Fort Myers, FL area](#). Every snowfall observation in NC was at least 1 inch, the first such occurrence since March 1980. Parts of eastern NC recorded **over 10 inches of snow**, making it the **largest snowstorm in more than four decades** for many coastal communities, while **blizzard conditions** were reported along portions of the Outer Banks.

## Severe Weather

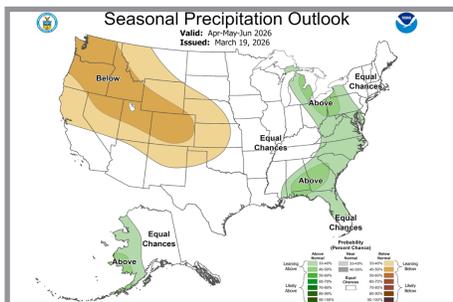
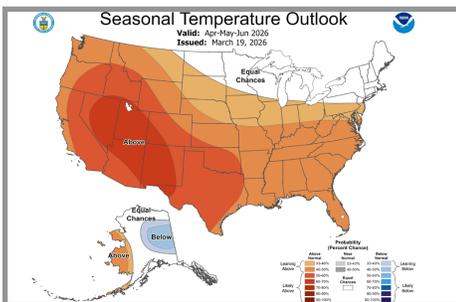
There were **216 reports of severe weather** this past winter, which is above the median frequency of 186 (116% of normal). There were **eight confirmed tornadoes** (3 EF-0s, 4 EF-1s, 1 EF-2), which is below the median frequency of 28 (29% of normal) and the **fewest winter tornadoes since 2003-2004**. For the season, there were **169 reports of high winds**, which is above the median frequency of 144 (117% of normal). There were also **39 hail reports**, which is more than 2.5 times the median frequency of 14. On **January 25th**, five tornadoes struck southern AL and GA and northern FL, causing major structural damage, downed trees, and straight-line winds up to 70 mph that impacted homes, vehicles, power lines, and roads. On **February 26th**, winds up to 75 mph affected northern and central AL, causing significant tree damage to homes, with **hail up to 2.25 inches**.

## Agriculture and Livestock

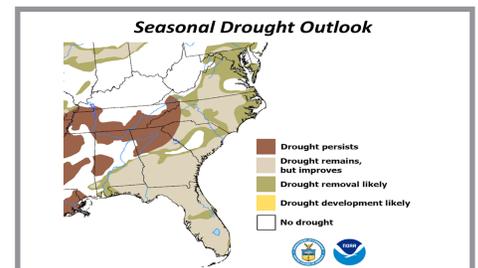
Agricultural impacts reflected **widespread dryness and temperature variability**. Pastures, livestock, and winter crops were stressed, with **deteriorating conditions** prompting early supplemental feeding, reduced pond levels, and increased livestock strain. In GA and SC, **poor forage** led to low stock weights and water hauling. Winter grains showed **limited growth**, with wheat struggling in eastern NC. Cool-season forages were weakened by drought, delayed planting, and freezes. In FL, irrigation concerns emerged during **freeze events**. Dry soils threatened spring planting through **poor germination and seed rot**. Repeated cold outbreaks and warm spells **increased water demand and fungal damage**. January freezes caused an estimated **\$3 billion in losses in FL**, including major impacts to strawberries, blueberries, sugarcane, and citrus.

# Regional Climate Outlook for Spring 2026

## Temperature and Precipitation



## Drought

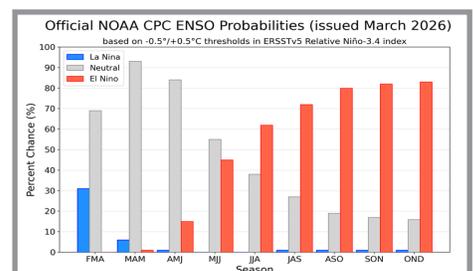


[NOAA's Climate Prediction Center \(CPC\)](#) is forecasting **above average temperatures** across the Southeast from April to June. Probabilities are in the 40-50% range, except across extreme northern VA. **Above average precipitation** is expected across most of the region, except northern AL and GA and South FL, with the highest probabilities stretching from the northern Gulf Coast through central GA (40-50%).

Drought is expected to **improve or be eliminated** across a large portion of the region, except across northern parts of AL, GA, and SC and western parts of NC, where drought is expected to **persist**. No new development is expected.

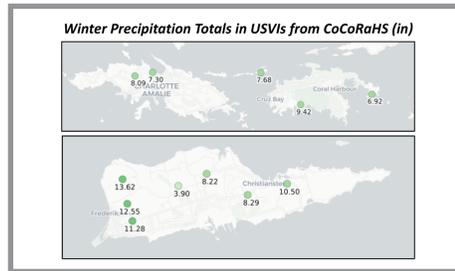
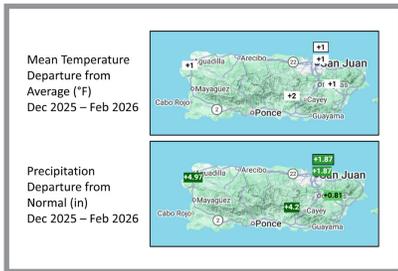
## ENSO Forecast

According to the [latest ENSO update](#) issued by CPC on March 12th, La Niña conditions are still present but a **transition to ENSO-neutral is expected** to occur this spring, with a 55% chance of neutral conditions persisting from May to July. **El Niño is likely to emerge this summer** (62% chance) and persist through the end of the year, owing to the large amount of heat in the subsurface tropical Pacific Ocean and expected weakening of the trade winds.



# Caribbean Climate Overview and Impacts for Winter 2025-2026

## Temperature and Precipitation Anomalies

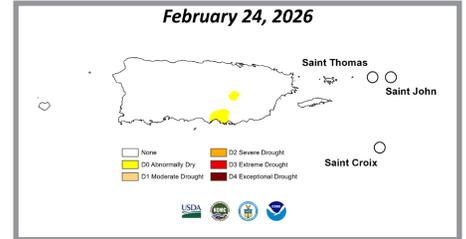
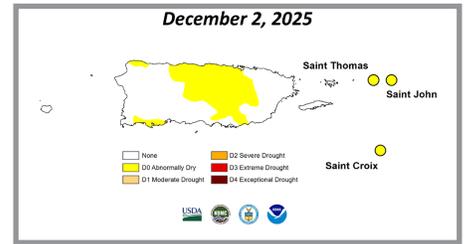


Temperatures were **above average** across PR and the USVIs. Saint Thomas (1953-2026) recorded its **warmest winter on record** with a mean temperature of 81.4 degrees F, breaking the previous record of 81.2 degrees F set in 1993-1994, while Coloso (1899-2026) recorded **one of its top 10 warmest winters**. Precipitation was **above average** across much of PR, as well as on Saint Croix, where several locations recorded over 10 inches of precipitation. Coloso recorded its **8th wettest winter** with 12.55 inches. The wettest locations were found in east-central PR where some locations recorded over 20 inches of precipitation, while parts of the southern slopes recorded less than 5 inches. Precipitation was **variable** across Saint Thomas and Saint John. Charlotte Amalie recorded 5.73 inches, or about 75% of normal for the season.

## Agriculture and Water Resources

Rainfall deficits and drought conditions across the U.S. Caribbean were largely **erased** this winter due to repeated frontal boundaries and troughs that delivered **beneficial rainfall**. Much of PR experienced wet conditions, though **lingering dryness** persisted in the southeast, where groundwater wells for agricultural and municipal use remained **near critical levels**. Early in the season, dry conditions **stressed** vegetable crops, but improving moisture later supported pasture **recovery** in the southwest, benefiting livestock. In the USVIs, soils were initially very dry, which promoted **runoff and erosion** while **limiting groundwater recharge** even as rainfall increased. These conditions led to **impacts to specialty crops and fruit tree production** despite the late-season improvement in moisture.

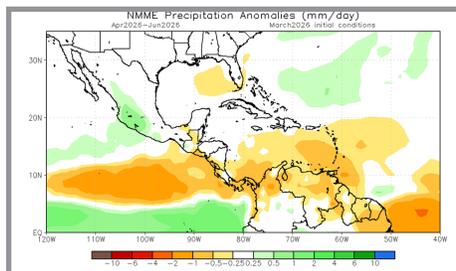
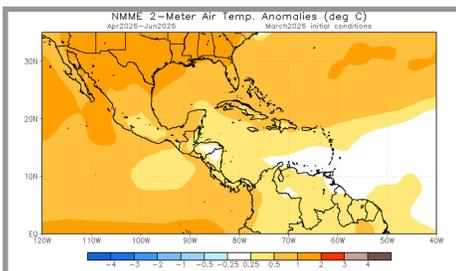
## Drought



**Abnormal dryness (D0)** was present across portions of PR and Saint Croix in December and January, while **moderate (D1) drought developed and persisted** on Saint Thomas and Saint John. **Conditions improved** in February as above-average rainfall reduced drought intensity across the region, **eliminating drought** on Saint John and abnormal dryness (D0) on Saint Croix, while moderate (D1) drought on Saint Thomas **improved** to abnormal dryness (D0).

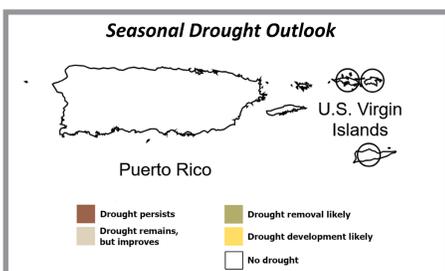
# Caribbean Climate Outlook for Spring 2026

## Temperature and Precipitation



According to the [North American Multi-Model Ensemble \(NMME\)](#), **above-average temperatures and below average precipitation** are expected during the April to June period.

## Drought



According to the CPC and the [Caribbean Climate Outlook Forum](#), PR and the USVIs are expected to **remain drought free** through spring and into early summer, ahead of the climatological wet season.

## Southeast Region Partners

- [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration](#)
- [National Centers for Environmental Information](#)
- [National Weather Service Eastern Region](#)
- [National Weather Service Southern Region](#)
- [Climate Prediction Center](#)
- [National Hurricane Center](#)
- [National Integrated Drought Information System](#)
- [Carolinas Integrated Sciences and Assessments](#)
- [National Sea Grant Office](#)
- [Southeast and Caribbean Regional Collaboration Team](#)
- [State Climatologists](#)
- [Southeast Regional Climate Hub](#)
- [Southeast Climate Science Center](#)
- [Community Collaborative Rain Hail and Snow Network](#)

