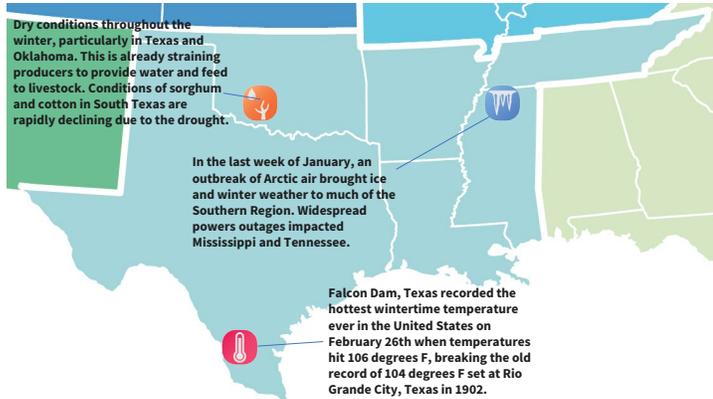


Southern Region Significant Events — Winter 2025-2026



Overview

Winter began with above normal temperatures and below normal precipitation for the Southern Region. In the western portions of the Region, many stations ran eight to ten degrees above normal for the month.

January brought more moderate temperatures on average and dry conditions continued across the Region. A major outbreak of winter weather and Arctic air impacted the Southern Region during the last week of January, resulting in widespread power outages.

The otherwise warm and dry conditions continued into February for the Southern Region, with a majority of stations in the Region reporting less than 50 percent of normal precipitation for the month. Falcon Dam, Texas set the record for hottest daily winter temperature in the United States.

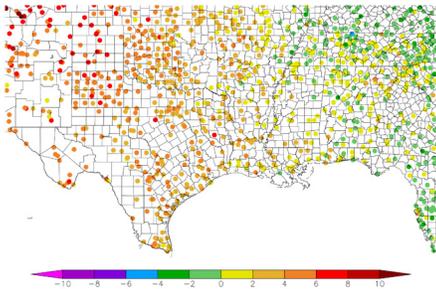
Well above normal temperatures and very dry conditions impacted much of the Southern Region during winter 2025-2026. This has resulted in harsh drought conditions in many areas. Exceptional Drought is again present on the landscape.

Regional Climate Overview — Winter 2025-2026

Temperature and Precipitation

Departure from Normal Temperature °F

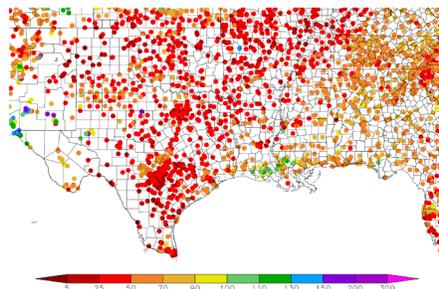
12/1/2025 – 2/28/2026



Winter 2025-2026 temperatures were well above normal across much of the Southern Region, with stations in the western portions of the Region being four to eight degrees F above normal. Anomalies decrease towards the east where temperatures were more moderate. Tennessee was the cool spot for the Region with temperatures near normal.

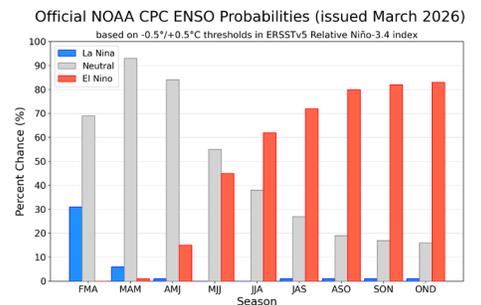
Percent of Normal Precipitation (%)

12/1/2025 – 2/28/2026



Precipitation was well below normal for almost the entire Southern Region during winter 2025-2026. Much of Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Tennessee saw 50 percent of normal precipitation or less during winter. Tennessee fared slightly better with most stations over 50 percent of normal. Isolated areas of West Texas and coastal Louisiana were above normal with 110 to 150 percent of normal.

Shift from La Niña to El Niño



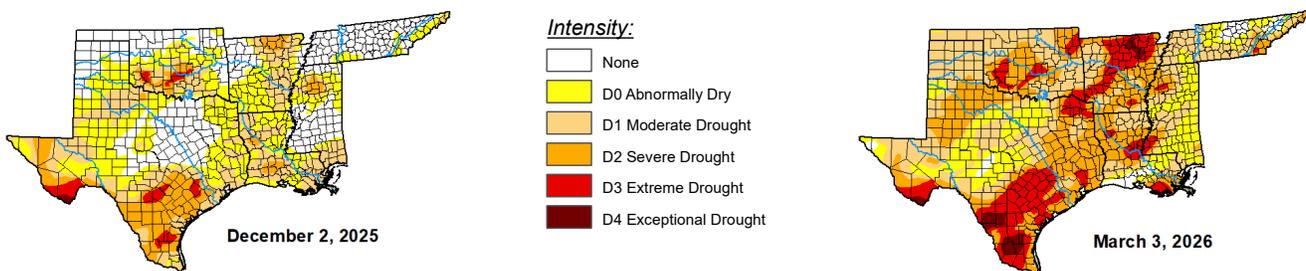
Forecasts for the upcoming months indicate a shift from La Niña conditions to neutral conditions with El Niño conditions emerging by late summer. El Niño conditions in the summer tend to reduce tropical activity in the Gulf of America. While good for avoiding damage from tropical cyclones, drought conditions will not likely be improved by El Niño during the summer months.

Southern Regional Impacts

Drought, Agriculture, and Water Supply

Dry and hot conditions were the prevalent story of winter 2025-2026 in the Southern Region, punctuated by a few outbreaks of Arctic air in the South. Much of the Region received less than 50 percent of normal precipitation since December 2nd. Major degradations in drought conditions across the Region emerged as a result. As of March 3, according to the United States Drought Monitor, 18 percent of the Southern Region was free of drought, down from 62 percent three months earlier. Drought was extreme (D3) or exceptional (D4) in South Texas, northern Arkansas southwest to the ArkLaTex Region, Central and Eastern Oklahoma, and an isolated area in southeastern Tennessee. Only some small parts of Central and West Texas, southwestern Louisiana and northern Tennessee were not abnormally dry as of March 3.

Impacts from worsening drought conditions began to emerge across the Region with low streamflow in rivers, potential crop failures in South Texas, reports of poor pasture and range conditions, and increasing reports of needing to haul feed and water to livestock. Corpus Christi, Texas, is facing a water shortage, with conditions possibly becoming critical as soon as May of this year. Along with dry conditions, heat has also been notable. On February 26th, the observing station near the dam at Falcon Reservoir, along the Texas-Mexico border, hit a high temperature of 106 F, which is the hottest winter temperature on record in the United States. This breaks the old record of 104 degrees F set at Rio Grande City, Texas in 1902.

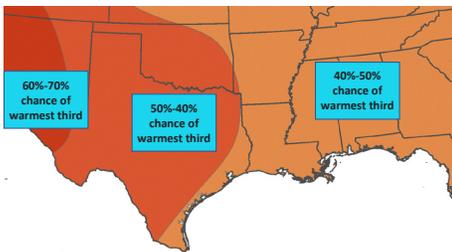


US Drought Monitor depiction of the Southern Region. The US Drought Monitor is produced by the National Drought Mitigation Center, the USDA, and NOAA.

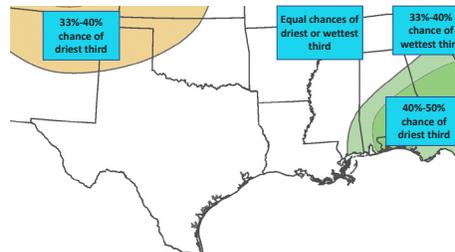
Seasonal Outlook

Temperature

Outlook for April-June 2026



Precipitation



The seasonal temperature outlooks from NOAA’s Climate Prediction Center calls for enhanced probabilities of above normal temperatures for the entirety of the Southern Region for April through June. The greatest probabilities of above normal temperatures are in Far West Texas where there is a 60 to 70 percent chance of well above normal temperatures. Looking east across the Region the probabilities fall to 33 to 40 percent probability of well above normal temperatures in the eastern portions of the Region over the coming season.

The precipitation outlooks for April through June 2026 calls for enhanced probabilities (33 to 40 percent) of above normal precipitation for the extreme eastern portions of the Region. Most of the Region has equal chances for above or below normal precipitation. The northwestern margin of the Region, in the Texas and Oklahoma Panhandles has a 33 to 40 percent probability of below normal precipitation.

ENSO Outlook

Currently, conditions in the Tropical Pacific indicate we are in a weak La Niña and this event is currently weakening. Neutral conditions are expected to emerge in the coming weeks. Longer range forecasts predict the emergence of an El Niño event by late-summer 2026.

Southern Partners

NOAA/NWS Climate Prediction Center
(cpc.ncep.noaa.gov)

NOAA National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science (coastalscience.noaa.gov)

NOAA Gulf of America Collaboration Team
(noaa.gov/regional-collaboration-network/regions-gulf-of-america)

NOAA/NESDIS National Centers for Environmental Information (ncei.noaa.gov)

NOAA/NWS Southern Region (weather.gov/srh)

Southern Regional Climate Center
(srcc.tamu.edu)

