



### Gulf of Maine Significant Events – March–May 2026

**Spring** temperatures were **near or above normal** for much of the Gulf of Maine region. Most areas saw **near- or above-normal precipitation**, with Caribou, ME, having its **third-wettest spring**. This allowed **drought conditions to improve**. However, **drought expanded** in Massachusetts, which saw **below-normal precipitation** during the season. **Spring snowfall was below normal** region-wide. River and ice jam **flooding was limited** in Maine this spring despite the state's waterways experiencing their "**most widespread and thick ice conditions since 2015**". Flooding was also limited along the Saint John River in New Brunswick this spring. In many ways, spring averaged out to be near normal with few extreme events.

#### March

A warm spell from March 9 to 10 brought Augusta and Bangor, ME, their **earliest 21°C (70°F) temperature** in a calendar year and Fredericton and St. Stephen, N.B., their **earliest 20°C (68°F) temperature**. For multiple sites in the Maritimes, it was their earliest-to-date warmest temperature on record. Temperatures for the full month averaged out to be near or above normal for almost the entire region. This allowed much of the month's precipitation to fall as a mix of rain, with **monthly snowfall totals below or near normal** for most areas. A storm on March 11 gave Caribou, ME, its sixth-wettest March day with 41.4 mm (1.63 in.) of precipitation.

#### April

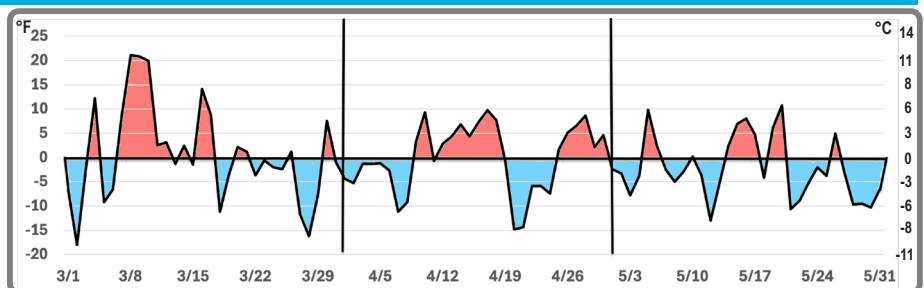
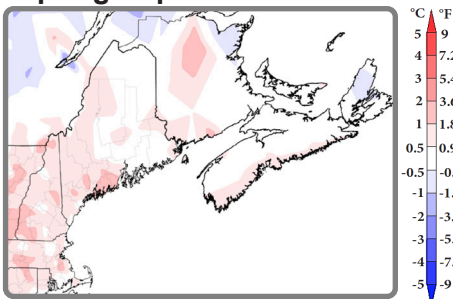
While April wrapped up with **near- or above-normal temperatures** for most areas, there was an **unseasonably cold period** from April 20 to 22. The coldest temperatures dropped to around -12°C (10°F). Caribou, ME, had a low of -10°C (14°F) on April 21, a threshold met **only three other times** so late into spring at the site. Monthly precipitation amounts varied. Places like Massachusetts, southern parts of New Hampshire and Maine, and Nova Scotia were drier than normal, while locations such as northern New Hampshire, western and northern Maine, and New Brunswick were wetter than normal. In fact, it was New Brunswick's first wetter-than-normal month since May 2025. **April snowfall was below normal** for a majority of the region.

#### May

While May temperatures averaged out to be near normal in most areas, there were a few notable temperature swings. Highs reached up to 37°C (98°F) during an **unusually hot period** from May 19 to 20. Heat warnings were issued in May in Nova Scotia for the **first time** since the current warning criteria was implemented in 2018. Temperatures at [Boston, MA](#); Concord, NH; [Portland, ME](#); and [Kejimikujik Park, N.S.](#), ranked among the **three hottest for May**. It was/tied the **earliest in the calendar year** that Boston and Concord reached 36°C (96°F). Also, Portland had its eighth-warmest low temperature for May. Temperatures dropped significantly from May 22 to 23, with **subfreezing lows** in some locations down to -5°C (23°F) and **concerns about frost**. Temperatures **cold enough to damage blueberry crops** occurred on May 31 in a few areas in Maine. May was quite wet for parts of New Hampshire, Maine, Nova Scotia, and P.E.I., ranking among the **10-wettest Mays** for Caribou, ME; Sydney, N.S.; and Charlottetown, P.E.I. There were **two localized, but notable snow events** during the month.

### Regional Climate Overview – March–May 2026

#### Temperature Spring Departure from Normal



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

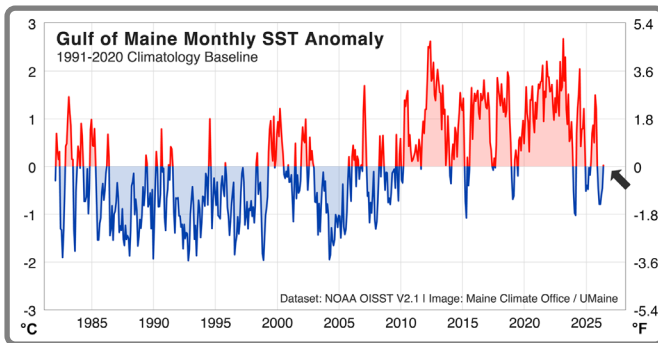
**Spring** temperatures (averaged over March, April, and May) ranged from 1°C (2°F) **below normal\*** to 2°C (4°F) **above normal**. **March** temperatures ranged from **near normal** to 3°C (5°F) **above normal** for most areas, with northern New Brunswick being cooler. **April** temperatures generally ranged from **near normal** to 2°C (4°F) **above normal**. **May** temperatures ranged from 2°C (4°F) **below normal** in parts of Maine and New Hampshire to 2°C (4°F) **above normal** in parts of Massachusetts, Nova Scotia, and P.E.I.

\*Normals based on 1991–2020 data.

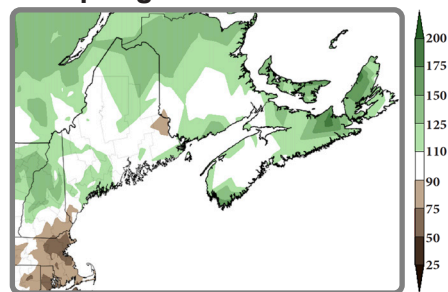
# Regional Climate Overview – March–May 2026

## Sea Surface Temperature

Spring monthly mean sea surface temperature (SST) averaged across the Gulf of Maine was **below the 1991–2020 climatological mean** during March and April and **near the mean** in May. The chart shows all monthly SST anomalies from January 1982 to May 2026, estimated from NOAA OISST version 2.1. The arrow on the right of the chart points to the March–May values.

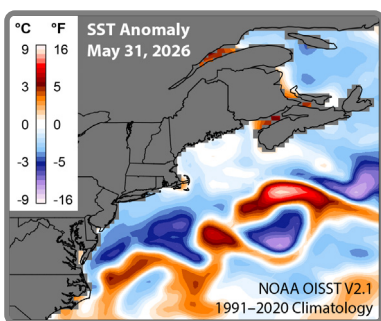


## Precipitation



**Spring precipitation** (accumulated from March to May) ranged from 50% of normal\* to 200% of normal, ranking as the **third-wettest spring** for Caribou, ME. **March** precipitation generally ranged from 50% of normal to 150% of normal. **April** precipitation ranged from 25% of normal to 175% of normal. It was the 10th-driest April for Boston, MA, but the ninth wettest for Caribou. **May** precipitation ranged from near normal to over 200% of normal for most areas, ranking among the 10-wettest Mays for Sydney, N.S.; Charlottetown, P.E.I.; and Caribou. However, parts of Massachusetts were drier.

\*Precipitation normals based on 1991–2020 data.



The map at left shows preliminary data for May 31. **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](#).

# Regional Impacts – March–May 2026



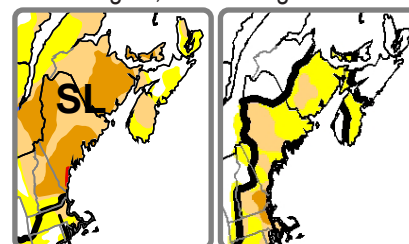
Ice along the Kennebec River in Augusta, ME on March 13. Credit: [USGS](#)

## Spring Conditions

Storms were somewhat limited during March and April. Notably, though, with near- or above-normal temperatures during **March**, most **precipitation fell as a mix or rain**. For instance, a storm from March 16–17 brought mild temperatures, heavy rain, and strong winds to the region. Rainfall totals were highest in coastal Maine, southern New Brunswick, and parts of Nova Scotia with up to 79 mm (3 in.) falling. Wind gusts in the 48–109 km/h (30–68 mph) range, highest along the coasts of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, [knocked down trees](#) and [caused power outages](#). The conditions caused the **snowpack to melt rapidly** and contributed to [localized ice jam flooding](#). A storm from March 31 to April 1 brought snow, ice pellets and freezing rain to northern Maine and much of the Maritimes, leading to poor road conditions, [school closures](#), and power outages. However, **May featured several storms** that brought **notable rainfall amounts** to parts of New Hampshire, Maine, Nova Scotia,

and P.E.I. For example, a storm from April 30 to May 1 brought up to 50 mm (2 in.) of rain to much of the region, with the highest totals of up to 80 mm (3 in.) in parts of New Brunswick and western Nova Scotia. Portland, ME, had three days with over 25 mm (1 in.) of precipitation in May, tying as its **second greatest for the month**.

Wet weather during spring **improved drought conditions** in much of the region. **Extreme drought was removed** from New Brunswick and Maine. **Severe drought was erased** from the Maritimes and shrank in coverage in Maine and parts of New Hampshire. **Moderate drought eased** in Nova Scotia and P.E.I. and contracted in New Brunswick, Maine, and parts of New Hampshire. Even so, notable long-term [precipitation and/or groundwater deficits](#) persisted in parts of the Maritimes and New England including southern New Hampshire and southwestern Maine. In contrast, eastern Massachusetts was drier than normal during spring, with **severe drought introduced** and **moderate drought expanding**. Drought-related impacts during spring included [record to near record low streamflow](#) in eastern Massachusetts, **mandatory water restrictions** in some communities in [Massachusetts](#) and [New Hampshire](#), and wildfires that [ignited easily and burned deeper](#) in southern New Hampshire.



**Intensity:**

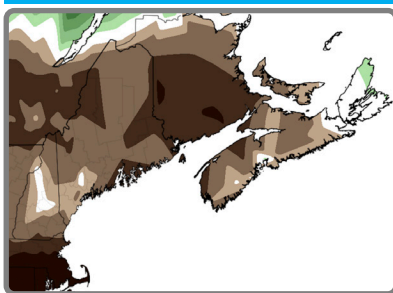
- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Drought - Moderate
- D2 Drought - Severe
- D3 Drought - Extreme
- D4 Drought - Exceptional

**Drought Impact Types:**

- S = Short-Term, typically <6 months (e.g. agriculture, grasslands)
- L = Long-Term, typically >6 months (e.g. hydrology, ecology)

North American Drought Monitor as of March 31 (above left) and May 31 (above right).

## Regional Impacts – March–May 2026



Spring snowfall ranged from less than 25% of normal\* to 125% of normal.

\*Normals based on 1991–2020 data

As is typical in **May**, there was **little to no snow** in most areas. However, there were two notable exceptions. From May 3 to 4, an **unseasonable heavy, wet snow** fell in southeastern New Brunswick and western/northern Nova Scotia. Yarmouth, N.S., had 10 cm (4 in.) on May 3, its **snowiest May day** and second-snowiest May. Up to 10 cm (4 in.) of snow also fell in the higher terrain of northern Nova Scotia, where snowplows were needed. From May 29 to 30, a **rare late-May snowfall** occurred in [eastern Nova Scotia](#), with Sydney seeing 7.6 cm (3 in.). Snow also fell in New Hampshire's White Mountains. [Mount Washington](#) saw 15 cm (5.9 in.) of snow/sleet on May 30, its **largest amount** so late into the calendar year. **Spring snowfall** (accumulated from March to May) was **below normal** for most of the region.

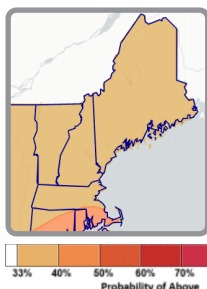
### Spring Snowfall

**March snowfall** was **below or near normal** for most of the region, with areas such as eastern Massachusetts and western New Brunswick seeing less than 25% of normal. However, a few spots like central New Hampshire and central Nova Scotia saw locally higher amounts. **Snow on the ground** at the end of March was **below normal** for most areas.

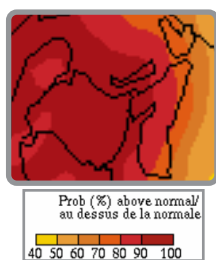
**April snowfall** was **below normal** for most locations, with an area from eastern Massachusetts into New Hampshire and coastal Maine to southern New Brunswick and parts of Nova Scotia seeing less than 25% of normal. However, a portion of northern Maine and northern New Brunswick were snowier than normal. In fact, April was the only month during the snow season (October to May) that northern New Brunswick saw above-normal snowfall. At the end of April, only small areas of northern New Brunswick and Cape Breton, N.S., had **snow on the ground**.

## Regional Outlook – Summer 2026

### Temperature and Precipitation



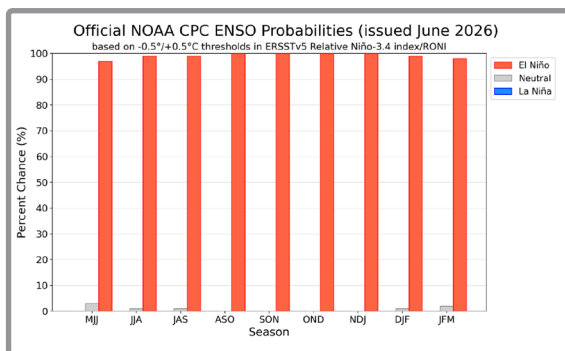
CPC temperature map (left) produced May 21. ECCC temperature map (right) produced May 31.



For **June–August**, [NOAA's Climate Prediction Center \(CPC\)](#) and [Environment and Climate Change Canada \(ECCC\)](#) favor **above-normal temperatures** for the entire Gulf of Maine region.

CPC slightly favors **above-normal precipitation** for New England. Meanwhile, ECCC favors **below-normal precipitation** for P.E.I., most of Nova Scotia, and eastern New Brunswick.

The outlooks for New England are based on several factors, primarily long-term trends and weather models.



### ENSO

As of early June, **El Niño conditions** had developed in the equatorial Pacific Ocean. According to NOAA's [Climate Prediction Center](#), **El Niño conditions** are expected to be **present and strengthen** through winter 2026–27, with a **"63% chance of a very strong El Niño"** during November–January that would **rank among the largest El Niño events** in the historical record going back to 1950".

### Atlantic Hurricane Season

	2026 Atlantic Season Outlook	1991-2020 Average Season
Number of Named Storms	8–14	14
Number of Hurricanes	3–6	7
Number of Major Hurricanes	1–3	3

[NOAA is expecting](#) a **below-normal Atlantic hurricane season** with 8–14 named storms, of which 3–6 are expected to become hurricanes, including 1–3 major hurricanes. Competing factors could affect the season. El Niño, which typically suppresses Atlantic hurricane activity, is forecast to develop and intensify this season. However, above-normal sea surface temperatures and weaker-than-average trade winds are favorable for hurricane development. The Atlantic hurricane season runs from June 1 through November 30, peaking from mid-August to late October. The Northeast Regional Climate Center's [webinar in August 2026](#) will focus on the updated hurricane outlook.

## Gulf of Maine Partners

[Northeast Regional Climate Center](#)  
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[Environment and Climate Change Canada](#)  
[Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment, Climate Network](#)  
[Massachusetts Climate Maps and Data Center](#)  
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