

National Significant Events – March–May 2026

Selected U.S. Significant Climate Anomalies and Events for May and Spring

On May 19, a heat wave brought record warmth to the Northeast, with Philadelphia, PA, reaching 98°F to set a May record, and Newark, NJ, (99°F) and Manchester, NH, (97°F) tying May records.

March

Pittsburgh, PA, recorded its wettest Mar on record with 6.40 in. of precipitation, surpassing a record that had stood since 1967 and caused widespread flooding.

April

This April was record warm for 45 of West Virginia's 55 counties. The remaining 10 had their second-warmest April.

The contiguous U.S. had its second-warmest spring with an average temperature at 4.9°F above the 20th-century average. Average temperatures for March, April, and May were 9.35°F above average (warmest), 3.8°F above average (third warmest), and 1.5°F above average, respectively. Globally, it was the second-warmest March, the fourth-warmest April, the second-warmest May, and the third-warmest spring. The contiguous U.S. spring precipitation was 0.50 inches below average. During March, April, and May, precipitation was 0.68 inches below average (eighth driest), 0.17 inches above average, and 0.05 inches below average, respectively.

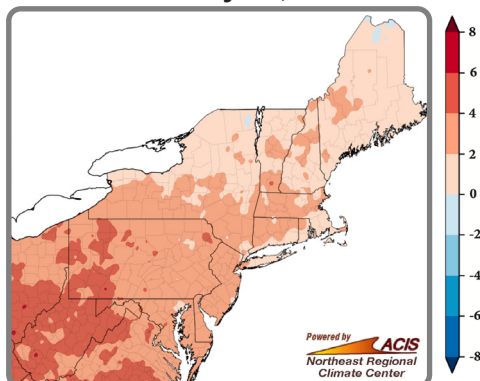
Highlights for the Northeast

- March and April were unusually warm. Pittsburgh, PA, tied its **warmest March temperature** of 84°F. Central Park had its **earliest 80°F day** on March 10. It was the **warmest April** on record for West Virginia and sites like Pittsburgh, PA, and Beckley, Charleston, Elkins, and Huntington, WV. Hartford, CT, tied its **warmest low temperature for April** of 63°F.
- The warm weather in March and April led to **early bud break** in the Mid-Atlantic and New York, causing some crops to sustain **significant damage during a freeze event** in late April.
- May 18–20 featured record- to near-record heat. Newark, NJ, and Philadelphia, PA, had their **hottest May temperatures** of 99°F and 98°F, respectively. For many sites including Washington, D.C., and Boston, MA, it was the **earliest occurrence** of such hot temperatures. Binghamton, NY, had its **warmest low temperature for May** of 70°F. Spring was **record warm** for Huntington and Elkins, WV. Hartford, CT, saw five days this spring with a high of at least 90°F, **tying its record** for the season.
- March was excessively wet for some interior locations. Pittsburgh, PA, had a **record wet March** with 6.40 inches of precipitation. Syracuse, NY, had its **wettest March day** with 1.96 inches of precipitation.
- Below-normal precipitation and above-normal temperatures in April led to **rapid intensification of drought conditions** in an area from West Virginia to New Jersey.
- **Spring snowfall was below normal** regionwide. It was the seventh or eighth consecutive spring with below-normal snowfall for sites along the Interstate 95 corridor.

Regional Climate Overview – March–May 2026

Temperature

Departure from Normal (°F)
March 1–May 31, 2026

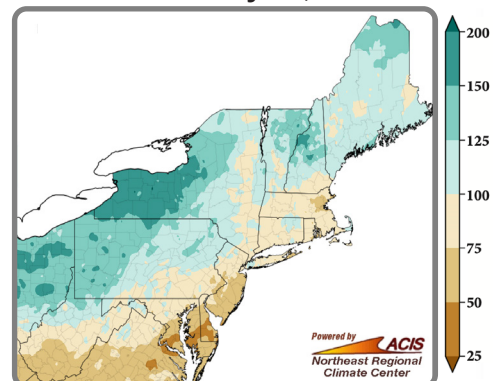


Climate normals based on 1991–2020 data; rankings based on 1895–2026.

The Northeast had its **ninth-warmest spring** at 2.3°F above normal, ranking among the 20 warmest for 11 of the 12 states. It was the region's **16th-warmest March** at 4.4°F above normal, ranking among the 20 warmest for nine states. It was the region's **fourth-warmest April** at 3.8°F above normal. April was **record warm** for West Virginia and among the 20 warmest for another 10 states. **May's** average temperature was 1.4°F below normal, in the **middle third** of all years.

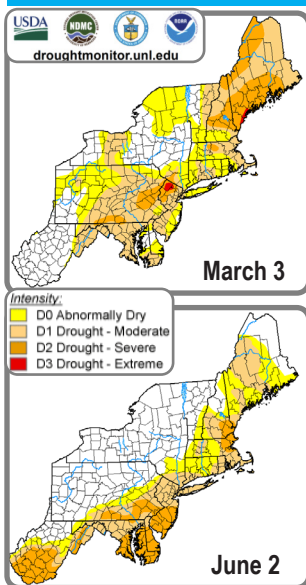
Precipitation

Percent of Normal (%)
March 1–May 31, 2026



The Northeast saw 104% of normal spring precipitation, in the **wettest third** of all years. It was among the 20 driest for three states but New York's 13th wettest. **March** precipitation was 108% of normal, in the **middle third** of all years. It was Delaware's 16th-driest March but among the 20 wettest for two states. **April** precipitation was 100% of normal, in the **middle third** of all years. It was among the 20 driest for four states but New York's 15th wettest. **May** precipitation was 104% of normal, in the **middle third** of all years. It was New Hampshire's 17th-wettest May.

Regional Climate Overview – March–May 2026



Drought in the Northeast

As of March 3, the [U.S. Drought Monitor](#) showed 47% of the Northeast in drought and 26% as abnormally dry. Beneficial precipitation in March **improved conditions** in areas like southern New England, New York, Pennsylvania, and northern New Jersey. The [March 31](#) U.S. Drought Monitor showed 33% of the Northeast in drought and 25% as abnormally dry. Wet weather in April **chipped away at drought** in far northern New England; however, **conditions intensified** in drier areas, especially from West Virginia to New Jersey. West Virginia's drought coverage went from 10% to 88% in two weeks. In one week, New Jersey's coverage went from 22% to 78% and Delaware's coverage went from 20% to 100%. The [April 28](#) U.S. Drought Monitor showed 42% of the Northeast in drought and 19% as abnormally dry. A dry start to May in much of the Mid-Atlantic allowed **extreme drought to develop** in West Virginia and severe drought to expand. West Virginia and Maryland had their **highest coverage** of severe drought since the U.S. Drought Monitor began in 2000. A wet second half of May in West Virginia and much of Maryland **erased extreme drought** and reduced severe drought coverage. An area from the Delmarva Peninsula to Massachusetts saw below-normal precipitation and **drought expansion**. Conditions improved in northern New England, with Vermont becoming **free of drought**. The June 2 U.S. Drought Monitor showed 34% of the Northeast in drought and 16% as abnormally dry. For current conditions, see the [Northeast DEWS Dashboard](#).

Regional Impacts and Updates – March–May 2026

Drought Impacts

There were multiple drought-related impacts during spring.

- **Water Resources:** Near record or **record low streamflow** was observed in multiple locations, particularly along a path from West Virginia to New Jersey during April and May. For instance, parts of the Potomac River, including gauges upstream from Washington, D.C., reached [daily record low levels](#) multiple times. In West Virginia, [water sources for irrigation and livestock](#) such as small creeks, ponds, and springs **declined significantly or dried up**, causing farmers to haul and/or purchase water. Groundwater levels were **record low** in several areas. Some water suppliers in places like [south-central Pennsylvania](#) and [eastern Massachusetts](#) had **mandatory water restrictions**.
- **Agriculture:** [Dry soil conditions](#) were present in several parts of the Northeast. [Reports](#) from West Virginia noted planting delays, **poor pasture conditions**, lack of germination, **reduced hay yields**, and slow growth of row crops. Some livestock producers had to purchase and use supplemental feed, adjust grazing patterns, and/or relocate or sell animals. In [southern and eastern Maryland](#), dry weather caused some growers to **stop planting**, grain crops showed signs of drought stress, and there was [not enough rain](#) to allow fertilizer to dissolve into the ground. Growers in several Mid-Atlantic states [relied on irrigation](#), which was implemented [earlier than usual](#) in some cases.
- **Wildfires:** **Burn bans** were temporarily implemented in [a few counties in Maryland](#) and several municipalities in [central](#) and [eastern](#) Pennsylvania. Wildfires [ignited easily and burned deeper](#) in southern New Hampshire.
- **Recreation:** The [opening of a swimming beach](#) in southwestern West Virginia was **postponed due to low water levels**.



Cracked ground (left) and poor pasture conditions (below) in eastern West Virginia in mid-May.

April Freeze Event

Above-normal temperatures during March and April led to **early bud break** in the Mid-Atlantic and parts of New York, leaving trees, grapevines, and other crops [vulnerable to frost/freeze damage](#). **Lows dropped below freezing** across much of the region during a [cold snap from April 20 to 22](#), with the coldest temperatures in the teens and 20s. The cold temperatures caused **significant damage to crops** including [grapes](#), [apples](#), [cherries](#), [blueberries](#), [plums](#), and [peaches](#). Additional reports noted damage to [Christmas trees](#), [hardwood trees](#), [small grains](#) such as barley, and other vegetation. Early estimates indicated **crop losses as high as 70% to 100%** [depending on variety](#) and location, with portions of [Maryland](#), [Pennsylvania](#), and [New Jersey](#) hit particularly hard. Economic losses tied to the freeze event were estimated to be [at least \\$300 million](#) in New Jersey, [\\$150 to \\$200 million](#) in Pennsylvania, and [over \\$30 million](#) in New York.



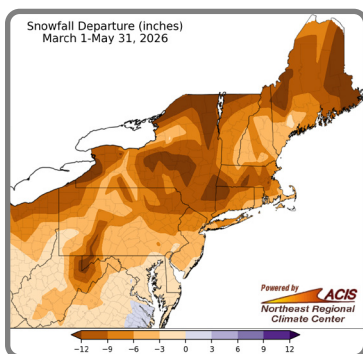
Grapevines in New York damaged by the April freeze event. Credit: [New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets](#)

Regional Impacts and Updates – March–May 2026

Spring Severe Weather

There were only a few severe weather events during spring.

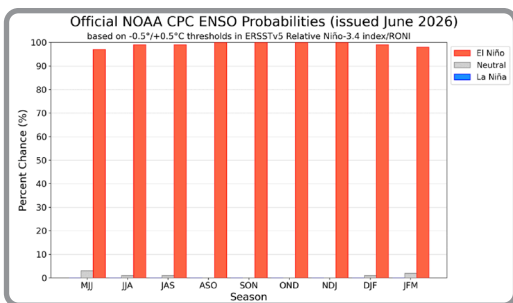
- In March, **four tornadoes** touched down in Maryland, well above the state's [March average of zero](#).
- Cattaraugus County, NY, saw one tornado in March and two in April, tying its **greatest annual total** of three tornadoes from 2010.
- On May 20, a strong cold front moved across the Northeast, ending a period of unusually hot temperatures and producing **severe thunderstorms**. [Wind damage reports](#) such as downed trees and power poles were concentrated in an area from central Maryland through southeastern Pennsylvania into central New Jersey. Flash flooding [blocked roads and suspended rail service](#) in the New York City metro area, where Kennedy Airport saw **one of its greatest hourly rainfall totals for May** with 0.98 inches.



Spring Snowfall

March snowfall was **below or near normal** for most of the Northeast, with the largest deficits exceeding 8 inches found throughout the region. **April snowfall** was also **below or near normal** for almost the entire Northeast, with the largest deficits of over 4 inches in places like eastern West Virginia, western and northern New York, northern New Hampshire, and parts of Maine. As is typical in **May**, there was **little to no snow** for most areas. **Spring snowfall** was **below normal** regionwide, with the largest deficits exceeding 12 inches. It was the **seventh or eighth consecutive spring** with below-normal snowfall for sites along the Interstate 95 corridor. Snowfall during the full **snow season** (October–May) ranged from over 24 inches below normal in places like Maine to over 36 inches above normal in places like western New York.

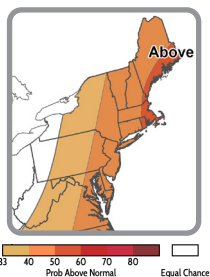
Regional Outlook – Summer 2026



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".

Temperature and Precipitation



Normal July–September average temperatures range from the low 60s in parts of New England and New York to the mid 70s in some coastal areas. [NOAA's Climate Prediction Center](#) favors **above-normal temperatures** for **July–September** for most of the Northeast (map left). Normal July–September precipitation ranges from less than 10 inches in western New York to more than 15 inches in eastern New York and parts of Pennsylvania and West Virginia. **Above-normal precipitation** is favored for **July–September** in areas closer to the coast from New Jersey to Maine (map right). **Equal chances** of below-, near-, or above-normal precipitation were forecast elsewhere. The outlooks are based on several factors, primarily long-term trends and weather models.



	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

Atlantic Hurricane Season

[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.

Northeast Partners

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