

National Drought Summary for February 25, 2025

Summary

With limited precipitation during the week, most of the country was dry after a fairly active week prior. The week was highlighted by the wild temperature swings from the first part of the period to the end. The current period started off with temperatures that were well below normal over much of the country and ended with temperatures that were well above normal. Valentine, Nebraska, had an observed low temperature of -33F on Feb. 20, and this rebounded to 69F on Feb. 25, a swing of 102 degrees over that five-day span. Precipitation was greatest over the coastal areas of the Pacific Northwest as well as along the Gulf Coast and Florida. In southern Louisiana, 4-6 inches of rain was common for the region. Even with cold temperatures over much of the eastern half of the country, the West was normal to slightly above normal for the week.

Northeast

Temperatures were below normal for almost the entire region outside of northern Maine. Departures ranged from 12-15 degrees below normal in West Virginia to 3-6 degrees below normal in New England. The week was dry, with only western New York as the one area near normal through some lake effect snow. As the impact of the recent wetter pattern continues to be analyzed, abnormally dry conditions were improved over southwest Pennsylvania and in eastern Virginia, where both abnormally dry and moderate drought conditions improved this week. With ongoing hydrological drought persisting in northern New Jersey, severe drought expanded slightly this week.

Southeast

Much of the region was dry this week, with some needed precipitation along the eastern areas of North Carolina as well as widespread precipitation over southern areas of Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia and much of Florida. Cooler-than-normal weather dominated the region, with departures of 10-15 degrees below normal in Alabama to 5 degrees below normal in southern Florida. Based on the impact of the recent precipitation in Alabama, improvements were made over much of the state. In the north and southeast, abnormally dry conditions improved while moderate drought improved in the southeast. Some additional abnormal dryness expansion was made over west central areas of Alabama to better reflect the indicators, as this area has not been as wet as others. Abnormally dry conditions were removed from the panhandle of Florida while severe and moderate drought were improved in central Florida. Moderate drought expanded slightly in south Florida. In Georgia, abnormally dry conditions were improved and adjusted in the northern and western parts of the state. In the south, moderate

drought was adjusted in southeast Georgia to better reflect the data over the last several months.

South

It was a colder-than-normal week over the region with temperatures in the 10-20 degrees below normal range over the entire area. The greatest rain occurred across the coastal areas of east Texas, Louisiana and portions of northeast Oklahoma. The region has been dry over much of the winter after a few very wet weeks in the autumn. The short-term data are picking up the dryness that also was prevalent prior to the wet November. As the dryness persists, moderate drought was expanded into more of southwest Oklahoma and into northern and central Texas. Abnormally dry conditions were expanded over much of southern Oklahoma and north Texas. Due to ongoing hydrological drought issues in south Texas, drought expanded this week with more moderate, severe and extreme drought conditions. Abnormally dry conditions were improved over east Texas but were not removed completely due to some lingering dryness being observed at longer timescales. The recent rains allowed for the removal of the abnormally dry conditions over southern Louisiana and some improvements in southern Mississippi, where both moderate drought and abnormally dry conditions were improved.

Midwest

Temperatures were below normal over most of the region outside the northern reaches of Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan. Most areas were 5-15 degrees below normal for the week. It was a mostly dry week over the region with some precipitation in areas of Missouri and into southern Illinois and Kentucky. Nearing the end of February, the winter has been dry over much of the region, which has allowed for expansion of moderate drought over Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, Missouri, Iowa, Minnesota and Michigan. Abnormally dry conditions were expanded in Missouri, Minnesota, Illinois and Indiana. Michigan has some longer-term dry signals that are quite prominent, which allowed for the expansion of severe drought over more of the Lower Peninsula.

High Plains

Light precipitation was measured from eastern Wyoming into Kansas and Nebraska as well as in portions of western North Dakota and the plains of eastern Montana. Most other areas were dry for the week. Colder-than-normal temperatures dominated the region with areas of southeast Kansas 20-25 degrees below normal for the week. With

the dry conditions, moderate drought levels were expanded over southern Kansas along with additional abnormally dry conditions being shown.

West

A very divided region with wetter-than-normal conditions in the north and zero precipitation in the south. The most abundant precipitation was along the coastal areas of Washington and Oregon and into Idaho and western Montana. Unlike the rest of the country, much of the West had near- to slightly-above-normal temperatures this week. The wetter pattern in Oregon allowed for abnormally dry conditions to improve in the west and both moderate drought and abnormally dry conditions improved in the northeast. No changes in Washington occurred this week as the most recent rains helped to stabilize conditions that had been deteriorating. In Idaho, abnormally dry conditions were improved over much of western and southern portions of the state. Abnormally dry conditions were improved over northern portions of Nevada. In Wyoming, abnormally dry conditions improved over the southwest part of the state while moderate, severe and extreme drought conditions improved over the northern and western parts of the state. Montana had improvements to moderate, severe and extreme drought over eastern portions of the state in response to the improving indicators. In Colorado, some abnormally dry conditions improved in the northcentral areas while they were expanded in the south. Moderate and severe drought expanded in the south along with a new pocket of extreme drought due to the long-term drought indicators and the poor snow season to date. In New Mexico, moderate drought expanded over the west and abnormally dry conditions expanded in the east.

Caribbean

No changes were made in Puerto Rico this week.

Conditions were dry over the U.S. Virgin Islands this week, but islands remained free of drought or abnormal dryness. On St. John, Rafe Boulon/Windswept Beach reported 0.15 inches of rain this week. The depth to water level at Susannaberg DPW 3 well (St. John, USVI) on February 25 was 8.06 ft below land surface. The analysis showed a steady decrease in water level since November 19, when the water level was at 0.32 ft. The current water level is around 0.4 ft higher over the past year, where it was 8.43 ft below land surface on February 26, 2024. This weeks SPI values, at timescales (6-, 9- & 12-month), showed wetter conditions persist on the St. John, while the 1- and 3-month SPI value indicated slightly drier conditions. A total of 0.16 inches of rain were reported on St. Croix (Henry Rohlsen AP) this week. The depth to water level at Adventure 28 Well (St. Croix, USVI) on February 25 was 16.60 ft below land surface. The analysis showed a significant increase in water level (over 15 ft) over the past year, where it was 31.96 ft below land surface on February 26, 2024. This weeks 3-month

SPI values indicated some dryness, but all other timescales confirmed wet conditions on the island. On St. Thomas, Cyril E. King Airport reported a rainfall total of 0.06 inches this week. The depth to water level at Grade School 3 well (St. Thomas, USVI) on February 25 was 6.15 ft below land surface. This is down by more than 6 ft from the 0.04 value on November 17, 2024, but about 2.5 ft above the water level value from last year (8.68 ft on February 26, 2024). This weeks SPI values showed conditions were wet at the 3-, 6-, and 9-month timescales, while the 1-month SPI value indicated some short-term dryness affected the island.

Pacific

In Alaska, abnormally dry conditions were added in the southeast part of the state due to the lack of snow.

In Hawaii, moderate drought expanded on Kauai while on Oahu, abnormally dry conditions expanded due to streamflow levels dropping rapidly after the last rain events. On Maui, abnormally dry conditions expanded over eastern areas while in west Maui, moderate drought expanded. On the Big Island, moderate drought conditions expanded due to dryness since the end of January over the northwest part of the island.

Conditions were wet over American Samoa this week. Pago Pago reported 11.67 inches of rainfall this week. This week brought significant daily rainfall totals, setting new daily rainfall records on February 19, with 4.79 inches of rain, and February 21, with a rainfall total of 3.29 inches. Toa Ridge and Siufaga Ridge reported 4.48 and 5.46 inches of rain this week, respectively. These islands need a minimum of two inches of rain per week to meet water needs.

Palau remained free of drought or abnormal dryness this week, with a reported rainfall total of 0.86 inches at the Koror COOP site.

Dry conditions persisted over the Mariana Islands this week. Short-term severe drought continued on Saipan, with a reported a weekly rainfall total of 0.26 inches. Guam and Rota reported weekly rainfall totals of 0.17 inches and 0.45 inches, respectively, but remained in short-term moderate drought this week. These islands need a minimum of one inch of rain per week to meet water needs.

Conditions were mixed across the Federated States of Micronesia this week. Nukuoro and Kapingamarangi reported weekly rainfall amounts of 3.20 inches and 3.17 inches, respectively, and both locations remained free of drought and abnormal dryness this week. Several locations, including Kosrae (1.82 inches), Pohnpei (0.21 inches), Lukunoch (0.20 inches), and Chuuk (0.19), reported rainfall totals below the 2-inch minimum threshold for water needs. However, these locations remained free of drought and abnormal dryness this week due to previously wet conditions. Short-term abnormal dryness persisted on Woleai (1.64 inches), while Pingelap (0.04 inches) was degraded

to short-term moderate drought this week. Conversely, wet conditions were observed over Yap this week, reporting 3.63 inches of rain. Although this amount is well above the 2-inch minimum threshold, Yap remains in short-term moderate drought due to previous weeks and months being dry. Data for Fananu and Ulithi were insufficient to make any assessments this week.

Dry conditions continued across the Republic of the Marshall Islands this week. The rain measured at Jaluit (0.99 inches), Majuro (0.79 inches), and Ailinglapalap (0.30 inches) were below the 2-inch minimum for water needs, but remained free of the drought and abnormal dryness this week. Despite minimal precipitation reported this week, Mili has received a month-to-date precipitation total of 12.33 inches, remaining free of drought and abnormal dryness. On Wotje, short-term abnormal dryness persisted this week, while no precipitation was reported on the island. No depiction was made Utirik due to missing data.

Looking Ahead

Over the next five to seven days, it is anticipated that the best chances of precipitation will be over the West coast and into the Great Basin, the Mid-Atlantic into the Northeast, the upper Midwest and across the Ozark plateau and into portions of the southern Plains. Temperatures are anticipated to be above normal over most of the Plains and into the Southeast with coastal areas of the West below normal. The greatest departures from normal are expected over the southern Plains with departures of 10-13 degrees above normal.

The 6-10 day outlooks show the high probability of above-normal temperatures over the upper Midwest and from south Texas and along the Gulf Coast as well as Alaska. The best chances of cooler-than-normal temperatures will be over much of California and into the Four Corners region. Most of the country will have above-normal chances of above-normal precipitation, with the greatest chances over southern California and from the Ohio Valley into the Northeast. West and southern Texas has the best chances of below-normal precipitation.

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