

National Drought Summary for August 19, 2025

Summary

Between Aug. 13-19, 2025, dry and drought conditions were widespread, driven by hotter-than-average temperatures and below normal precipitation across much of the country.

Temperatures across the country were mostly 1 to 5 degrees above normal, while isolated areas of North Dakota, Minnesota and California saw below-normal temperatures. Areas in the central High Plains and Midwest, Arkansas, along the Ohio River, central Pennsylvania and New York saw temperatures of 5 to 10 degrees above normal. Precipitation was mostly near to slightly below normal for much of the country. Along the Pacific Northwest coastline, rainfall was 1 to 3 inches above normal. The Southeast also saw areas of 1 to 3 inches above normal precipitation where thunderstorms dropped heavy precipitation. A series of storms brought above normal rainfall from South Dakota to Lake Michigan, with areas of eastern South Dakota, southern Minnesota and northeastern Illinois recording 2 to 5 inches. Storms that brought decent moisture saw improvements across the northern Intermountain West, central High Plains and the western Great Lakes region. In the West, severe to exceptional drought (D2-D4) remained widespread across California, Nevada, Arizona, and New Mexico, while hot, dry weather pushed drought to expand in Oregon, Washington, and Idaho. These conditions also fueled large wildfires, particularly in California and the Southwest, where dry vegetation and gusty winds created dangerous fire behavior. The High Plains also saw abnormal dryness and drought intensify across Nebraska, Kansas, and the Dakotas as above-normal temperatures and limited rainfall added stress to crops and rangeland. A few localized showers, however, offered minor improvements. In the South, scattered storms brought limited relief to parts of Texas and south-central Tennessee. Along the Tennessee and mid-Mississippi River valleys, flash drought conditions led to widespread intensification and expansion of abnormal dryness (D0) and moderate drought (D1) particularly in southern Missouri, western Kentucky and Tennessee, northwestern Mississippi and Arkansas. Areas of the Midwest that received heavy rains saw steady or improved conditions in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Iowa, while continued dryness led to worsening drought in Illinois, Indiana and Ohio. The Southeast saw mostly stable conditions, though moderate drought and abnormally dry areas persisted in Alabama, Georgia, and the Carolinas. Meanwhile, the Northeast continued to dry up, with the expansion of abnormal dryness (D0) and moderate drought (D2) across New England.

Northeast

The Northeast grew drier almost everywhere with a continued lack of rainfall that allowed drought to spread. West Virginia saw widespread abnormal dryness (D0) expand across the state, spilling into Pennsylvania and Maryland. Pennsylvania, Maryland and New Jersey all worsened, with new drought conditions appearing around the Chesapeake Bay and northern New Jersey. New York and the New England states also dried out. Western New York saw moderate drought (D1) expand, while Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Connecticut saw expanding abnormal dryness. In Maine, temperatures were above normal, with Caribou, Maine, in the northeastern corner of the state enduring multiple 90-degree days. Moderate drought (D1) expanded westward into New Hampshire and Vermont as severe

drought (D2) was introduced along the southeast coast.

Southeast

Rainfall patterns and temperature swings drove drought changes across the Southeast this week. In Florida, scattered showers brought short-term improvement in Collier and Monroe counties, where drought eased by a category. Much of the Panhandle and Gulf Coast, however, remained abnormally dry (D0). Persistent long-term rainfall deficits, combined with continued summer heat, kept much of southern Florida locked in moderate (D1) to extreme (D3) drought. In Georgia, limited rainfall left much of the state still dry, with abnormal dryness (D0) lingering in the southwest, north-central, and northeast counties. With hot and humid weather, Alabama saw moderate drought (D1) expand in the northeast and west-central parts of the state, even though central counties saw enough rain to hold steady. In North Carolina, beneficial rain lifted abnormal dryness in the east. Virginia saw dryness expand in the north and southeast and around the Chesapeake Bay, where below-average rainfall led to expansion of abnormally dry (D0) conditions. Interestingly, this came during one of the coolest early August periods on record for the state, with several cities reporting their lowest average highs in over a century (Cardinal News).

South

The South saw widespread drought expansion over the week, despite scattered thunderstorms that brought brief, localized relief. Texas saw some improvements due to heavy rains and flooding in south-central counties earlier in the month that continued to ease drought there. Temperatures across the region stayed hot and humid, with heat index values topping 100F in Texas and Oklahoma. Fire danger also crept higher in Oklahoma and Texas, where persistent heat and dry rangelands created favorable conditions for grassfires. Abnormal dryness (D0) formed in the Panhandle and north-central Texas. There was widespread expansion of abnormal dryness (D0) and moderate drought across much of Oklahoma under hot, windy conditions. Arkansas is experiencing a flash drought with conditions deteriorating quickly, with nearly the entire state now abnormally dry (D0) or worse and pockets of severe drought (D2) developing in the northeast and central counties, along with the expansion of moderate drought (D1). Louisiana also saw abnormal dryness (D0) expand in the northwest and in the southeast and into Mississippi. Mississippi saw moderate drought (D1) expand in both the south and northwest, while Tennessee recorded broad expansion of drought in the west, despite some trimming in the south-central counties. Overall, the South ended the week with worsening drought almost everywhere, reinforcing the strain of prolonged heat and limited rainfall.

Midwest

From Aug. 1319, the southern and eastern parts of the Midwest saw conditions deteriorate, with drought slowly expanding where rainfall was limited. In Missouri, abnormal dryness (D0) and moderate drought (D1) spread in the south and central counties under hot, dry weather. Illinois and Indiana also saw conditions worsen in areas that missed out on thunderstorms,

allowing drought to extend east and south. Ohio saw abnormal dryness (D0) expand across the northeast and into the Ohio Valley, reaching toward the West Virginia and Pennsylvania borders, while Kentucky experienced broad expansion of abnormal dryness (D0) in the west and moderate drought (D1) in the south. In Michigan, rainfall helped ease drought in a few western counties, but central areas dried out, leading to new or expanding D1.

High Plains

The High Plains saw a mixed pattern of drought changes between Aug. 1319. North Dakota improved the most, as widespread storms erased nearly all dryness, leaving only a small pocket in the northeast. South Dakota had patchy outcomes, with rainfall trimming drought in some central and southern counties while western areas remained dry. Nebraska also showed contrasts with severe dryness expanding in the Sandhills, especially in Cherry and nearby counties, while parts of the east improved after storms. Kansas slipped slightly drier, with abnormal dryness spreading into the southwest. Conditions were most concerning in Colorado and Wyoming, where persistent heat and limited rainfall drove drought deeper. In Colorado, drought expanded along the Front Range and southwest into northern New Mexico, while Wyoming saw new extreme drought in the northwest and broader expansion of abnormally dry conditions across central counties. These worsening conditions have fueled wildfire activity, most notably Colorado's Lee Fire, which has already burned more than 137,000 acres, ranking among the states largest, while Wyoming has faced smaller but fast-moving rangeland fires.

West

Hot, dry weather dominated much of the West, fueling widespread drought expansion. Arizona and New Mexico saw severe to extreme drought spread north and east as monsoon rains largely missed these areas. In Utah, drought expanded in the south and along the borders of Colorado and Wyoming. Idaho worsened, with severe (D2) and extreme (D3) drought spreading in the southeast and north. Montana was mixed: heavy rains in the northeast allowed drought to ease, but hot, dry weather in the southwest caused drought to intensify. Oregon and Washington saw smaller changes, with some localized improvement in southeast Oregon but worsening conditions in northern Oregon and southern Washington. California remained locked in extreme (D3) to exceptional (D4) drought in the southern regions with no major change. The dry conditions have fed several large wildfires: Arizona's Dragon Bravo Fire has burned over 145,000 acres and California's Gifford Fire about 130,000 acres. A record-breaking heat wave, with temperatures above 110F in desert areas and red-flag warnings across California, has heightened fire danger.

Caribbean

From Aug. 1219, 2025, Puerto Rico saw all moderate drought (D1) in the south to widespread flooding as Hurricane Erin passed just north of the island. The storm's outer bands dropped 3 to 6 inches of rain, with over 6 inches in some areas like Cayey, quickly erasing dry conditions. Abnormal dry (D0) conditions also improved.

The U.S. Virgin Islands experienced significant impacts from Hurricane Erin, which passed north of the region as a major hurricane this week.

On St. John, the rainfall recorded at VI-SJ-5 (Cruz Bay 1.6 E) was 5.44 inches. Additionally, VI-SJ-3 (Windswept Beach) reported 4.65 inches of rain, improving the abnormal dry condition. As of August 19, 2025, the depth to the water level at the Susannaberg DPW 3 well (St. John, USVI) was 11.95 feet below the land surface. This marks a significant decrease from last weeks measurement of 13.30 feet. The 1-month Standardized Precipitation Index (SPI-1) at Windswept Beach has also shown a substantial increase from 0.09 last week to 1.6 this week. In addition, the 3-, 6-, 9-, and 12-month SPI values are positive. Consequently, St. John has improved from an abnormally dry condition to being free of drought this week.

On St. Thomas, heavy rainfall occurred, with reports indicating up to 7 inches in some areas, primarily from outer bands of Hurricane Erin on August 16/17. The rainfall totals varied, measuring 6.30 inches at VI-ST-5 (Charlotte Amalie West, 4.2 WNW) and 5.05 inches at VI-ST-15 (Charlotte Amalie West, 1.3 N). Additionally, VI-ST-13 (Charlotte Amalie, 1.2 NNW) recorded 4.68 inches this week. For King Airport, St. Thomas, the SPI-1 value is 0.5 (it was -1.13 last week). On August 19, 2025, the depth of the water level in the Grade School 3 well in St. Thomas was reported to be 5.98 feet below the land surface. This measurement is significantly lower than the level recorded last week, which was 9.36 feet. Due to the recent heavy rainfalls, St. Thomas is now free of drought.

On St. Croix, the weekly rainfall amount ranged from 0.63 inches at VI-SC-23 (Christiansted 6.5 W) to 1.62 inches at VI-SC-30 (Christiansted 1.7 SW). Intermediate values included 1.31 inches at VI-SC-10 (Christiansted 1.6 E), 0.74 inches at VI-SC-20 (Frederiksted 1.7 ESE), 0.65 inches at VI-SC-34 (Frederiksted 1.9 NE), and 0.66 inches at VI-SC-35 (Frederiksted 1.3 ENE). The SPI-1 value for East Hill, St. Croix, is currently -0.86, compared to -1.38 and -1.21 in the previous two weeks. According to the USGS, groundwater levels at Adventure 28 Well (St. Croix) reported 17.52 inches below the surface as compared to 17.43 inches last week. Thus, St. Croix improved to an abnormally dry condition this week.

Pacific

Alaska improved slightly in the interior thanks to rainfall but turned drier in the south.

Hawaii saw worsening dryness on Kauai, Oahu and the Big Island.

This week, most areas of the Marshall Islands experienced drought-free conditions. However, Kwajalein recorded only 0.98 inches of rain, remaining in short-term abnormally dry conditions. In addition, Wotje reported only 0.28 (with four days unaccounted for) to stay in short-term moderate drought. In contrast, some of the islands reported heavy rain this week. For example, Ailinglapalap and Majuro observed 3.91 and 2.45 inches of rain. Jaluit reported only 0.24 with four days missing, but it remained drought-free due to wet conditions in the previous weeks. There was no data available for Mili and Utirik so that no assessment could be made of those locations.

Normal weather conditions have been observed across the Federated States of Micronesia following recent heavy rains. The islands of Kosrae, Lukunor, and Pohnpei received rainfall

amounts of 3.81 inches, 2.64 inches, and 4.46 inches, respectively. This week, Chuuk Lagoon, Kapingamarangi, and Nukuoro recorded rainfall of 1.64 inches, 0.74 inches, and 1.34 inches (with one day of data missing), respectively. Pingelap reported only 0.93 inches of rain, with three days of data unaccounted for, but it has remained drought-free due to recent rains in the past few weeks. Additionally, Woleai received 2.73 inches of rain, while Yap received 2.11 inches (with two days of data missing), allowing both islands to remain drought-free. There was no data available for Fananu and Ulithi, preventing any assessment from being made for those locations.

Normal conditions were observed across American Samoa, with Pago Pago reporting 0.68 inches of rain. Additionally, Siufaga Ridge and Toa Ridge recorded 0.53 and 0.54 inches of rain this week, respectively. As a result, American Samoa remains free of drought.

Normal weather conditions were observed in Palau. The Weather Service Office in Palau Airai recorded 1.86 inches of rain, while Koror reported 1.9 inches of rain this week, ensuring the island remains free from drought.

This week, normal weather conditions prevailed across the Mariana Islands. According to the weekly rainfall report, Rota received 2.36 inches of rain, while Guam recorded 2.8 inches. As a result, both islands are currently drought-free. Additionally, Tinian and Saipan received 0.75 inches and 0.7 inches of rain, respectively. Due to the wet conditions in June and July, both islands have also managed to remain free of drought.

Looking Ahead

From Aug. 21 to 26, the heaviest precipitation is forecast along the East Coast, especially from North Carolina through the Mid-Atlantic and into southern New England, where amounts may exceed 5 inches, likely tied to a coastal storm system. Pockets of heavier rain are also expected in parts of the central Rockies, High Plains and southern Texas, with localized totals between 2 and 4 inches. Much of the Midwest, Southeast and Southwest are forecast to receive lighter but widespread rainfall, generally between 0.5 and 2 inches. By contrast, the Pacific Northwest and much of California show little to no precipitation expected. Overall, the forecast highlights a wet period for the East Coast and scattered parts of the interior U.S., while the West Coast remains mostly dry.

The Climate Prediction Centers 6-10 day outlook (valid Aug. 26-30) shows much of the central and eastern U.S. is expected to be cooler than normal, with the greatest chance for well-below-average temperatures across the Midwest and Ohio Valley. In contrast, warmer-than-normal conditions are favored along the West Coast, especially in the Pacific Northwest and northern California, as well as in Florida, parts of Alaska and Hawaii. Rainfall patterns show a split across the country: wetter-than-normal conditions are likely in the central and southern Rockies, the Southwest and the central Plains, along with parts of Alaska. Drier-than-normal conditions are forecast for the Great Lakes, Ohio Valley, and portions of the interior Northeast. The Southeast, Gulf Coast and parts of the interior West are generally expected to see near-normal precipitation. Overall, the late-August outlook points to a cool and damp stretch for much of the central U.S., warmer weather along the West Coast and in the far South, and a

drier setup in the Great Lakes and Ohio Valley.

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