

National Drought Summary for December 2, 2025

Summary

This U.S. Drought Monitor (USDM) week saw improvement in drought-related conditions across areas of the West, Plains, Midwest, South, Southeast, and the Northeast. Out West, improvements continued in areas of eastern California and southern Nevada, where conditions since the beginning of the Water Year (October 1) have improved significantly. As of early December, mountain snowpack conditions continue to be well below normal levels for the time of year across much of the western U.S., except for isolated areas of the Southwest and southern Rockies, where recent storms have boosted snowpack conditions well above normal levels. As of December 2, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) SNOw TELemetry (SNOTEL) network reported the following region-level (2-digit HUC) snow-water equivalent (SWE) levels: Pacific Northwest 43%, Missouri 47%, Upper Colorado 53%, Great Basin 39%, Lower Colorado 121%, Rio Grande 64%, and Arkansas-White-Red 53%. In California, the statewide snowpack was 39% of normal (December 3), with the Southern Sierra at 78%, Central Sierra at 36%, and Northern Sierra at 17%. Elsewhere on the map, conditions continued to improve in drought-affected areas of central and northeastern Texas, where precipitation during the past month has been above normal. In the Southeast, drought conditions have intensified in recent months, both in spatial extent and intensity, including in southern Georgia and Florida Panhandle where soil moisture and streamflow levels have dropped significantly in recent weeks. In the Northern Plains, Midwest, and Northeast, moderate-to-heavy snowfall accumulations provided some minor relief to drought-affected areas.

Northeast

This week, improvements were made in isolated areas of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, New York, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. In New England, improvements were made in response to recent significant precipitation events, which have impacted groundwater and soil moisture conditions. For the week, the areas of the region received significant snowfall accumulations including areas of New York, Vermont, and New Hampshire with the highest totals (ranging from 10 to 27 inches) observed in western and central New York. In terms of snowpack conditions across the region, the National Weather Service National Operational Hydrologic Remote Sensing Center (NWS NOHRSC) is reporting that the Northeast region is currently 94% covered by snow (area), with an average depth of 5 inches and a maximum depth of 41 inches. Despite recent storm activity, precipitation has been below normal across much of the region in both the short and mid-term time scales. Moreover, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) continues to report below-normal streamflow levels (<10th percentile) at many gages across the region, with the lowest levels observed in eastern Pennsylvania, Maryland, southern New Jersey, western New York, southern New Hampshire, and southern Maine. For the week, average temperatures were below normal across the southern extent of the region with the greatest departures (6 to 9 degrees F) observed in areas of West Virginia. In the northern portion of the region, temperatures were 1 to 3 degrees F above normal.

Southeast

During the past week, light-to-moderate rainfall accumulations were observed across areas of the region with the highest totals (2 to 4 inches) logged in central and southern Alabama. The beneficial rains led to improvements of areas of drought on the map in Alabama, northwestern Georgia, and South Carolina. Elsewhere, conditions deteriorated on the map in Florida, east-central Georgia, central North Carolina, and southern Virginia. For the past 30-day period, precipitation departures across most of the region ranged from 1 to 4 inches with the greatest departures observed in southern Alabama, Florida Panhandle, southwestern Georgia, and far western portions of the Carolinas. According to data from the Southeast Regional Climate Centers Climate Perspectives tool, the past month (November 2 to December 2) has been very dry across areas of Georgia and Florida, with record to near-record dryness observed in the following locations: Newton, GA (-3.14 inch departure, 2nd driest); Jacksonville, FL (-2.5 inches, 3rd driest); Vero Beach, FL (-2.86 inches, driest on record); and Ft. Myers, FL (-1.74 inches, driest on record). In terms of streamflows across the region, the lowest levels were observed in the Florida Panhandle and in west-central Florida where numerous USGS gages reported well below normal flows (<10th percentile). In terms of average temperatures for the week, below-normal temperatures (2 to 10 degrees F) were observed across most of the region except for areas of Florida which observed temperatures 1 to 5 degrees F above normal.

South

On this weeks map, widespread improvements were made in drought-affected areas of Texas, while isolated areas of Oklahoma, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Tennessee saw minor improvements in response to rainfall activity during the past week. The heaviest rainfall accumulations were observed in isolated areas along the Gulf Coast of southeastern Texas, while lesser accumulations (ranging from 1 to 2 inches) were observed in other areas of the region including eastern and southern Texas, Louisiana, southeastern Oklahoma, southern Arkansas, northern Mississippi, and eastern Tennessee. In western Texas, conditions on the map deteriorated in response to drier-than-normal conditions during the past 90-day period. Looking at climatological rankings for the past 30-day period (November 2 to December 2), Austin, TX was 10th driest (-2.31-inch departure), College Station, TX 9th driest (-2.54 inches), New Orleans, LA 8th driest (-3.32 inches), Slidell, LA 2nd driest (-3.49 inches), and Hattiesburg MS driest on record (-3.71 inches). In Texas, Water for Texas (December 3) reported statewide reservoirs at 74% full, with numerous reservoirs in the eastern part of the state in very good condition, while numerous reservoirs in the southern and western portion of the state were experiencing continued below-normal levels, including at Falcon Reservoir along the Rio Grande River (15.9% full). In terms of drought-related impacts, the National Drought Mitigation Centers Conditions Monitoring Observer Reports (CMOR) tool showed numerous impact reports during the past 30-day period with the highest concentration of reports yielding from southern Oklahoma, northern Arkansas, and northern Louisiana. For the week, average temperatures were below normal across most the region with anomalies ranging from 4 to 10 degrees F above normal.

Midwest

On this weeks map, improvements (Iowa, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Michigan) were made in response to this weeks snowfall activity, impacting a large portion of the region. The highest snowfall totals were observed across areas of northern Michigan, where accumulations ranged from 10 to 34 inches, according to NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Information. Despite the beneficial moisture, areas of Michigan saw deterioration on the map in response to a combination of factors including short-term precipitation deficits, low streamflows, and low soil moisture levels. In terms of snowpack conditions across the region, the National Weather Service National Operational Hydrologic Remote Sensing Center (NWS NOHRSC) is reporting that the Northern Great Lakes region is currently 99% covered by snow (area) with an average depth of 6.5 inches and a maximum depth of 23.1 inches. For the week, average temperatures were below normal across the entire region, with anomalies ranging from 2 to 15 degrees F below normal, with the greatest departures observed in southwestern Minnesota, northwestern Iowa, and west-central Illinois.

High Plains

On this weeks map, only minor changes were made in the region. In eastern Kansas, two areas of lingering Moderate Drought (D1) were removed in response to improving conditions during the past 90-day period. For the week, some beneficial snowfall was observed across the northern Plains, with accumulations ranging from 1 to 14 inches. The highest accumulations were logged in areas of North Dakota. In terms of average temperatures, cooler-than-normal temperatures (5 to 20+ degrees F below normal) were observed across the region, with the greatest anomalies observed in the Dakotas. According to NWS NOHRSC, the Upper Midwest region is currently 94.4% covered by snow (area) with an average depth of 3.7 inches and a maximum depth of 22.2 inches.

West

Out West, recent storms and overall improving conditions on short-term indicators (precipitation, soil moisture, streamflows) led to improvements on the map in California (eastern Sierra, Mojave Desert), Nevada (west-central, southern), Utah (southwestern), Wyoming (central, southwestern), Montana (northwestern, central, northeastern), and Washington (southeastern). Conversely, degradations were made on the map in areas of Oregon (central, southern), Idaho (west-central), Wyoming (southeastern), Colorado (central, north-central), and New Mexico (southeastern). For the week, most of the region experienced dry conditions except for portions of the Pacific Northwest and isolated areas in the central and northern Rockies. In the Pacific Northwest, light-to-moderate precipitation accumulations were observed along the coastal areas of northwestern Oregon and western Washington. Despite this weeks storm activity, significant precipitation deficits (2 to 10 inches since October 1) remain, with the greatest anomalies observed in the Olympic Peninsula and Cascade Range. In terms of the snowpack out West, below-normal SWE levels are being observed at SNOTEL stations across most of the West, except for areas in the southern Sierra, Colorado Plateau, and southwestern

Colorado. In California, the NWS Forecast Office in Los Angeles is reporting that November was one of the wettest Novembers in the last 50+ years across southwestern California. Moreover, the city of Santa Barbara has reported the wettest water-year start on record through November with over 9.5 inches observed. Other areas in Santa Barbara County, including areas of the Santa Ynez Mountains, have received over 15 inches for the contemporaneous period.

Caribbean

In Puerto Rico, some minor expansion of areas of Abnormally Dry (D0) were made in the central portion of the island in response to short-term dryness (past 30-day period), low streamflows, reduced soil moisture, and drying vegetation.

The U.S. Virgin Islands received good rainfall over the past week. St. Thomas received half an inch to an inch islandwide over the past week, according to the National Weather Services precipitation estimate. St. Croix got a quarter of an inch or less on the western third of the island, and a quarter to a half of an inch on the eastern two-thirds of the island. St. John received half an inch to an inch over the northern half of the island and 1 to 1.5 inches over the southern half of the island.

The Vegetation Health Index does not indicate vegetative stress for St. Thomas or St. John but does have some for St. Croix.

Water levels in wells on all three islands continued to drop through the end of the assessment period due to below-normal rainfall in recent weeks. The lack of response from the water levels suggests that a continuation of D0 is appropriate for all three islands.

Pacific

In Alaska, the state remained drought-free, and no changes were made on the map this week.

On this week's map, widespread 1-category degradations were made across the Hawaiian Islands in response to continued rainfall shortfalls and exceptionally low observed streamflow levels, with numerous gaging stations reporting flows below the 10th percentile.

The Republic of Palau received adequate precipitation with more than 2 inches at Palau and Koror. Water supplies should be sufficient, as these locations need 2 inches of rainfall to meet minimum water needs.

Most of the Mariana Islands received more than an inch, which is the weekly minimum precipitation these islands need to meet minimum water needs. Guam reported 1.63 inches, Rota got 2.73 inches and Tinian collected more than 2 inches. Saipan, however, received under half an inch and was in D0 for a second week.

Most locations in the Federated States of Micronesia received more than 2 inches. Kapingamarangi received an inch of rain and remained in D1. Woleai and Yap received 0.83 inches and 0.35 inches, respectively. All other locations were free of dryness.

Most of the Marshall Islands reported more than 2 inches of precipitation for the week. Utirik

received 0.53 inches of rain for the week and 2.79 inches in November and remained at D0. Kwajalein, Jaluit, Ailinglaplap, Mili and Majuro received from 2 inches to more than 5 inches, while Wotje reported 1.97 inches. The Majuro reservoir held 45.2 million gallons on Nov. 30. American Samoa remained free of dryness. Pago Pago and Toa Ridge each received more than 6 inches of rain.

Looking Ahead

The NWS 7-day quantitative precipitation forecast calls for the heaviest rainfall (2 to 5 inches) to be along the central Gulf Coast, including southern Louisiana, southern Mississippi, southern Alabama, and the western Florida Panhandle, while 1 to 4 inches is expected in southern Georgia and areas of coastal South Carolina. The southern extent of the Mid-Atlantic coast is forecast to receive 1 to 3 inches, while New England is expected to have totals less than 1 inch. In the Pacific Northwest, 2 to 7+ inches (liquid) of precipitation is expected across western portions of Washington and Oregon, while the Northern Rockies including northern Idaho, western Montana, and western Wyoming are forecast to receive liquid totals ranging from 1 to 3 inches. These values represent liquid precipitation and may fall as rain or snow; actual snowfall amounts will vary depending on temperature and snow-to-liquid ratios. Meanwhile, much of the Intermountain West, Desert Southwest, and the central and southern Great Basin is expected to remain mostly dry, although northern portions of Utah and Colorado are forecasted to observe totals ranging from 0.25 to 2.0 inches. Across the Plains and Midwest, precipitation totals are expected to be less than 0.5 inch.

The 610-day temperature outlook (valid December 9 13, 2025) calls for above-normal temperatures across the western U.S., much of the Plains, and Texas, with the highest probabilities centered over the Far West and Great Basin. Below-normal temperatures are favored across the eastern United States, with the highest probabilities in the Northeast and portions of the northern Mid-Atlantic and Great Lakes. Near-normal temperatures are expected across a narrow swath extending from the Lower Mississippi Valley through the eastern portions of the Dakotas. In terms of precipitation, the 610-day outlook calls for below-normal precipitation across the southern half of the continental United States, including California, Great Basin, southern half of the Intermountain West, South, and much of the Southeast. Above-normal precipitation is forecasted for much of the northern tier of the continental U.S., including the Pacific Northwest, Northern Plains, Upper Midwest, and the Northeast. Near-normal precipitation is expected across the Lower Midwest and southern Florida.

Author(s)

David Simeral, Western Regional Climate Center

Denise Gutzmer, National Drought Mitigation Center