

National Drought Summary for January 6, 2026

Summary

The past week featured above-normal temperatures across much of the western half of the U.S. Areas west of the Mississippi River generally experienced near- to above-normal temperatures, with portions of the northern Rocky Mountains running 15-20°F above normal for the week. These warm conditions favored rain over snow, which is critical for winter water supply in the West, and many locations continue to experience a slow start to the snow season.

In contrast, cooler-than-normal temperatures dominated the Florida Peninsula, with departures of 5-10°F below normal across southern Florida. Below-normal temperatures were also widespread from the Upper Midwest into the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic, where departures of 5°F or more below normal were common. Parts of New England were particularly cold, with temperatures 10-15°F below normal.

Outside of the West, above-normal precipitation was limited to pockets of the Southeast, Florida, and the Upper Midwest. Much of the West recorded more than 100% of normal precipitation for the week, with large portions of California receiving over 200% of normal.

Northeast

Much of the region experienced a dry week, with the exception of areas downwind of the Great Lakes, where lake-effect snow was significant. Portions of western New York received several feet of snow as snow squalls developed off lakes Erie and Ontario. Nearly the entire region observed below-normal temperatures, with the coldest anomalies in New England, where departures of 9-10°F below normal were common.

Most of the region saw no changes to drought conditions. Improvements to moderate drought and abnormally dry conditions were noted in western New York. Along the Maine coast, recent precipitation led to improvements in extreme drought. Moderate drought improved over northern Pennsylvania due to a wetter pattern.

Conversely, abnormally dry conditions expanded in eastern Massachusetts, while moderate and severe drought expanded across New Jersey and moderate drought extended onto Long Island. The Mid-Atlantic experienced the greatest drought expansion, with severe drought spreading across central Maryland and much of central Virginia. Moderate drought also expanded along the coastal areas of Maryland and Virginia and into southern Delaware.

Southeast

Temperatures were generally above normal across much of the region, with departures of 2-4°F above normal. Exceptions included coastal areas of the Carolinas and much of Florida, where temperatures were 2-4°F below normal, and southern Florida, where departures reached 4-6°F below normal.

Most of the Southeast was dry, with pockets of above-normal precipitation limited to the Florida Panhandle and areas from central Alabama into central Georgia. Severe drought expanded

across northeast Georgia, western South Carolina, and western North Carolina, with severe drought newly introduced into central North Carolina. Moderate drought also expanded in both North and South Carolina.

In Florida, severe drought expanded in the southwest and northeast portions of the state, while moderate drought grew to encompass all of south Florida. Alabama saw expansion of moderate and severe drought across central and southern areas, with abnormally dry conditions increasing along the coast.

South

Nearly the entire region was dry, with only isolated precipitation observed in Mississippi and southwest Tennessee. Temperatures were above normal across most areas, with portions of the Texas and Oklahoma panhandles running more than 12F above normal.

Drought conditions deteriorated across every state in the region. Moderate drought expanded across northern and southern Mississippi. Central and eastern Tennessee saw expansion of moderate and severe drought, while moderate drought increased in western Tennessee. Moderate and severe drought expanded across much of Louisiana and southern and western Arkansas. Severe drought expanded in northeast and northwest Arkansas and into northeast Oklahoma. Severe and extreme drought spread from southwest into central Oklahoma, while moderate drought continued to fill in across eastern Oklahoma.

Across Texas, moderate drought and abnormally dry conditions expanded over much of the Panhandle, while moderate and severe drought grew across east Texas and coastal southeast Texas. Drought conditions continued to intensify in far south Texas.

Midwest

Temperatures were cooler than normal across northern areas and near to above normal farther south. Western Iowa and southwest Minnesota experienced temperatures 9-12F above normal. Most of the region was dry, though above-normal precipitation occurred in northern and eastern Minnesota, central Wisconsin, and both the Upper Peninsula and northern Lower Peninsula of Michigan.

Despite localized precipitation, a generally warm and dry winter has allowed drought to continue developing. Abnormally dry conditions expanded across southern Kentucky and along the Indiana border, with a new pocket of moderate drought in southeastern Kentucky. Abnormally dry conditions spread across southern Indiana, while severe and extreme drought expanded in central portions of the state.

Slight improvements to moderate drought and abnormally dry conditions were noted in southwest Michigan. Moderate drought and abnormally dry conditions improved over northwest Illinois, eastern Iowa, and southern Wisconsin. However, drought worsened across central and southern Illinois, where moderate and severe drought expanded. Moderate and severe drought also expanded across much of southern Missouri, while abnormally dry conditions increased over northwest Missouri and into southwest Iowa. Portions of east-central Minnesota saw

improvement due to a wet start to January.

High Plains

Warmer-than-normal temperatures dominated the region, with departures exceeding 15F above normal across parts of western Nebraska, western Kansas, northeast Colorado, Wyoming, and southeast Montana. Precipitation was minimal, with the greatest totals confined to northeastern North Dakota.

The continued warm and dry winter has resulted in some areas experiencing their driest start to winter on record. Abnormally dry conditions expanded across southern Nebraska and northeast Kansas, as well as southeast Kansas, where moderate drought also increased. Moderate and severe drought expanded across southeast Wyoming, western Nebraska, northeast Colorado, and southeast Colorado.

West

The largest positive temperature departures occurred in the West, with areas from central Montana into western Wyoming and northwest Colorado experiencing temperatures more than 15F above normal. These warm conditions pushed snow to higher elevations and increased rainfall at lower elevations. While many areas received above-normal precipitation, snowpack remains critically low, and significant snow drought persists across numerous mountain ranges, including the Cascades, Oregon's Blue Mountains, Idaho's Bitterroot Range, and the central Rocky Mountains of Colorado.

It was a wet week for much of the region, with nearly all of California recording above-normal precipitation, along with much of Nevada and western Arizona. Above-normal precipitation also occurred across eastern Washington and Oregon, Idaho, western Utah, and Montana. Severe and extreme drought improved across northern Montana, with additional improvement to moderate drought in the southwest part of the state.

Continued wet conditions led to improvements in moderate and severe drought across Nevada, Arizona, eastern Oregon and Washington, and the Idaho Panhandle. Abnormally dry conditions expanded across northeast New Mexico, while extreme and exceptional drought expanded across central Colorado. Extreme drought was removed from southwest Wyoming, and moderate drought improved across western Wyoming. In Washington, abnormally dry conditions were adjusted to reflect recent precipitation while also accounting for persistent snow drought in the Cascades.

Caribbean

For Puerto Rico, abnormally dry conditions were improved this week in the areas that received the most rain and the indicators improved.

This week, precipitation in the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI) was light to moderate and intermittent, which is typical of the dry season. Data from coastal and island weather stations on Saint Thomas and Saint John show moderate drought conditions, with occasional light rain or

passing showers. Similarly, on St. Croix, most stations recorded less than 1.5 inches of rainfall over the week, and the island remained in abnormally dry conditions.

St. Croix experienced moderate rainfall, with locally measurable totals. This week, rainfall totals were reported for VI-SC-10 (Christiansted 1.6 E), VI-SC-20 (Frederiksted 1.7 ESE), VI-SC-23 (Christiansted 6.5 W), VI-SC-30 (Christiansted 1.7 SW), VI-SC-34 (Frederiksted 1.9 NE), and VI-SC-35 (Frederiksted 1.3 ENE), ranging from 0.13 to 1.34 inches. The Standardized Precipitation Index (SPI) values for East Hill and Christiansted Hamilton showed short-term abnormally dry conditions. The water level depth at Adventure 28 Well (St. Croix, USVI) is 18.98 ft on January 6, 2026, an increase from last week, indicating that St. Croix remains in abnormally dry conditions.

On St. Thomas, the recorded rainfall totals at VI-ST-13 (Charlotte Amalie, 1.2 NNW) and VI-ST-15 (Charlotte Amalie West, 1.3 N) were 0.66 inches and 0.13 inches, respectively. On January 6, 2026, the depth of the water level in the Grade School 3 well in St. Thomas was reported to be 7.5 feet below the land surface, indicating moderate drought conditions. Similarly, St. John recorded minimal rainfall, with only 0.05 inches reported at VI-SJ-5 (Cruz Bay 1.6 E). As of 6 January 2026, the depth to water level at the Susannaberg DPW 3 well (St. John, USVI) is 11.69 ft below land surface, which has continued to increase since mid-October 2025, keeping St. John in moderate drought conditions.

Pacific

In Alaska, the precipitation for this week was adequate enough that no changes were needed.

In Hawaii, severe and extreme drought improved on the southeast portion of the Big Island.

This week, most regions of the Marshall Islands experienced little to no rainfall as the dry season began. Ailinglapalap, Jaluit, and Mili reported no precipitation. Wotje, Kwajalein, Majuro, and Utirik recorded rainfall amounts of 0.08, 0.05, 0.03, and 0.02 inches, respectively. As a result of earlier wet conditions in December 2025, Ailinglapalap, Jaluit, Majuro, and Mili are classified as drought-free, while Kwajalein, Utirik, and Wotje are experiencing abnormally dry conditions.

The Federated States of Micronesia is currently experiencing fair weather and dry conditions, with only isolated showers occurring in certain areas. Pingelap reported no rainfall, with two days of data missing, and it remains in an abnormally dry condition. In addition, the islands of Kapingamarangi, Nukuoro, Kosrae, Pohnpei, Lukunor, and Chuuk Lagoon recorded rainfall amounts of 1.41, 0.6, 0.28, 0.27, 0.24, and 0.21 inches, respectively. Despite these rainfall amounts, all of these islands remain free of drought due to the prolonged wet conditions over the past few weeks. In contrast, heavy rainfall has been observed on the islands of Yap and Woleai, which recorded 4.35 and 2.68 inches of rain this week, respectively, helping them stay drought-free.

American Samoa experienced wet weather and heavy rainfall this week, with Pago Pago receiving 2.74 inches of rain. Siufaga Ridge recorded 2.07 inches, while Toa Ridge saw 1.57 inches of rainfall this week. As a result, American Samoa remains drought-free.

Palau experienced warm, humid, and rainy weather this week. The Weather Service Office in Airai reported 0.9 inches of rain, while Koror recorded 0.84 inches, although data for five days is missing. The continuous rainfall has helped keep the island free of drought.

This week, the Mariana Islands experienced consistently warm weather, with conditions ranging from mostly sunny to partly cloudy, characteristic of the region's dry season. According to the weekly rainfall report, Guam received 0.14 inches, Rota received 0.44 inches, and Saipan recorded 0.77 inches. Tinian also reported 0.34 inches of rain, although data for five days is still pending. Due to the wet conditions over the past few weeks, the Mariana Islands are currently experiencing drought-free conditions.

Looking Ahead

Over the next five to seven days, the pattern over the continental U.S. appears to be active with many areas showing a strong probability of precipitation. Areas from the Central Plains into the Midwest and Great Lakes areas are anticipated to receive up to an inch of precipitation. Further south, areas from Louisiana northeast into Kentucky are expected to receive the greatest amount of precipitation with several inches expected. From the Pacific Northwest into the Rocky Mountains and Southwest, widespread precipitation is anticipated. The driest areas are expected to be over the northern Great Plains, California, central and southern Texas and from the Carolinas into the Florida peninsula. Temperatures are expected to remain warmer than normal over much of the country. Only the areas along the southern tier of the U.S. will be near to below normal. The warmest departures are expected over the central to northern Plains, with some areas of Montana predicted to be 10-15 F above normal.

The 6-10 day outlooks show that the likelihood of above-normal temperatures is projected over almost the entire U.S., with the exception of the Southeast and south Texas. The greatest chances of above-normal temperatures are over the West Coast, as well as the northern Plains and northern Rocky Mountains. The best chances of below-normal precipitation are over the Western U.S. and into the southern Plains. Above-normal chances of above-normal precipitation are anticipated over the central to northern Plains, Florida and along the coast of the Carolinas, as well as Alaska and Hawaii.

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