

National Drought Summary for April 21, 2026

Summary

The week was highlighted by a band of above-normal precipitation extending from south Texas into eastern Oklahoma, Missouri, Illinois, Michigan, and southern Wisconsin. Many areas in this swath received greater than 150% of normal precipitation, with some locations exceeding 400% for the week. From the Ohio Valley south into the Southeast, conditions remained quite dry, with little to no precipitation recorded across most of the region.

The West was also largely dry, with only coastal areas of California and parts of the Pacific Northwest recording above-normal precipitation. Northern portions of the Northeast received rain, with areas from western New York into Maine recording 200% or more of normal precipitation.

Temperatures were near normal to slightly below normal across the West, with departures of up to 5°F below normal in some areas. Portions of the central Plains, Midwest, Northeast, and Mid-Atlantic experienced above-normal temperatures, with departures of 5–10°F above normal. Temperatures in the Southeast were near to slightly above normal, with cooler conditions in the Florida Panhandle.

Northeast

Temperatures were warmer than normal across nearly the entire region, except for far northern Maine. Most areas were 4–8°F above normal for the week. Rainfall occurred but was largely confined to northern areas, from western Pennsylvania and New York through northern Vermont and New Hampshire into Maine, where many locations recorded 150% or more of normal precipitation.

This wetter pattern led to improvements in abnormally dry and moderate drought conditions across northern Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine. Severe drought was removed in northern and reduced in southern Maine.

In southern portions of the region, moderate drought expanded across northern New Jersey and eastern Pennsylvania. Severe drought intensified in southeastern Pennsylvania and eastern Maryland as dry conditions persisted. In Virginia, severe drought expanded in southern and western areas, with extreme drought developing along the southern border with North Carolina. Most of West Virginia experienced degradation, with nearly the entire state now in moderate to severe drought.

Southeast

It was a very dry week, with only parts of northern Alabama, western Virginia, and North Carolina recording precipitation. Temperatures were near to slightly above normal in southern areas, while northern areas were 5°F or more above normal. Portions of southern Alabama and the Florida Panhandle were slightly below normal.

With strong drought signals across short- to mid-term timescales—and in some cases longer—

drought expanded and intensified. In the Carolinas, severe and extreme drought expanded across western areas, and along southern North Carolina into northern South Carolina.

Moderate to extreme drought expanded across western and southern Georgia and the Florida Panhandle. Exceptional drought expanded in southern Georgia and northern Florida as impacts became more widespread, especially in agriculture.

Most of Alabama experienced a full category of degradation, except for northern and southeastern areas. The entire state is now experiencing some level of drought, with extreme drought covering much of the south.

Midwest

Temperatures were mostly above normal, with departures of 5–10°F across much of the region. The upper Midwest, particularly far northern Minnesota, saw near- to slightly below-normal temperatures.

Precipitation varied widely. Southern Wisconsin and Michigan received over 300% of normal rainfall. Southern Indiana, central and southern Ohio, Kentucky, northwest Iowa, northern Wisconsin, and much of Minnesota were drier.

Improvement occurred in Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois due to recent rainfall, easing moderate drought and abnormally dry conditions. Southern Iowa also saw improvements. Southern Missouri received needed precipitation, though improvements were limited due to persistent long-term dryness.

Northern Minnesota and Wisconsin saw improvements in abnormally dry to severe drought conditions, though long-term drought signals remain.

Degradation occurred in southern Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio, where abnormally dry and moderate drought expanded. Kentucky experienced further degradation, with the entire state now in drought. Moderate and severe drought expanded across western and central areas. The period from November 2025 through March 2026 ranks as the fifth-driest five-month period on record for Kentucky's western climatic division. Southwestern Minnesota also saw slight expansion of moderate to severe drought.

High Plains

The region was mostly dry, with isolated rainfall in far southeast Nebraska, northern and southeast Kansas, and small areas of Colorado and North Dakota. Temperatures were generally above normal, with the warmest departures in southeast Nebraska and eastern Kansas.

Dryness and a warm spring led to widespread degradation. Extreme drought expanded across central and western Nebraska and into northwest Kansas. Severe drought expanded in central and southwest Kansas, with new extreme drought in far southwest Kansas.

Degradation continued across the plains of Wyoming and Colorado, with expansion of moderate to extreme drought. Extreme drought was also introduced in southern South Dakota.

Some improvements occurred in southeast Kansas, where moderate drought and abnormally dry conditions were reduced due to recent rainfall.

South

Temperatures were above normal across northern and eastern areas, with departures of 2–6°F. Across Texas, temperatures transitioned to below normal in southern and western areas, with departures of 2–6°F below normal.

The heaviest rainfall occurred from central to southern Texas into central and eastern Oklahoma, where totals reached 150–400% of normal. Elsewhere, conditions were mostly dry, including the Texas and Oklahoma Panhandles, and much of Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Tennessee.

Where rainfall was sufficient in Texas and Oklahoma, drought conditions improved or were removed. However, drought intensified across Mississippi, where nearly the entire state experienced a full category of degradation and is now 100% in drought.

Extreme drought expanded in eastern Arkansas and northern and southern Louisiana, with moderate drought increasing in southern Louisiana. Severe and extreme drought expanded across western Tennessee, while moderate drought increased in the east. Tennessee is now also fully in drought.

West

Precipitation was mixed. Parts of central to northern California, western Oregon and Washington, much of Idaho, and isolated areas in Montana, Utah, and Colorado recorded above-normal precipitation. However, most of the region remained drier than normal.

Temperatures were generally cooler than normal, with northern Nevada experiencing departures of up to 6°F below normal. Southern California and Arizona saw the warmest conditions, with temperatures up to 6°F above normal.

Drought conditions worsened across much of Nevada, with expansion of abnormal dryness to severe drought. Severe drought expanded into northwest Utah, while moderate to severe drought increased in western and southern Arizona. Severe drought also expanded in western Wyoming, and extreme drought was introduced in southwestern Montana.

Oregon and Washington saw slight expansion of abnormally dry to moderate drought, with a small increase in severe drought in southwest Oregon. Southern California also experienced expansion of abnormally dry conditions.

Impacts are becoming more evident as snowpack has largely melted, and early runoff may contribute to future water supply issues.

Caribbean

No changes were made in Puerto Rico. The San Juan area is beginning to show drying signals, though recent rainfall has maintained overall wet conditions.

Early in the drought week (Wed, Apr 15 – Tue, Apr 21), a mid to upper-level trough and a surface high pressure system over the North Atlantic served as the dominant features across the region. Their interaction promoted a moist, unstable, and breezy pattern, with localized showers and thunderstorms. For the latter part of the period, a drier and more stable pattern prevailed.

On St. Croix, precipitation amounts for the week ranged from 0.33-inch at Rohlsen Airport to 1.70 inches at VI-SC-30 (Christiansted 1.7 SW, 1 day missing). Intermediate rainfall values in ascending order are: 0.80-inch at East Hill, 0.81-inch at VI-SC-20 (Frederiksted 1.7 ESE), 0.93-inch at VI-SC-29 (Frederiksted 2.5 NNE, 2 days missing), 0.94-inch at VI-SC-34 (Frederiksted 1.9 NE), 0.97-inch at VI-SC-24 (Christiansted 2.1 ENE, 2 days missing), 1.01 inches at VI-SC-35 (Frederiksted 1.3 ENE, 1 day missing), 1.22 inches at VI-SC-32 (2 days missing), 1.24 inches at VI-SC-25 (Christiansted 4.4 W, 2 days missing), 1.29 inches at VI-SC-10 (Christiansted 1.6 E), and 1.69 inches VI-SC-23 (Christiansted 6.5 W, 1 day missing). There was one station that reported only 0.16-inch of precipitation, but had 5 days missing so was not included in the list (VI-SC-9 (Christiansted 4.1 ESE)). In terms of the Standardized Precipitation Index (SPI), East Hill's 1-, 3-, 6-, 9-, and 12-month values are, respectively: 0.78, 1.49, -0.2, 0.27, and -0.16, while Rohlsen reported 1- and 3-month SPI values of 0.21 and -1.1, respectively. The Adventure 28 Well started around 20.75 feet below the land surface, rose slowly over time and ended near 20.49 feet.

For St. John's, rainfall measurements for the drought week included 0.42-inch at VI-SJ-10 (Cruz Bay 3.1 NNW) and 1.32 inches of rain at VI-SJ-5 (Cruz Bay 1.6 E). The heaviest rain fell at VI-SJ-3 (Windswept Beach), with 1.59 inches measured. Thus far in April, 3.43 inches of rain have fallen, and 2.25 inches accumulated during March. An observer notes "a fairly wet April... well over our average. Everything is greening up". SPI values for 1-, 3-, 6-, 9-, and 12-months are 1.39, 1.66, -0.15, 0.6, and 0.19 this week. East End did not report. The Susannaberg Dpw 3 Well level started near 13.13 feet and remained fairly steady before rising, then fell fairly quickly back down to very near its starting point at 13.12 feet late in the period.

In St. Thomas, precipitation amounts ranged from 0.27-inch at VI-ST-15 (Charlotte Amalie West 1.3 N) to 0.61-inch at VI-ST-13 (Charlotte Amalie 1.2 NNW). Cyril King Airport came in with 0.29-inch of rain this past drought week, with SPI 1-, 3-, and 6-month values of 0.48, 0.83, and -0.75, respectively. The Grade School 3 Wellwater level started near 4.55 feet, followed by a slight rise. Very late on April 19th, the water level spiked at 4.15 ft, then peaked at 4.12 and then dropped back down to 4.45 feet at the end of the week.

Due to SPI values, precipitation received, and the fact that we are in the early stages of the rainy season, all islands remain at D-nada.

Pacific

In Alaska, abnormally dry areas were reduced following recent precipitation.

No changes were made in Hawaii.

During the drought week of Wed, Apr 15 – Tue, Apr 21, the dominant weather feature was the

first typhoon and later super-typhoon of the northern West Pacific tropical cyclone season, Sinlaku. The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), Guam, and Chuuk State were the primary places impacted by this storm. Sinlaku achieved super-typhoon status on April 12th. Preliminary reports (which still requires verification) suggests 1-minute maximum sustained wind speeds associated with this tempest reached 160 knots, with the central pressure falling to 890-hPa. Shortly thereafter, Sinlaku “weakened” to a category-4-equivalent typhoon due to a long-lasting Eyewall Replacement Cycle, losing its super-typhoon status. Nevertheless, this very powerful typhoon made landfall on the northern side of Tinian, with Saipan being located within the now much larger new eye. The slow forward motion of the typhoon only compounded the devastation with very heavy rainfall and resultant flash flooding, an extended period of very damaging winds, electrical power outages, and storm surge. With the power outages came the inability to use cooling units, and residents were at the mercy of the very warm temperatures. Humanitarian needs for immediate relief and long-term recovery are rapidly expanding, with residents requiring access to fresh water, food staples, hygiene products, and fuel. Please refer to this article by the Salvation Army for more details (<https://www.salvationarmyusa.org/stories/typhoon-sinlaku-disaster-response/>). For the Republic of Palau, and the western and central Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), much drier conditions were experienced this week as drier air was pulled into these areas on the south side of Sinlaku as it moved away to the northwest and north. For these areas, marine and surf conditions were the main concern during this week. Across the eastern FSM and the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), a broadly unsettled pattern was in place for much of this drought week, with numerous showers and scattered thunderstorms. This was related to a fragment of the ITCZ interacting with a trade-wind trough. As Sinlaku slowly receded from the CNMI, the ITCZ fragment was able to move westward, bringing some showers to Kosrae and Chuuk. Over the South Pacific, a shortwave trough approached the Samoa Islands from the north-northeast. Some showers and a brief period of thunderstorm activity was noted, followed by improving conditions. A surface high pressure system anchoring southeast of the region generated moderate easterly winds with embedded showers through midweek.

Satellite-based QPE (thru 12z 4/20): To the north of the equator, a large elongated region of heavy precipitation was centered over the CNMI associated with Sinlaku with widespread 2-4 inch totals (locally 4-8 inches). Hardly any precipitation was observed over Palau, and western and central portions of the FSM. Shower activity resulted primarily in amounts between 0.5-inch and 2-inches across the RMI south and east of Kwajalein. South of the Equator, American Samoa received light to moderate precipitation during the week, with amounts generally less than three-quarters of an inch.

Looking Ahead

Over the next 5–7 days, the highest precipitation chances are expected from the central Plains into the South, Midwest and parts of the Mid-Atlantic. The Pacific Northwest and northern Rockies may also see widespread precipitation.

Temperatures are expected to be above normal across the southern Plains, South and Southeast, with departures of 9–11°F in north Texas and Oklahoma and 5–7°F elsewhere.

Cooler-than-normal temperatures are forecast for the northern Plains, northern Rockies, and California, with departures of 9–12°F below normal in North Dakota and Montana and 6–9°F below normal in California.

The 6–10 day outlook shows the highest chances for cooler-than-normal temperatures across the Plains and Midwest, with the greatest potential over the High Plains and upper Midwest. The best chances for above-normal temperatures are in the Pacific Northwest and along the southern Gulf Coast. The greatest likelihood of above-normal precipitation is across much of the central and southern United States, with the highest chances in the Southwest. Meanwhile, the northern United States along the Canadian border is expected to have the best chances for below-normal precipitation.

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