

National Drought Summary for September 8, 2026

Summary

Drought and abnormal dryness continued to expand or intensify this week across parts of the central and south-central United States as flash drought conditions continued from much of Texas northeast to the middle and lower Mississippi River Valley. Warmer-than-normal temperatures, ranging from 10-15 degrees F above normal in much of the central Great Plains, Corn Belt and Missouri, combined with mostly dry weather in these areas to support worsening drought. Largely drier weather also continued this week in New England, in parts of the Michigan Upper Peninsula, along parts of the North Dakota-South Dakota border, in southeast Montana and in southwest Colorado, leading to degradations occurring in parts of these areas. In contrast, heavy rains fell from southeast South Dakota into western Iowa and southern Minnesota, in eastern Wisconsin, in northern North Dakota, in western Oregon and in parts of the northern Rocky Mountains in Montana and Idaho. Scattered heavy rains, locally 2-3 inches or more, also occurred in parts of Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware, eastern North Carolina and Florida. Tropical Storm Edouard and its remnants delivered very heavy rain amounts, locally 10-15 inches or more, in a narrow corridor in southeast Texas. Lowell, in the central Pacific Ocean, delivered heavy rain amounts to Niihau, Kauai and Oahu as it passed west of the islands as a hurricane earlier this week, alleviating abnormal dryness in a few areas. Conditions continued to improve in localized areas of Puerto Rico this week after recent heavy rains. While the central United States dealt with an early-autumn heat wave, near- or below-normal temperatures occurred from the Great Basin west to the Pacific Ocean.

Northeast

Scattered heavy rains fell in the Northeast this week, especially in parts of far northern New York, southwest New York, Pennsylvania, northeast West Virginia, New Jersey and Delaware. The heaviest amounts fell in portions of central Pennsylvania, where locally over 5 inches of rain fell. The rain led to some improvements to ongoing long-term drought and abnormal dryness in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Maryland, Delaware and New Jersey, where precipitation deficits lessened and streamflow and soil moisture levels improved. In contrast, moderate and severe drought increased in parts of southern Maine and Vermont and New Hampshire, where precipitation deficits quickly grew and soil moisture and streamflow declined. Temperatures were generally near or a few degrees below normal in New England, while western Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Virginia were 5 or more degrees above normal for the week.

Southeast

With long-term dryness entrenched in parts of the Carolinas, Virginia, Georgia and Florida, localized heavier rains, or lack thereof, played a large role in how conditions changed in the Southeast this week. Conditions were quickly drying in southern Virginia and parts of northern and western North Carolina and northern Georgia. Temperatures were also 5-10 degrees above normal in these areas this week. A few locations in eastern North Carolina received

enough rainfall to lessen precipitation deficits and boost soil moisture. In contrast, drier weather in parts of south-central Virginia and the western Carolinas led to worsening precipitation deficits and lowered streamflows and soil moisture in some locales. Widespread improvements occurred in the Florida Peninsula and adjacent southeast Georgia following widespread heavy rains, locally totaling 4-6 inches. Remaining drought in northeast Florida is primarily long-term in nature, as most shorter-term drought impacts have stopped.

South

Large parts of the South region continued to quickly dry this week amid mostly above-normal temperatures and dry weather. A few exceptions include southern Louisiana, southeast Texas (where former Tropical Storm Edouard dropped rain amounts that locally exceeded 10 inches), and parts of the western Oklahoma Panhandle, where scattered thunderstorm rains occurred. Isolated one-category improvements occurred in the Oklahoma Panhandle, while one- and two-category improvements occurred in southeast Texas, where precipitation deficits were either reduced or erased entirely, along with improved soil moisture and streamflow. Elsewhere, mostly dry weather and hot temperatures (5-15 degrees above normal) covered a wide area from western and northern Texas through most of Oklahoma, Arkansas, northern Mississippi and Tennessee. Short-term rainfall deficits continued to grow across much of the region, along with dropping soil moisture and streamflow levels, leading to widespread agricultural drought impacts. Large areas of degrading conditions spread from much of Texas into eastern Oklahoma, Arkansas, northern Mississippi and portions of Tennessee. The rapidly drying weather in Tennessee came after much wetter recent weather, somewhat lessening the impact of the recent heat and dryness there and in neighboring Kentucky.

Midwest

Weather and drought (or lack thereof) conditions were a mixed bag across the Midwest this week. Temperatures across the region were warmer than normal, with most of the region finishing the week at least 5-10 degrees above normal, and large portions of Iowa, Missouri and Illinois finishing the week 10-15 degrees above normal. Thunderstorms dropped heavy amounts of rain, locally exceeding 5 inches, in northwest Iowa, southern Minnesota and east-central Wisconsin. Notable rains of 1-2 inches or more also fell in parts of far northeast Indiana, southern Lower Michigan, west-central Wisconsin, northern (especially northwestern) Minnesota and parts of Ohio. Elsewhere, with a few exceptions, dry weather came along with the heat, and most of Missouri (excluding the northwest), Illinois, Indiana (excluding the far northeast) and western Kentucky received little or no rainfall. Moderate, severe and extreme drought coverage grew across south-central and southwest Missouri, where significant short-term precipitation deficits and soil moisture deficits continued to build amidst declining streamflow in some areas. Widespread agricultural drought impacts were occurring across south-central and southwest Missouri given these conditions and the early-autumn heat wave. Short-term moderate drought also expanded in northeast Missouri where short-term rainfall deficits grew and soil moisture and streamflow dropped. While not yet at drought levels, abnormal dryness expanded across much of Missouri, southern Illinois and western Kentucky,

where conditions have quickly dried due to the hot and dry weather pattern of the past few weeks. In far northern Illinois, hot and dry weather this week led to a small area of moderate drought development where soil moisture levels have dropped. Short-term moderate drought developed in parts of the eastern Upper Peninsula of Michigan, where short-term rainfall deficits combined with low levels of soil moisture and streamflow. Heavy rains led to improving conditions in west-central and northwest Iowa (and adjacent southwest Minnesota), east-central Wisconsin and northwest Minnesota. Extreme drought expanded slightly into the Twin Cities area, where short- and mid-term precipitation deficits increased.

High Plains

Conditions in the High Plains region this week were mixed. Scattered heavy rains fell in northeast and southwest Nebraska, southeast South Dakota, northern North Dakota and far southwest Kansas, leading to localized or widespread improvements in these and neighboring areas. However, temperatures across the region were warmer than normal, leading to abnormally high atmospheric thirst and widespread degrading conditions in parts of the region. Temperatures were mostly 10-15 degrees above normal in Kansas, eastern Nebraska and southeastern South Dakota. Eastern Kansas and southeast Nebraska were particularly hot and dry this week, leading to large expansions of moderate, severe and extreme drought in south-central and southeast Kansas, and the introduction of abnormal dryness in much of northeast Kansas. Unusually wet weather in August kept conditions in southeast Nebraska from drying as much as areas farther south and southeast. Severe and extreme drought also grew in coverage in southeastern North Dakota, where warm and dry weather this week worsened precipitation deficits and soil moisture conditions. Drought conditions improved in southeastern South Dakota, and adjacent far northeast Nebraska, where rain amounts of 2-5 inches fell. Similar amounts of rain fell in parts of northern North Dakota, leading to improvements in soil moisture and streamflow there and improving drought conditions. Heavy rain amounts of 1-3 inches fell in parts of southwest Nebraska and the Nebraska Panhandle, and adjacent northeast Colorado, lessening precipitation deficits and improving drought conditions.

West

Most of California, Oregon, Washington and Idaho were cooler-than-normal this week, with some areas of northern California and southern Oregon finishing the week 10-15 degrees below normal. Eastern portions of New Mexico and Montana, by contrast, were warmer than normal, with temperatures in most areas 5-10 degrees above normal. Widespread moderate to heavy precipitation fell from northern California across portions of Oregon, central and northern Idaho and western and northern Montana. Precipitation amounts in western Montana and northern Idaho ranged from 2 to 6 inches. This led to increased soil moisture and streamflow and lessened short- and long-term precipitation deficits, and the coverage of moderate and severe drought and abnormal dryness lessened in some areas. Precipitation also improved conditions in south-central Oregon, as long-term precipitation deficits lessened in severity. Long-term precipitation deficits grew amid groundwater and soil moisture shortages in south-central Nevada, leading to an increase in severe drought coverage there. In southeast

Montana, warm and dry weather led to decreased streamflow and soil moisture in a few areas, leading to localized expansion of severe and extreme drought.

Caribbean

Rain totals of 1-5 inches fell in parts of central, north-central and western Puerto Rico. This led to improvement of severe and moderate drought and abnormal dryness in central and north-central parts of the island. Recent rainfall also allowed a small amount of improvement to extreme drought in southeast Puerto Rico.

This week, the dominant atmospheric pattern changed from the influence of the remnants of Hurricane Dolly early in the week to a southeast trade-wind regime. This brought passing showers and isolated thunderstorms, followed by slightly drier air on September 8. While this week's rainfall helped in some areas, it was not enough to alleviate the ongoing extreme drought conditions, particularly the significant groundwater deficits observed at monitoring wells.

St. Croix experienced highly variable rainfall this week. The NWS/NOAA station at East Hill recorded 0.10 inches. The CoCoRaHS network recorded 0.14 inch at Christiansted 1.6 E (VI-SC-10), 0.11 inch at Frederiksted 1.7 ESE (VI-SC-20), 0.44 inch at Christiansted 6.5 W (VI-SC-23), 0.20 inch at Christiansted 1.7 SW (VI-SC-30), 1.14 inches at Frederiksted 1.9 NE (VI-SC-34), and 0.88 inch at Frederiksted 1.3 ENE (VI-SC-35). Thus, reported rainfall ranged from 0.10 to 1.14 inches, with the largest amount occurring in the Frederiksted area. These observations indicate that rainfall was locally substantial but unevenly distributed across the island. Despite the rainfall, the groundwater conditions remained very poor. At Adventure 28 Well, the water level on September 8 was 25.66 ft, compared with 18.67 ft on September 8, 2025, indicating the water level was about 6.99 ft lower than a year earlier. These conditions indicate continued extreme drought.

This week, St. John experienced locally significant rainfall, although available observations are limited. The Rafe Boulon (VI-SJ-3) station at Windswept Beach recorded 1.47 inches, while the CoCoRaHS station VI-SJ-5 at Cruz Bay 1.6 E recorded 1.04 inches. Both stations measured over 1 inch of rainfall, indicating that parts of St. John received a beneficial amount of precipitation during the week. However, the groundwater situation remained much less favorable. At Susannaberg DPW 3 well, the water level on September 8 was measured at 18.64 feet below the land surface, compared to 10.14 feet on September 8, 2025. This 8.50-foot difference indicates the groundwater level is substantially deeper now than it was a year ago. Observations showed that the depth continued to increase from the previous week, and St. John remains in extreme drought conditions.

St. Thomas observed significant variability in rainfall this week. While Cyril E. King Airport recorded no rainfall, CoCoRaHS station VI-ST-5 at Charlotte Amalie West 4.2 WNW measured 1.19 inches, and station VI-ST-15 at Charlotte Amalie West 1.3 N recorded 0.51 inches. This shows a rainfall range of 0.00 to 1.19 inches. On September 8, groundwater levels were at 9.76 feet, slightly up from 9.88 feet the previous week. However, this is still much higher than the 7.77 feet recorded on September 8, 2025, making it about 1.99 feet deeper than last year. Despite this week's minor improvement in groundwater depth, St. Thomas continues to

experience extreme drought conditions.

Pacific

Rainfall in the central Interior region this week led to some improvement in areas experiencing abnormal dryness. Drier-than-normal weather continued in southeast Alaska, and moderate short-term drought continued there. Above-normal precipitation fell in parts of central and western Alaska, with some areas receiving at least 150 percent of normal precipitation. South-central Alaska and the Aleutian Islands were drier than normal this week, with some areas receiving less than half of their normal weekly precipitation. Temperatures across most of Alaska were generally within 5 degrees of normal (with a few exceptions). Temperatures mostly leaned cooler than normal in central and northern Alaska and warmer than normal in southeast Alaska and the Aleutian Islands.

Heavy rain fell across portions of Niihau, Kauai and Oahu following the passage of Lowell's center to the west of the islands. Abnormal dryness was removed on Kauai and Oahu following Lowell's passage, while abnormal dryness also improved in southern parts of central Maui. Above-normal rainfall also occurred in parts of the Big Island of Hawaii, especially along the east-central and southeast ends of the island.

Synoptic conditions across the Marshall Islands featured tropical moisture and localized convergence, producing intermittent showers but considerable island-to-island rainfall variability. Rainfall was generally adequate during September 2–8, although rainfall remained variable among stations. This week, Ailinglapalap received 1.60 inches, Jaluit 0.20 inches, Kwajalein 3.51 inches, Majuro 2.28 inches, Mili 1.62 inches, Utirik 0.78 inches, and Wotje 2.10 inches. The increased rainfall at Kwajalein, Majuro, and Mili indicates generally favorable moisture conditions, and all stations remain drought-free. Jaluit experienced a second dry week, and Utirik received limited but sufficient rainfall to remain drought-free. However, continued dryness at both locations should be monitored for possible development of abnormally dry conditions.

The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) experienced generally adequate rainfall this week, with most stations receiving between about 1.8 and 3.1 inches. This week, Chuuk Lagoon received 0.19 inches (1 day missing), Kapingamarangi 1.97 inches, Kosrae 4.18 inches, Lukunor 3.05 inches, Nukuoro 1.88 inches, Ulithi 1.84 inches, Pohnpei 2.29 inches, Woleai 2.43 inches, and Yap 0.14 inches. Chuuk had also received 2.84 inches during the previous week, while Kapingamarangi remained abnormally dry (D0-S) after at least two weeks of dryness but showed some improvement from recent rainfall. Fananu and Pingelap had no data. Synoptic conditions supported periodic convection and showers in a moist tropical environment, with rainfall generally sufficient to maintain drought-free conditions across the FSM, although Yap and Chuuk received considerably less rain this week.

American Samoa continued to experience insufficient rainfall and persistent drought conditions. Synoptic conditions were dominated by trade-wind flow and localized convergence, producing scattered showers but not enough widespread or persistent rainfall to alleviate the existing moisture deficit. This week, Pago Pago received 0.23 inches, Siufaga Ridge 0.4 inches, and

Toa Ridge 0.65 inches. Although Toa Ridge received somewhat more rainfall, precipitation remained localized and insufficient to provide meaningful drought relief. All three stations remain in short-term moderate drought conditions.

Palau experienced continued severe rainfall deficits this week. Synoptic conditions were unfavorable for significant rainfall, with suppressed convection and relatively stable conditions limiting shower development over Palau. Both Koror and WSO Palau/Airai recorded 0.00 inches. This represented a second consecutive dry week, and the drought condition has now deteriorated from an abnormal drought to a short-term drought classification (D1-S) at both locations. Weekly rainfall observations also indicated that Koror experienced dry conditions during six of the past seven weeks, while Airai also experienced persistent dryness in recent weeks.

This week, the Mariana Islands received generally adequate rainfall, although precipitation was highly localized. Synoptic conditions favored active convection and locally heavy showers, particularly over Guam, where enhanced moisture and convergence produced the 3.07-inch rainfall event on September 6. The exceptionally heavy rainfall on Guam accounted for most of the island's weekly total. This week, Guam received 4.09 inches, including 3.07 inches on September 6; Rota received 2.67 inches; Saipan received 1.24 inches; and Tinian received 0.38 inches (5 days missing). The rainfall was sufficient to maintain drought-free conditions across all four locations.

Looking Ahead

From the evenings of Wednesday, September 9-Monday, September 14, the National Weather Service Weather Prediction Center precipitation forecast is for mostly dry weather in the West, and in the western half of the Great Plains, except for parts of north-central Idaho eastward across Montana into North Dakota, where over 0.75 inches of precipitation are forecast in most areas. Eastern parts of South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas and Oklahoma may also receive 0.75 inches or more of rain, with some parts of eastern Kansas and western Missouri forecast to receive 1.5 inches of rain or more. Much of northern Iowa, Minnesota, northwest Wisconsin and the western Upper Peninsula of Michigan are forecast to receive at least 1.5 inches of rain. Rain amounts at or above 0.75 inches are also likely in parts of the Ohio River Valley, southern Mid-Atlantic, southeast Louisiana, and parts of southern Mississippi, Alabama, northern Georgia and the Carolinas. Parts of the Florida Peninsula may receive 1.5-4 inches of rain. Generally drier weather, with local exceptions, is forecast in Texas, the Lower Peninsula of Michigan, northern parts of Illinois, Indiana and Ohio, and southern New England.

For September 15-19, the National Weather Service Climate Prediction Center forecast favors above-normal precipitation for much of the contiguous United States, especially in the Four Corners states. Near-normal precipitation is favored near the Gulf Coast and in parts of central and northern California and Nevada and eastern Oregon and Washington. Below-normal precipitation is favored in western parts of Oregon and Washington. Warmer-than-normal temperatures are favored across much of the southern and eastern United States, especially in the Southeast. Cooler-than-normal temperatures are favored in North Dakota, northern South Dakota, northwest Minnesota and most of Montana. Above-normal precipitation and

avored across the state. Above-normal precipitation is favored in most of Alaska, though below-normal precipitation is likelier in southeast Alaska, and near-normal precipitation is favored in the central Aleutian Islands.

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