

National Drought Summary for September 15, 2026

Summary

Last week, there were several areas that had significant rainfall amounts. One area was over Iowa, eastern Nebraska and Kansas, and northwest Missouri, where more than 4 inches fell in central Iowa and southeastern Kansas. Another area was centered over Ohio, West Virginia, and western Pennsylvania, where conditions were already wet. Much of Florida and the Gulf Coast received 2 to 4 inches of precipitation in the past week. Most of the southwest U.S. received little rain, with exceptions of scattered monsoonal precipitation along the New Mexico-Arizona border. Most of Texas and Oklahoma continued to be dry, as was the majority of the western Great Plains.

Temperatures in the southern Great Plains and lower Mississippi valley continued to be very warm, in some locations over 10F above normal. Most of the rest of the continental U.S. was also above normal. The only areas with below normal temperatures for the past week were in northern New England as well as most of the northwest states.

Northeast

Northern New Jersey to Cape Cod along the coast of southern New England had a band of significant rain in the past week. Unfortunately, this rain was not where it was most needed. Much of Maine saw deteriorating drought conditions with continued dryness. An area of extreme drought was introduced along the Maine coastline, with low streamflows and well levels observed. Another area with rain falling over locations that are not abnormally dry was in West Virginia and western Pennsylvania.

Southeast

Central Virginia had moderate rainfall this past week, leading to some drought improvement. Most of the Carolinas into Georgia were warm and dry, however, resulting the regional degradation of drought conditions. Florida was generally wet and had drought improvement in small areas in the north, center, and south parts of the state. Meanwhile, Alabama continued to experience above normal temperatures and limited rainfall in the central to north, leading to large areas with drought degradation. There remain some areas of extreme drought in northern North Carolina, coastal South and North Carolina, and small areas in Florida.

South

Extremely above normal temperatures continued in this region over the past week. Nearly all locations had drought deterioration, with the exceptions of northern Arkansas, northeastern Oklahoma, and coastal Mississippi. Much of Texas and into the Ark-La-Tex area experienced flash drought conditions. In addition to the heat, these areas received little rainfall in the week. Extreme to exceptional drought conditions are noted in far south Texas, most of northern Texas into western and southern Oklahoma, northwestern and northeastern Arkansas, and along the

Arkansas-Mississippi border.

Midwest

Significant rainfall was observed over western Kentucky as well as over central-to-north Missouri, leading in removal of abnormally dry conditions. Heavy rain also fell in northwestern Iowa, northern Minnesota, and a band across central Wisconsin, with drought improvement as a result in these locations. Meanwhile, a mostly rain-free week in northern Illinois and Indiana caused introduction of an abnormally dry area. Extreme drought conditions can be found in southern Missouri, northern Wisconsin, and along the borders of Minnesota with both Wisconsin and North Dakota.

High Plains

Eastern Kansas had above normal precipitation over the past week; this led to improvement in drought conditions in this area. Eastern Nebraska and eastern South Dakota also had decent rainfall and resulting improvement to drought. Other areas of South Dakota that missed out on the rain had drought degradation. Colorado had drought degradations in the center part of the state, with drought improvements in both the southwest and southeast parts. Extreme drought continues over much of Colorado and Wyoming, western Nebraska and the Dakotas, and in eastern North Dakota. Exceptional drought is observed over much of central Colorado as well as two localized areas in far western Nebraska.

West

An area from southwestern Oregon to central Washington into northern Idaho and Montana received some welcome rainfall during the week. The rain resulted in regional improvements in drought conditions. One location that just missed out was in northwest Washington on the Canadian border, resulting in a drought degradation, where continued low streamflows were observed. There were also areas on the California-Nevada border and central Arizona with drought degradation that also received little-to-no rainfall. Extreme drought is shown over much of central Oregon, central Utah, southern Idaho down into northern Nevada, and small areas in northern Washington and southern Arizona. Exceptional drought continues in southern Idaho, northern Nevada, and northeastern Oregon.

Caribbean

In Puerto Rico, some locations did experience heavy rain over the past week, which improved drought conditions. Additional rainfall will be needed to ameliorate extreme drought conditions in the northeast as well as the central-to-southern coast.

St. Croix experienced highly variable and light rainfall this week. The NWS/NOAA station at East Hill recorded 0.13 inches. The CoCoRaHS network recorded 0.48 inch at Christiansted 1.6 E (VI-SC-10), 0.07 inch at Frederiksted 1.7 ESE (VI-SC-20) and Christiansted 6.5 W (VI-SC-23), 0.18 inch at Christiansted 1.7 SW (VI-SC-30), 0.70 inches at Frederiksted 1.9 NE (VI-

SC-34) and 0.12 inch at Frederiksted 1.3 ENE (VI-SC-35). Thus, reported rainfall ranged from 0.07 to 0.80 inches, with the largest amount occurring in the Christiansted area. The groundwater conditions remained very poor. At Adventure 28 Well, the water level on September 15 was 25.85 feet, compared with 18.62 feet on September 15, 2025, indicating the water level was about 7.2 feet lower than a year earlier. These conditions indicate continued short-term extreme drought (D3-S).

This week, St. John experienced sparse rainfall although available observations are limited. The Rafe Boulon (VI-SJ-3) station at Windswept Beach recorded 0.3 inches, while the CoCoRaHS station VI-SJ-5 at Cruz Bay 1.6 E recorded 0.38 inches and station VI-SJ-10 at Cruz Bay 3.1 NNW recorded 0.5 inches. None of the stations measured over half-an-inch of rainfall. At Susannaberg DPW 3 well, the water level on September 15 was measured at 18.73 feet below the land surface, compared to 12.68 feet on September 15, 2025. This 6.10-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 short-term extreme drought (D3-S) 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 1.01 inches and station VI-ST-15 at Charlotte Amalie West 1.3 N recorded 0.43 inches. This shows a rainfall range of 0.00 to 1.01 inches. On September 15, groundwater levels were at 8.41 feet, up from 9.76 feet the previous week and almost equal to 8.22 feet this time last year on September 15, 2025. Despite this week's improvement in groundwater depth, 3- to 12-month precipitation indicators show large precipitation deficits remain and St. Thomas continues to experience short-term extreme drought (D3-S) conditions.

Pacific

In Alaska, areas of abnormally dry conditions were also removed based on recent rains in the southeastern part of the mainland.

Over Hawaii, rainfall from remnants and outer bands of tropical systems resulted in removal of abnormally dry conditions on the islands of Maui and M o l o k a » i

Conditions across the Marshall islands brought intermittent showers and heavy rainfall for most islands this week (September 9-15). This week, all but Utirik (1.74 inches) received over 3 inches of rain with Ailinglapalap recording 6.41 inches, Jaluit 4.13 inches, Kwajalein 5.84 inches, Majuro 3.87 inches, Mili 4.23 inches and Wotje 3.54 inches. While Utirik did receive 1.74 inches this week, it follows several weeks of below adequate precipitation demand leading to the introduction of short-term abnormal dryness (D0-S).

The Federation States of Micronesia experienced generally good rainfall this week, with most stations receiving 2-6 inches. This week, Chuuk Lagoon received 2.39 inches (1 day missing), Kapingamarangi 0.98 inches, Kosrae 2.16 inches (2 days missing), Lukunor 5.91 inches (2 days missing), Nukuoro 1.88 inches, Ulithi 3.34 inches, (2 days missing) Pohnpei 5.81 inches, Woleai 4.19 inches (1 day missing) and Yap 2.23 inches (1 day missing). Kapingamarangi remained in short-term abnormally dryness (D0-S) after at least three weeks of dryness but

showed some improvement from recent rainfall. Fananu and Pingelap had no data.

American Samoa received much needed and beneficial rainfall this week after several dry weeks. This week, Pago Pago received 2.68 inches (1 day missing), Siufaga Ridge 6.56 inches and Toa Ridge 5.43 inches. Despite the abundant rainfall this week, conditions remain in short-term moderate drought conditions, though more rainfall in the weeks to come could improve those conditions.

Palau experienced another week of inadequate precipitation and remain in short-term moderate drought (D1-S). This week with both Koror and WSO Palau/Airai recorded 1.87 inches. While this week did get more precipitation, this followed 2 consecutive dry weeks.

This week, the Mariana Islands received generally adequate rainfall. Synoptic conditions favored active convection and locally heavy showers, particularly over Guam that received an average of 2.7 inches this week with Antonio B Won Pat International Airport recording 4.49 inches, Agat 3.19 recording inches and Dededo recording 3.13 inches (2 days missing). Saipan averaged over 3.18 inches this week with Saipan International Airport recording 3.41 inches and Capital Hill recording 2.95 inches this week. Rota received 2.54 inches this week with the September monthly total already surpassing the necessary 4 inches (4.52 inches). Tinian only recorded trace precipitation (0.06 inches), though there was no data for 6 of the 7 days this week. All islands remain free of dryness or drought.

Looking Ahead

Over the next five days leading up to next Tuesday, above normal rainfall is forecast in south Florida as well as a large area in southern Wisconsin and Minnesota into eastern Iowa and northern Illinois. The latter area of forecasted rainfall continues to the east through central Michigan, the southern Great Lakes, Pennsylvania, New York, and much of central and southern New England. Other locations with rainfall in the forecast this week are in the Appalachian Mountains, the western Great Plains, and the Four Corners states. Unfortunately, most of Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama are forecast to receive little rainfall. Dry conditions are also forecast in California, Nevada, and Washington. Much above normal temperatures are forecast to continue this week in the central and southern U.S.

The 6- to 10-day outlook (September 22-26, 2026) favors above normal temperatures continuing over nearly all of the continental United States. Areas most likely to be above normal are again the south into the southeast, plus the far north. Hawaii is also likely to be above normal. For precipitation, the Eastern Seaboard is likely to have above normal rainfall as is the Southwest. The central U.S. into the upper Midwest is likely to have below normal rainfall. Hawaii and Alaska are both likely to have above normal rain during this period.

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