

▶ READ ABOUT THE HURRICANE AWARENESS TOUR.....1

○ ISSUE 28

○ Spring

○ 2020



▶ EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT: MEET ISRAEL GONZALEZ.....3



▶ OFFICE OUTREACH EFFORTS.....4

# Tallahassee topics

NEWS AND NOTES FROM YOUR LOCAL NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE OFFICE.

*The National Weather Service (NWS) office in Tallahassee, FL provides weather, hydrologic, and climate forecasts and warnings for Southeast Alabama, Southwest & South Central Georgia, the Florida Panhandle and Big Bend, and the adjacent Gulf of Mexico coastal waters. Our primary mission is the protection of life and property and the enhancement of the local economy.*

## Hurricane Awareness Tour Returning to Tallahassee...next year

*By Mark Wool*

The National Weather Service (NWS) in Tallahassee was excited to announce the return of the Hurricane Awareness Tour (HAT) to Tallahassee, FL on Thursday, May 7th. The event was set to take place at the Tallahassee International Airport. However, the COVID-19 pandemic forced cancellation of the tour for this year. The good news is that we are planning to bring the event to you in May of 2021! The highlight of the day will be student, media and public tours of two of the aircraft that fly service missions into hurricanes at the request of the National Hurricane Center (NHC). The planes (pictured below) include NOAA’s WP-3D “Orion” aircraft (left) and the U.S. Air Force 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron’s WC-130J “Hercules” aircraft (right).



The Orion is a versatile turboprop aircraft equipped with a variety of scientific instrumentation, radars, and recording systems for both in-situ and remote sensing measurements of the atmosphere, the earth, and its’ environment. The aircraft collects low-altitude data to fill gaps in data not available from ground-based radar or satellite imagery. The Hercules is a high-wing, medium-range aircraft configured to penetrate tropical disturbances and storms, hurricanes and winter storms to obtain data on the movement, size and intensity of these systems. It carries a minimal crew of five: pilot, co-pilot, navigator, aerial reconnaissance weather officer, and weather reconnaissance loadmaster. The crew collects and reports weather data as often as every minute.

Attendees will also meet forecasters from NHC and the NWS, walk through various exhibits such as mobile command vehicles, and learn about weather safety and preparedness. The HAT last visited Tallahassee in 2014.



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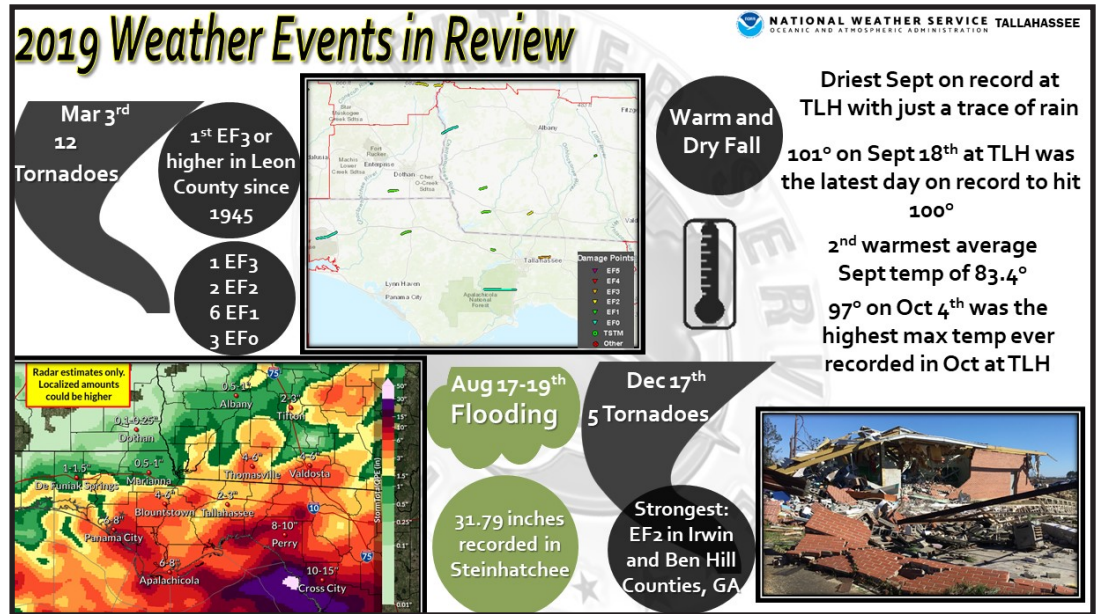


[weather.gov/tae](http://weather.gov/tae)

# 2019 Weather Recap, Mild Finish

By Israel Gonzalez

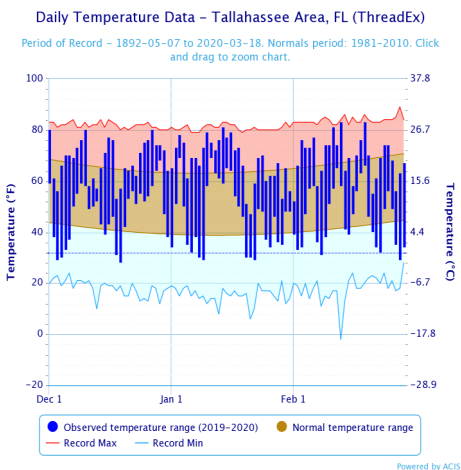
With a new year and decade well underway, this is a good time to reflect on notable weather events from 2019 as highlighted in the graphic below. More information can also be found at this link: <https://www.weather.gov/tae/events>.



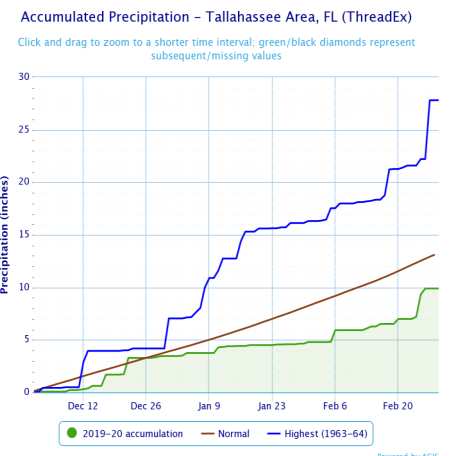
November was a slightly cooler and much drier than normal month with an **average temperature of 58.5°** (1.8° < normal) and **total precipitation accumulation of 0.87"** (2.63" < normal). The first Freeze Warnings of the season were issued for our AL and GA counties, and portions of the western Panhandle on the 12<sup>th</sup>. Apalachicola also set a new record for daily minimum temperature at 32°, breaking the previous record of 34° in 1968. 2019 ended on a mild note with December average temperatures (57.8°) being 4.6° warmer than normal. Apalachicola set a new daily max temperature record of 76° on the 28<sup>th</sup>, breaking the previous record of 75° in 2016. In terms of precipitation, December was slightly drier than normal with a **total accumulation of 3.46"** (-0.44" anomaly). The most noteworthy event occurred on **December 17<sup>th</sup>**, when a potent squall line passed through the area. **This system ended our office's 88-day Severe Thunderstorm Warning issuance drought** (3<sup>rd</sup> longest drought since the office opened in 1999)! In addition, a few confirmed tornadoes touched down with damage surveys conducted by NWS personnel. The strongest one was an EF-2 that tracked through Ben Hill and Irwin counties.

## Warm Start to 2020

By Israel Gonzalez



2020 got off to a very warm start with the **average temperature anomaly reaching nearly +11° through mid-January!** However, a cold snap late in the month (19<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup>), helped knock down the anomalous warmth by about 3°. In fact, the **first wind chill advisories of the season were issued.** By the end of January, the average temperature was 57.1° (5.7° > normal). January was also very dry, with only a **total accumulation of 1.33"** (3.01" < normal). February was warmer and slightly wetter than normal with an average temperature and precipitation accumulation of 57.3° and 5.10", respectively. Overall, temperature trends were cyclic in February, consisting of brief cold periods followed by quickly moderating temperatures to at or above seasonal values. **Nearly half the total rainfall amount for Tallahassee, was measured on the 25<sup>th</sup> at 2.24"**!







# Employee Spotlight: Israel Gonzalez

Meteorologist at the NWS Tallahassee Since October 2019

By Eric Bunker & Israel Gonzalez

IS THERE A TOPIC YOU'D LIKE US  
TO COVER? SEND US AN E-MAIL:

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## When did you become interested in meteorology?

I became interested growing up in the mid-90s when I frequently watched The Weather Channel after my house got cable TV. I was and continue to be most fascinated with hurricanes; first stimulated by experiences from Hurricane Andrew, and being mesmerized by a VHS tape of the very active 1995 Hurricane Season.

## What made you interested in working for the NWS?

Attending Florida International University (FIU) allowed me to have a solid connection with the NWS as the Hurricane Center (NHC)/Miami Weather Forecast Office shared land with FIU's campus. Frequent seminar visits, forecast shadowing, and volunteer work gave me the necessary exposure to seriously consider the NWS a career choice. I built a large number of connections with the employees over the years, many of whom played a role in where I am now.

## How did your time at FIU help you (personally and professionally) get to this point?

As mentioned in my answer for question 2, the connection with NWS on campus was a great help. Many years of graduate school under the tutelage of my advisor (who has a lot of history at NWS; including flying into numerous hurricanes!) was also invaluable as I learned the science and history of meteorology in the classroom, conducted important projects (e.g., thesis, dissertation) and wrote about/presented my work at various venues. Graduate school also afforded me opportunities to travel to conferences, seminars and workshops leading to exposure beyond the bubble of the academic world.

## Having almost been here a full year, what event or moment has stuck with you the most?

The moment that stuck out to me the most was when I received the official conversion letter to become a permanent employee with this office. It was an incredibly gratifying feeling that set my post-academic life into motion. Event wise, probably the one that stood out was during Hurricane Dorian where history was unfolding with the storm's intensity as it approached the eastern US, and there was still considerable uncertainty on its next move. Anxiety built to its highest point when it stalled over the Bahamas. It was a long, unique, and challenging operational period, but a huge learning experience that will surely help me for future tropical events.

## Having come from the Miami area, what have you most and least enjoyed about the weather in Tallahassee?

I've most enjoyed the actual change in seasons compared to Miami, despite being anomalously warm for Tallahassee since moving up here. There were a couple of instances where I attended FSU football games late in 2019 and the weather was nearly unbearable: 1) peak afternoon, clear skies, and intense heat; 2) windy, cold, and overcast skies. Those conditions tested my fortitude, but I was able to stay through the entirety of both games!

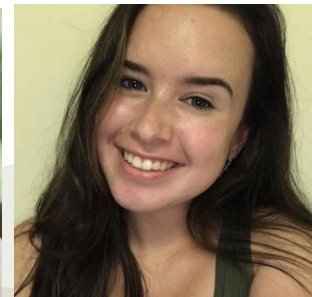
## What do you like to do outside of work?

I am a pretty laid-back person, so outside of work I like to catch up on rest, household chores and errands. My interests include watching basketball (mainly my hometown Miami Heat), gaming, exercising, cooking, reading, and spending time with my girlfriend. Lately, I've also taken advantage of the favorable weather by running/biking along many of the beautiful trails Tallahassee has to offer.

# FSU's Student Volunteers

By Israel Gonzalez

This year, our office welcomed four FSU meteorology students to participate in volunteer work and learn the ins and outs of operational meteorology. They are **Catherine Buczek** (far left), **Caitlin Dirkes** (center left), **Lauren Kubelka** (center right), and **Megan Tollefsen** (far right). Catherine is a graduate student mainly working with Kelley Godsey, our Senior Service Hydrologist. She has an interest in hydrometeorology, climate and GIS. Caitlin (graduate student) and Lauren (senior) both came in already with some prior volunteer work in the weather service (both coincidentally at the Key West Office). Lastly, Megan is a sophomore involved with the North Florida Chapter of the American Meteorological Society and National Weather Association. We look forward to helping them learn what we do on a daily basis, further stimulate their interest in operations, and hopefully lead them on a successful career path after graduation. We have an excellent track record with our student volunteers as many of them have gone on to careers in the weather service – most recently **Charles Bowen**, a 2019 FSU graduate (M.S.) landed an entry level forecaster position at the Morehead City NC Office. Two other volunteer students also continue to work with us: **Chesnea Skeen** (graduate student) and **Harrison Prieto** (undergrad & FSU basketball player) who have done great work for us, and should transition nicely into the weather service as well, should they decide to pursue that path.

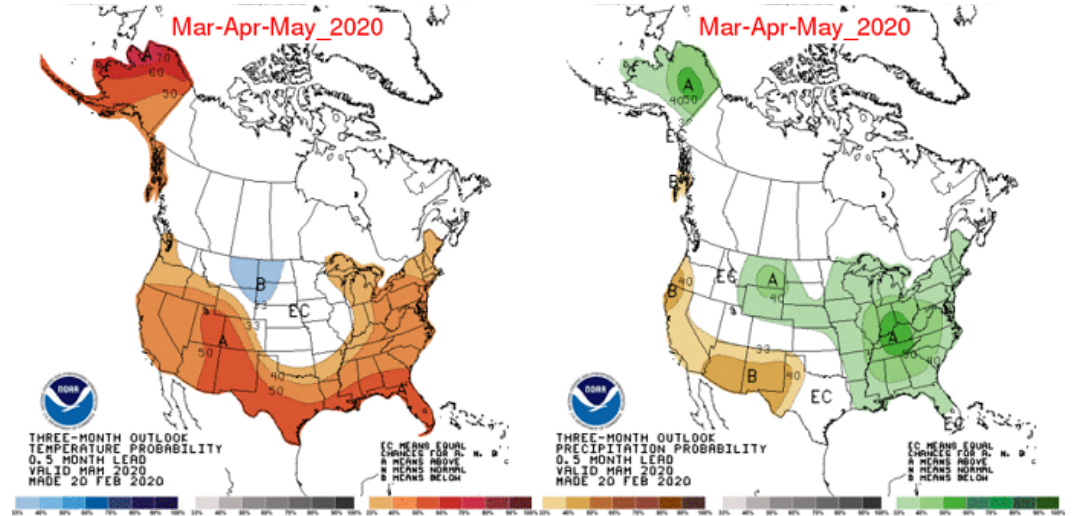




# Spring Outlook

By Tim Barry

For the period March through May, the Climate Prediction Center indicates that conditions are more favorable for above average temperatures and precipitation, with a higher confidence in above average temperatures. The average monthly temperature/total precipitation amounts for Tallahassee for March, April, and May are 61.8°/3.94", 68.3°/3.44", and 74.3°/2.49", respectively.



## Management-Admin Team

- Tom Johnstone MIC
- Mark Wool, WCM
- Parks Camp, SOO
- Doug Sherrick, ESA
- Jennifer Nichols, ASA
- Toan Tran, ITO
- Kelly Godsey, Hydrologist
- Ricardo Humphreys, OPL

## Lead Forecasters

- Don Van Dyke
- Donal Harrigan
- Jessica Fieux
- Blair Scholl
- Lauren Nash

## Forecasters

- Tim Barry
- Lance Franck
- Claudia (Jeanie) McDermott
- Wright Dobbs
- Federico Di Catarina
- Eric Bunker
- Israel Gonzalez
- Vacant
- Vacant

## Electronic Technicians

- Craig Carpenter
- Ron Eimiller

# Winter Outreach Efforts

By Mark Wool

NWS Tallahassee enjoys getting out into the community to spread the word about weather safety. We were still able to do that over the winter before the coronavirus brought an abrupt halt to these efforts in March. Back on December 4th, our Science Officer, Parks Camp, was a judge at the Trinity Catholic Science Fair. On the 10th, Meteorologist in Charge, Tom Johnstone, Warning Coordination Meteorologist, Mark Wool, and Senior Forecaster, Jessica Fieux, attended the ACC Emergency Management Conference held at Doak Campbell Stadium's University Center. Tom discussed decision support services. National Hurricane Center Director, Ken Graham, discussed hurricane preparedness. On the 14th, forecaster Lance Franck conducted an office tour for a STEMS 4 Girls group.

After the holidays, on January 16th, forecaster Wright Dobbs conducted a tour for the American Heritage Girls Troop and demonstrated the evening weather balloon launch. On the 25th, Mark and Administrative Support Assistant, Jennifer Nichols, did weather experiments and handed out weather safety information at the annual Museum of Florida History Children's Day (below left). That same day, forecaster Tim Barry manned a booth at the biannual Red Hills Fire Festival. During the last week of January, Florida observed Severe Weather Awareness Week. We at the NWS shared safety and preparedness information for many different weather hazards via our social media accounts. A statewide tornado drill was conducted on the 29th. This allowed schools, hospitals and other institutions to exercise their tornado drill procedures. Similar awareness weeks occurred in Georgia and Alabama in February. On February 16th, senior forecaster, Lauren Nash, conducted an office tour for a large group from Nature Club at the School of Arts and Sciences at the Centre (SASC). On the 20th, Mark joined the weather team from Dothan, Alabama's WTVY TV at a NOAA Weather Radio programming event at Academy Sports and Outdoors. Midland Radio's Bruce Jones also helped out. On the 22nd, Mark handed out safety and preparedness information at Jefferson County, Florida's Build Your Bucket event (below right). This event provided an opportunity for Jefferson County residents to collect hurricane season emergency kit supplies. That same day, Lance talked marine weather at the annual NOAA Weather & Navigation Seminar at MarineMax Marina in Panama City Beach, FL. Finally, on the 28th, Mark conducted an office tour for a group of prospective FSU graduate students.

