



2015 Year in Review for Central and Southeast Illinois

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A wet start to 2015 was observed across central and southeast Illinois, punctuated by June totals that were 4 to 8 inches above normal in many areas, and as much as 10-12 inches above normal in Fulton and Mason Counties. However, a dry spell set up in late summer and early fall which resulted in a period of moderate drought in these same areas. The last week of the year was also unusually wet, with 8-12 inches occurring in many areas south of I-72. Precipitation for the year averaged ended up above normal over the region as a result, especially near the Illinois River valley and from Effingham to Flora. As El Niño continued to intensify, the last few months of the year averaged warmer than normal. Severe weather activity continued to be lower than normal, with only 11 tornadoes reported in the 35-county coverage area of our office.

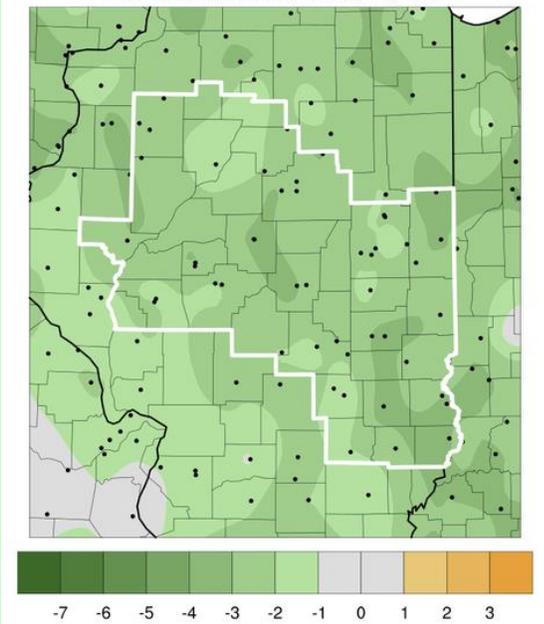
Winter Season

(December 1, 2014 to February 28, 2015)

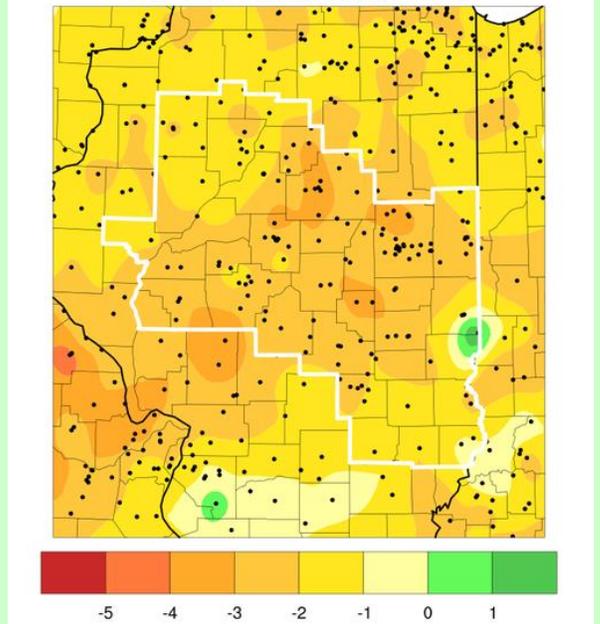
Temperatures: Below normal

Precipitation: Below normal

Average Temperature (°F): Departure from 1981-2010 Normals
December 01, 2014 to February 28, 2015

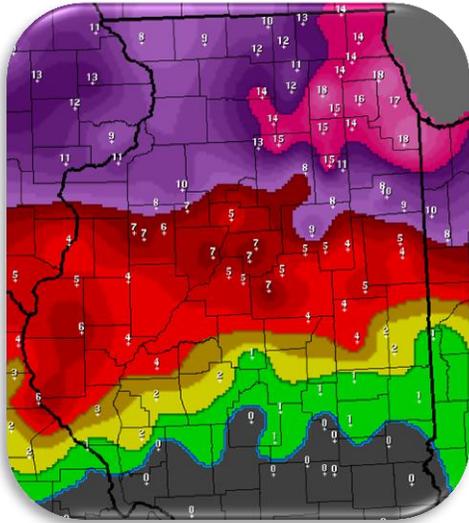


Accumulated Precipitation (in): Departure from 1981-2010 Normals
December 01, 2014 to February 28, 2015



Images courtesy Midwestern Regional Climate Center

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A winter storm produced several inches of snow in parts of central Illinois in early February, but the Chicago area received the brunt of the storm. Snow depth on February 2nd was in excess of a foot in most of northeast Illinois.

Temperature Review:

Warmer weather during December gave way to a period of very cold conditions as the year began. Average temperatures during the first half of January were 9 to 11 degrees below normal across areas north of I-72. The period from the 5-10th was especially cold, with highs frequently only in the teens and lows below zero. The morning of the 8th saw low temperatures colder than 10 below zero from about Galesburg to Bloomington northward, with wind chills of 25 below to 30 below zero. However, a January thaw began around mid-month, and high temperatures were back into the 50s across the south half of the state.

A return to bitter cold was observed during February, with temperatures averaging 10 to 13 degrees below normal. A brief thaw occurred from the 7-8th, when highs were in the 40s, but much of the second half of the month featured days when the average temperature was 20 to 30 degrees below normal. Two people died in Morgan County around mid-month due to prolonged exposure to the cold. On February 24, low temperatures of 10 to 15 below zero were common in east central Illinois, with a low of 20 below observed in far eastern Shelby County.

Weather Review:

A storm system produced 4 to 7 inches of snow along and north of I-74 from January 5-6. This accounted for the bulk of the snow that occurred in that area during the month. Areas from about I-72 southward generally only observed 1 to 3 inches of snow, with less than an inch south of I-70.

February saw several periods of heavy snow:

- As the calendar turned from January to February, an intense storm system brought heavy snow to a large part of the Midwest. Central Illinois observed 5 to 9 inches in locations north of the I-72 corridor, but the heaviest snowfall of 12 to 20 inches occurred from the Quad Cities east to Chicago.
- On the 15-16th, areas from Effingham to Newton to Olney observed 8 to 9 inches of snow, as a storm system passed south of the Ohio Valley.

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- A large area along the I-72 corridor received 6 to 9 inches of snow from the 20-21st, with the heaviest total of 11.8 inches reported at Springfield. There was a sharp cutoff with this snow to the north and south; no snow occurred only 40 miles north of this corridor, and areas south of I-70 largely received rain.
- Several upper-level disturbances produced prolonged snowfall accumulation from the 28th through March 1st. Parts of Macon, Piatt, and Champaign Counties observed 8 to 10 inches of snow during this period, with 4 to 8 inches common along and south of a Rushville to Bloomington line.

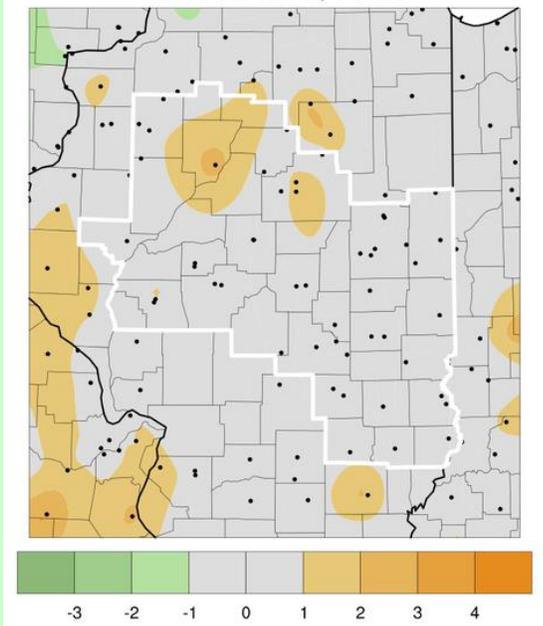
Spring Season

(March 1 through May 31)

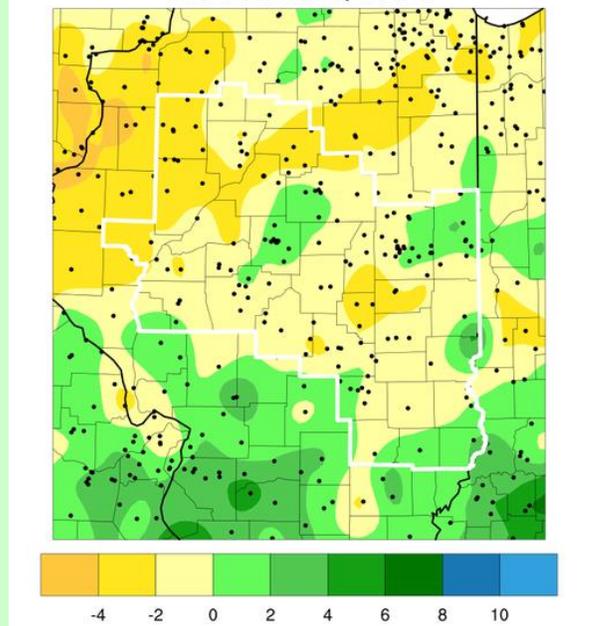
Temperatures: Near normal

Precipitation: Below normal

Average Temperature (°F): Departure from 1981-2010 Normals
March 01, 2015 to May 31, 2015



Accumulated Precipitation (in): Departure from 1981-2010 Normals
March 01, 2015 to May 31, 2015



Images courtesy Midwestern Regional Climate Center



A funnel cloud was observed near Mossville on April 9. Northern Illinois received the brunt of the severe weather on this date, including a long-track EF-4 tornado which affected areas around Rochelle and Fairdale. Photo courtesy of Cara Dorssett.

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Temperature Review:

Temperatures for the spring were fairly typical, with most areas fairly close to normal. Early March did start rather cold, averaging 25-30 degrees below normal with some locations dipping below zero on the 5th and 6th. The first half of April featured well above normal temperatures, which then became well below normal for the second half. There were a couple warmer periods during early and late May; however, the month itself started out very cool and several locations observed a frost on May 1st.

Weather Review:

As meteorological spring began on March 1, the tail end of a winter storm which started on February 28th resulted in 4 to 9 inches of snow falling southeast of a Rushville to Bloomington line, including some totals as high as 8 to 10 inches in Macon, Piatt and Champaign Counties.

Severe weather activity was below normal, with more of the focus across the northern third of the state. A major tornado outbreak in northern Illinois on April 9 largely missed central Illinois, although weak tornadoes were observed near Dunlap (Peoria County) and Tovey (Christian County), and hail as large as 3 inches in diameter fell near Mahomet (Champaign County). Even into May, little in the way of organized severe weather occurred.

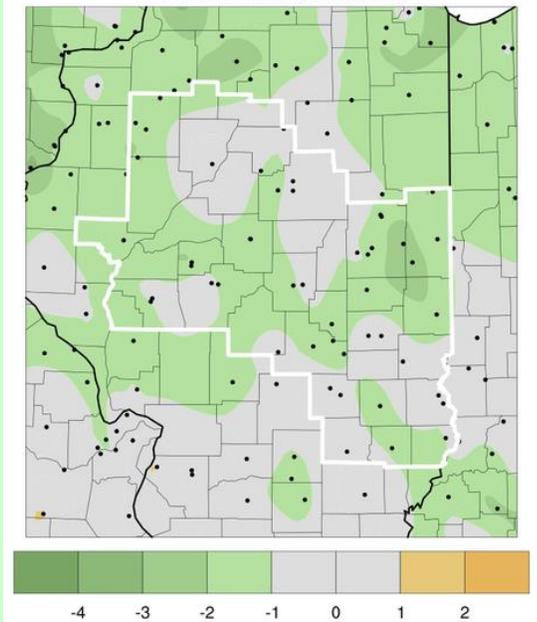
Summer Season

(June 1 through August 31)

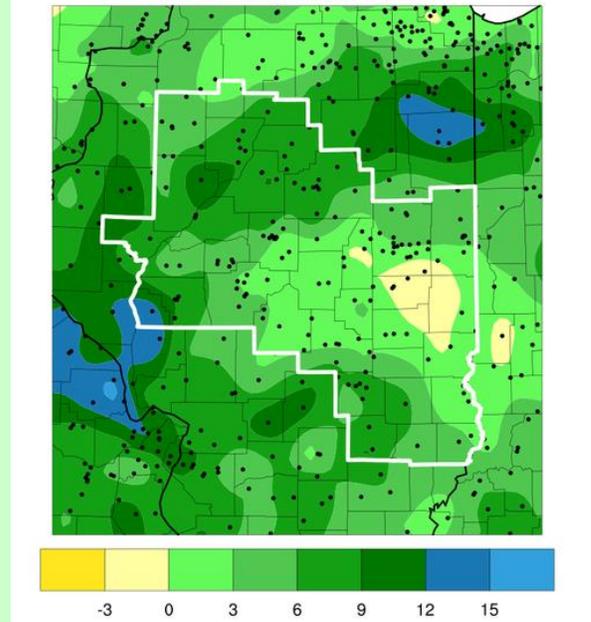
Temperatures: Near to slightly below normal

Precipitation: Mostly above normal

Average Temperature (°F): Departure from 1981-2010 Normals
June 01, 2015 to August 31, 2015



Accumulated Precipitation (in): Departure from 1981-2010 Normals
June 01, 2015 to August 31, 2015



Images courtesy Midwestern Regional Climate Center

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A tornado struck Delavan late evening on July 15th. There were 51 homes damaged by the EF-2 tornado. Photo courtesy of IDOT.

Temperature Review:

While June temperatures were slightly above normal, high temperatures were consistently in the 80s, with a few days reaching the lower 90s. This was followed by one of the coolest July months on record in much of the area, with new record cool Julys set at Decatur, Effingham, Lincoln, Olney and Urbana. Because of this cool July, the summer as a whole ranked in the top 10 coolest summers on record.

With that trend persisting into August, the number of 90 degree days was only a small fraction of normal. Decatur did not reach 90 degrees until August 21st, and only had 4 days of 90 degree highs the entire year, setting a record low number. The warmest stretch of the summer was from August 24-26th, when highs were in the lower to mid 90s, and dew point temperatures in the upper 70s to near 80 degrees resulted in heat indices of 105-110 in many areas.

Weather Review:

June was an extremely wet month across the area, and the statewide average of 9.53" was the wettest June on record. An active jet stream brought numerous upper level disturbances to the area, enhancing rainfall amounts, and the remnants of Tropical Storm Bill on the 18-19th further enhanced the rainfall. One of the wetter summers on record occurred over central Illinois, with amounts of 4 to 8 inches above normal. Rainfall totals for the month included 15.81" at Canton, 14.95" at Havana, 14.63" at Flora, 13.05" at Danville, and 11.60" at Peoria (its 2nd wettest June on record and 5th wettest month ever).

July continued where June left off, with an active storm track resulting in repeated heavy rainfall. However, the coverage of the heavy rain was in a much smaller area, mainly focused in west central Illinois (including 14.40" at Winchester). East central Illinois started to dry out, especially during the second half of the month, with rainfall generally averaging about 75% of normal.

The most significant tornado event of the year in central Illinois occurred on [July 16th](#), when a tornado moved into Delavan (Tazewell County) late in the evening. While there were no fatalities, two injuries were reported. There were 51 homes damaged, 6 of which were declared a total loss. This EF-2 tornado produced estimated wind speeds around 120 mph, and was on the ground for 1.3 miles.

After the excessive rainfall for the first several months of the year, a dry trend started to take shape over the area. Rainfall was generally about 50 to 75% of normal for August. Heavier rainfall was generally focused with

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scattered strong to severe storms, especially during the week of August 15-21. That was the most active week for severe weather.

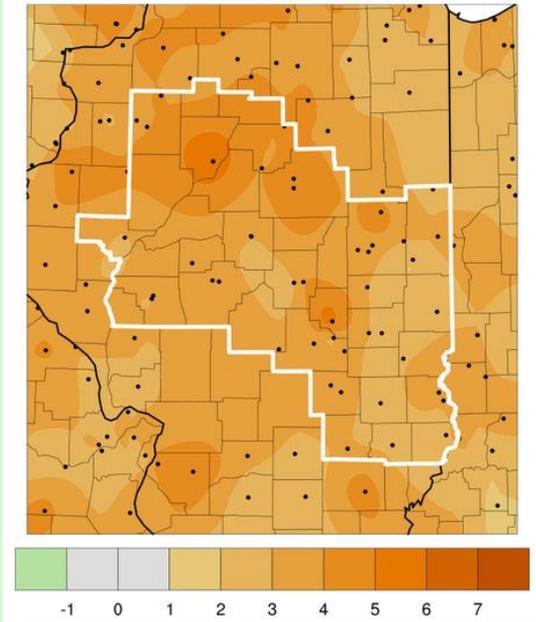
Autumn Season

(September 1 through November 30)

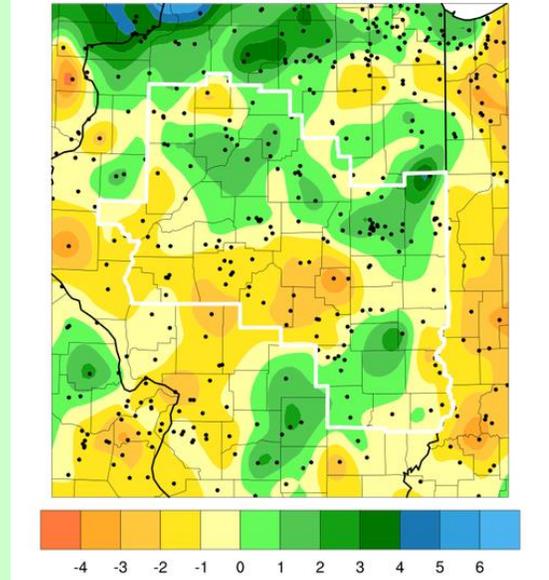
Temperatures: Above normal

Precipitation: Above normal near I-74 corridor and south of I-70; below normal along I-72 corridor

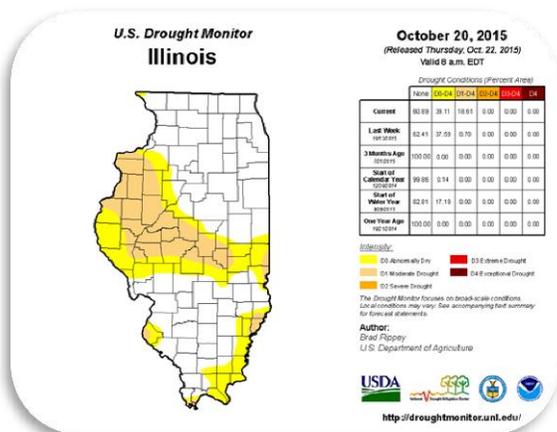
Average Temperature (°F): Departure from 1981-2010 Normals
September 01, 2015 to November 30, 2015



Accumulated Precipitation (in): Departure from 1981-2010 Normals
September 01, 2015 to November 30, 2015



Images courtesy Midwestern Regional Climate Center



Drought conditions developed for a time across central Illinois during the fall, despite the abnormally wet weather that started the first half of the year.

Temperature Review:

Much of September featured well above normal temperatures, with 90s occurring during the first few days of the month. The high temperature of 98 degrees at Peoria on the 4th was the hottest temperature observed

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over central Illinois during the year. Temperatures remained slightly above normal into October as well, but were well above normal during November. Peoria had its 4th warmest November on record with an average of 47.9 degrees, and Springfield's average of 48.4 degrees was its 7th warmest November.

Weather Review:

With El Niño in full force, the trend of drier conditions continued through September and October. This resulted in moderate drought conditions developing in areas that previously had been excessively wet earlier in the year. The exception was in northern Vermilion County, where September featured a total of 11.74" of rain at Hoopeston thanks to repeated storms, and the I-74 corridor from southeast McLean County to around Danville did see about 5-8" during September. However, rains returned to the most of central Illinois in late October and especially November, easing the drought. The rainfall of 6.17" at Peoria in November was its third wettest November on record.

Strong to severe thunderstorms moved through the evening of Veterans Day, most concentrated north of I-72. Even ahead of the storms, winds were gusting from 30 to 50 mph at times. A wind gust of 70 mph at the Peoria airport tied the November record for the area.

A storm system on November 21 resulted in a change from rain to snow across the area. Periods of moderate to heavy snow occurred, along with some blowing and drifting snow. The heaviest snow totals were north of a Galesburg to Roanoke line, with 5-9", but many areas reported their first measurable snow of the season from this system.

Winter Season to date

(December 1-31)

Temperatures: Much above normal

Precipitation: Much above normal

Temperature Review:

Near record warm temperatures prevailed through much of the month, with temperatures averaging 9 to 13 degrees above normal in most areas. The weekend of December 12-13th was exceptionally mild, with average temperatures more than 30 degrees above normal. On December 12, highs were close to 70 degrees across much of central and southeast Illinois, and on the 13th, both Peoria and Springfield observed its warmest December low temperature on record at 61 degrees. Additional periods of unseasonably mild weather were found shortly before and after Christmas.

Weather Review:

Heavy rain accompanied the unseasonably mild weather from the 12-13th. Two-day rainfall totals exceeded 1.5 inches in many areas west of I-55, with totals of a half to 1 inch common in east central Illinois.

On the 23rd, a powerful storm system brought strong winds, and strong to severe thunderstorms. As the system exited the area, wind gusts of 40-50 mph occurred.

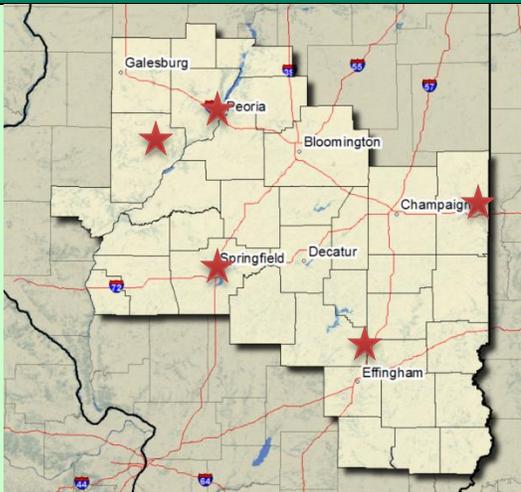
A second strong system impacted the central U.S. from the 26-28th. Widespread flooding occurred southeast of a Jacksonville to Rantoul line into southern Illinois on the 26-27th, where rainfall totals of 2 to 5 inches were

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reported. Additional heavy rain continued into the 28th, with another 1-3 inches occurring. This resulted in many rivers reaching moderate to major flood stage as the month was ending. Precipitation totals for the month set records in some areas. Totals included 11.73 inches at Pana, 10.06 inches in Neoga, 9.56 inches in Paris, and 9.22 inches at the Decatur airport.

The same storm system brought some colder air in as it was moving out on the 28th. This resulted in a large area from Galesburg to Bloomington receiving up to 3/10 inch of ice accumulation to trees and other elevated surfaces, although road conditions were mainly wet. As winds were gusting from 40-50 mph at the time, the oscillation of the trees plus the weight of the ice resulted in damage to many trees and power lines, and some locations were still without power at the end of the year.

Preliminary Statistics for the Lincoln NWS Coverage Area:



Highest Temperature	98°F at Peoria (September 4)
Lowest Temperature	-20°F at Neoga 4NW (February 24)
Most Rain in 24 Hours	6.50" at Danville Sewage Plant (June 8)
Most Snow in 24 Hours	11.8" at Springfield (February 20-21)
Most Rain in 1 Month	15.81" at Canton (June)
Most Snow in 1 Month	22.6" at Springfield (February)
Reported Tornadoes	11 By County: Richland 2, Tazewell 2. One each in Champaign, Christian, Lawrence, Macon, Mason, Menard, Peoria, and Piatt. (Total >11 due to border crossers.)