



FLORIDA KEYS

National Weather Service

Forecast Office

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DRY CONDITIONS PERSISTED THROUGHOUT THE KEYS DURING MARCH FOURTH DRIEST FEBRUARY AND MARCH COMBINED AT KEY WEST NEAR TO SLIGHTLY ABOVE AVERAGE TEMPERATURES DURING MARCH

NEAR RECORD DRY CONDITIONS THAT PREVAILED THROUGHOUT THE FLORIDA KEYS DURING FEBRUARY CONTINUED ACROSS MOST OF THE ISLAND CHAIN IN MARCH. THE KEY WEST INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT RECORDED 0.27 INCHES OF RAINFALL DURING THE PASSAGE OF A SQUALL LINE OF THUNDERSTORMS IN ADVANCE OF A SIGNIFICANT COLD FRONTAL PASSAGE ON MARCH 10TH. THIS WOULD BE THE ONLY DAY WHEN MEASURABLE RAINFALL WAS RECORDED AT KEY WEST DURING THE ENTIRE MONTH OF MARCH. KEY WEST CONCLUDED MARCH WITH A MONTHLY DEFICIT OF 1.59 INCHES. MARCH 2011 RANKS AS THE 22ND DRIEST MARCH ON RECORD AT KEY WEST SINCE RAINFALL RECORDS BEGAN IN 1871.

MARCH 10TH WAS ALSO THE ONLY DAY WHEN MEASURABLE RAINFALL FELL AT THE KEY WEST INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT DURING A 67 DAY STRETCH FROM JANUARY 27TH THROUGH APRIL 3RD. KEY WEST EXPERIENCED ITS 4TH DRIEST FEBRUARY AND MARCH COMBINED, AND THIS WAS THE DRIEST FEBRUARY AND MARCH AT KEY WEST IN 66 YEARS. THE DRIEST FEBRUARY AND MARCH COMBINED ON RECORD AT KEY WEST OCCURRED IN 1945, WHEN ONLY 0.13 INCHES OF RAINFALL WAS MEASURED.

THE FLORIDA KEYS MARATHON AIRPORT RECORDED 0.95 INCHES OF RAINFALL DURING MARCH 2011. THIS WAS 1.75 INCHES BELOW AVERAGE FOR THE MONTH AND THE 9TH DRIEST MARCH ON RECORD FOR THE MARATHON/DUCK KEY AREA OF THE MIDDLE FLORIDA KEYS SINCE RECORDS BEGAN IN 1982. A MAJORITY OF THIS RAINFALL OCCURRED ON TWO SEPARATE DAYS, WITH 0.44 INCHES FALLING ON MARCH 10TH AND 0.43 INCHES FALLING ON MARCH 28TH. FEBRUARY AND MARCH 2011 WAS THE 3RD DRIEST ON RECORD FOR THE MIDDLE KEYS SINCE 1982, WITH ONLY 0.97 INCHES OF RAINFALL MEASURED AT THE FLORIDA KEYS MARATHON AIRPORT. HIGHER RAINFALL TOTALS WERE RECORDED AT SEVERAL RAIN GAGES IN THE UPPER KEYS, WITH A MAJORITY OF THIS RAINFALL OCCURRING DURING THE FINAL THREE DAYS OF THE MONTH.

EXPANDING DROUGHT CONDITIONS THROUGHOUT SOUTH FLORIDA AND THE FLORIDA KEYS PROMPTED THE SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT TO IMPLEMENT PHASE TWO WATER RESTRICTIONS BEGINNING ON MARCH 26TH. THE MONTH OF APRIL IS NORMALLY ONE OF THE DRIEST OF THE YEAR IN THE FLORIDA KEYS, WHERE AVERAGE RAINFALL AMOUNTS GENERALLY VARY FROM 1.5 TO NEAR 2.0 INCHES. SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT IN OUR LONG-

TERM RAINFALL DEFICITS APPEARS UNLIKELY UNTIL THE ONSET OF THE RAINY SEASON, WHICH TYPICALLY OCCURS IN THE FLORIDA KEYS DURING THE SECOND HALF OF MAY.

AVERAGE MONTHLY TEMPERATURES FOR MARCH 2011 WERE 74.0 DEGREES AT THE KEY WEST INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AND 75.5 DEGREES AT THE FLORIDA KEYS MARATHON AIRPORT. THESE VALUES FOR MARCH WERE 0.2 DEGREES AND 2.5 DEGREES ABOVE NORMAL, RESPECTIVELY. ONLY ONE TEMPERATURE RECORD WAS TIED DURING THE MONTH AT KEY WEST. THE LOW TEMPERATURE ON MARCH 30TH ONLY FELL TO 77 DEGREES, WHICH TIED THE PREVIOUS RECORD WARM MINIMUM TEMPERATURE RECORD MOST RECENTLY ESTABLISHED FOR THIS DATE IN 1991.

BELOW ARE PRELIMINARY RAINFALL TOTALS FOR MARCH ALONG THE KEYS ISLAND CHAIN...COMPARING 2011 TO 2010 AND THE DEPARTURES FROM NORMAL VALUES WHERE AVAILABLE.

MARCH 2011 RAINFALL TOTALS/DEPARTURE FROM NORMAL/2010 IN INCHES

Station – Station Type	2011	Dep. fm Normal	2010	Dep. fm 2010
Dry Tortugas National Park – <i>COOP</i>	0.61		1.73	-1.12
Key West WFO – <i>NWS</i>	0.60	-1.26	0.62	-0.02
Key West International Airport – <i>Automated</i>	0.27	-1.59	0.34	-0.07
Big Coppitt Key – <i>CoCoRaHS</i>	0.20		0.41	-0.21
Cudjoe Key – <i>CoCoRaHS</i>	0.36		0.84	-0.48
Cudjoe Key – <i>Citizen Observer</i>	0.35		N/A	N/A
Bahia Honda State Park – <i>COOP</i>	1.35		2.15	-0.80
Florida Keys Marathon Airport – <i>Automated</i>	0.95	-1.75	1.55	-0.60
Curry Hammock State Park – <i>COOP</i>	1.57	-1.13	1.50	+0.07
Duck Key – <i>COOP</i>	1.57	-1.13	1.81	-0.24
Islamorada – <i>COOP</i>	2.09		1.01	-1.08
Islamorada – <i>CoCoRaHS</i>	0.89		1.01	-0.12
John Pennekamp State Park – <i>COOP</i>	2.95		3.03	-0.08
Key Largo – <i>CoCoRaHS</i>	1.50		2.38	-0.88

NORMAL VALUES FOR KEY WEST LOCATIONS ARE THE AVERAGE OF 1979-2000 AT THE KEY WEST INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT...AND FOR THE MARATHON AREA THEY ARE THE AVERAGE SPANNING 1982-2004 AT DUCK KEY. RECORDS ARE NOT YET TRACKED AT THE MARATHON AIRPORT DUE TO THE SHORT PERIOD OF AUTOMATED DATA.