

January 2023 Northern Michigan Climate Summary

Alpena

Avg Temp	Avg Temp Departure	Precip	Precip Departure	Snowfall	Snowfall Departure
27.6°F	+7.6°F	2.22"	+0.41"	10.8"	-8.5"

Houghton Lake

Avg Temp	Avg Temp Departure	Precip	Precip Departure	Snowfall	Snowfall Departure
27.5°F	+8.4°F	1.68"	-0.02"	8.7"	-7.7"

Sault Ste. Marie

Avg Temp	Avg Temp Departure	Precip	Precip Departure	Snowfall	Snowfall Departure
23.7°F	+7.5	2.78"	+0.57"	27.7"	-2.6"

Gaylord

Avg Temp	Avg Temp Departure	Precip	Precip Departure	Snowfall	Snowfall Departure
26.9°F	+11.0°F	1.99"	-0.84"	14.3"	-23.1"

Traverse City

Avg Temp	Avg Temp Departure	Precip	Precip Departure	Snowfall	Snowfall Departure
31.5°F	+8.4°F	2.13"	-0.58"	14.5"	-17.8"

January 2023 was an unusual winter month across northern lower and eastern upper Michigan solely from the magnitude of warmth that was observed across the region. While it was still cold enough to observe periods of wintry weather at times, snowfall totals suffered as a result of the warmth that lingered across the region over much of the duration of the month.

Temperatures were well above normal across the entire NWS Gaylord footprint, with some locations even seeing average temperatures running more than ten degrees above normal! Overall, high temperatures were still quite cool, but generally were averaging 5-7 degrees above normal through the month. The warmest stretch of days came around January 15-17, where several spots recorded their highest temperatures for the month, generally in the low-to-mid 40s across northern lower Michigan, and upper 30s in eastern upper Michigan.

The real driver of the above normal warmth was the nighttime lows, several of which were above freezing (particularly across northern lower Michigan). As a matter of fact, before a cooler stretch of days at the end of the month, average low temperatures across northern lower Michigan were running as high as 15-20°F above normal. This was a trend that not only was prevalent across northern Michigan, but also across much of the Great Lakes region and Midwest as a whole.

Abnormal liquid equivalent precipitation was not a dominant feature of January 2023, with most places hovering near average. The biggest story was the lack of snowfall across the region. In what is climatologically the snowiest month of the year, much of northern lower Michigan was well below normal for snowfall, particularly in the snow belts, as the typical lake effect snows that frequent the region in January were absent owing to the lack of any deeper cold airmasses.

Much of the snow that fell came from larger systems that often featured rain mixing with snow. There were several instances of drizzle and freezing drizzle across northern lower Michigan through the month of January, and these more moist periods of weather often kept overnight temperatures well above normal. This warmth drove snowfall well below normal across northern lower Michigan, particularly in the snowbelts, as the usual lake effect snow events were largely absent. Given their more northern location (leading to longer snowier periods in larger systems), spots in eastern upper Michigan saw more appreciable snowfall, but regardless, still wound up below normal for the month.