



WINTER WEATHER UPDATE: Extreme Cold and Potential Ice/Sleet February 14-16

2:00 PM CT

Friday, February 12 2021

*Prepared by: Barry Goldsmith
WFO Brownsville/Rio Grande Valley*

Disclaimer: The information contained within is time-sensitive. Do not use after 7 AM CST Saturday.



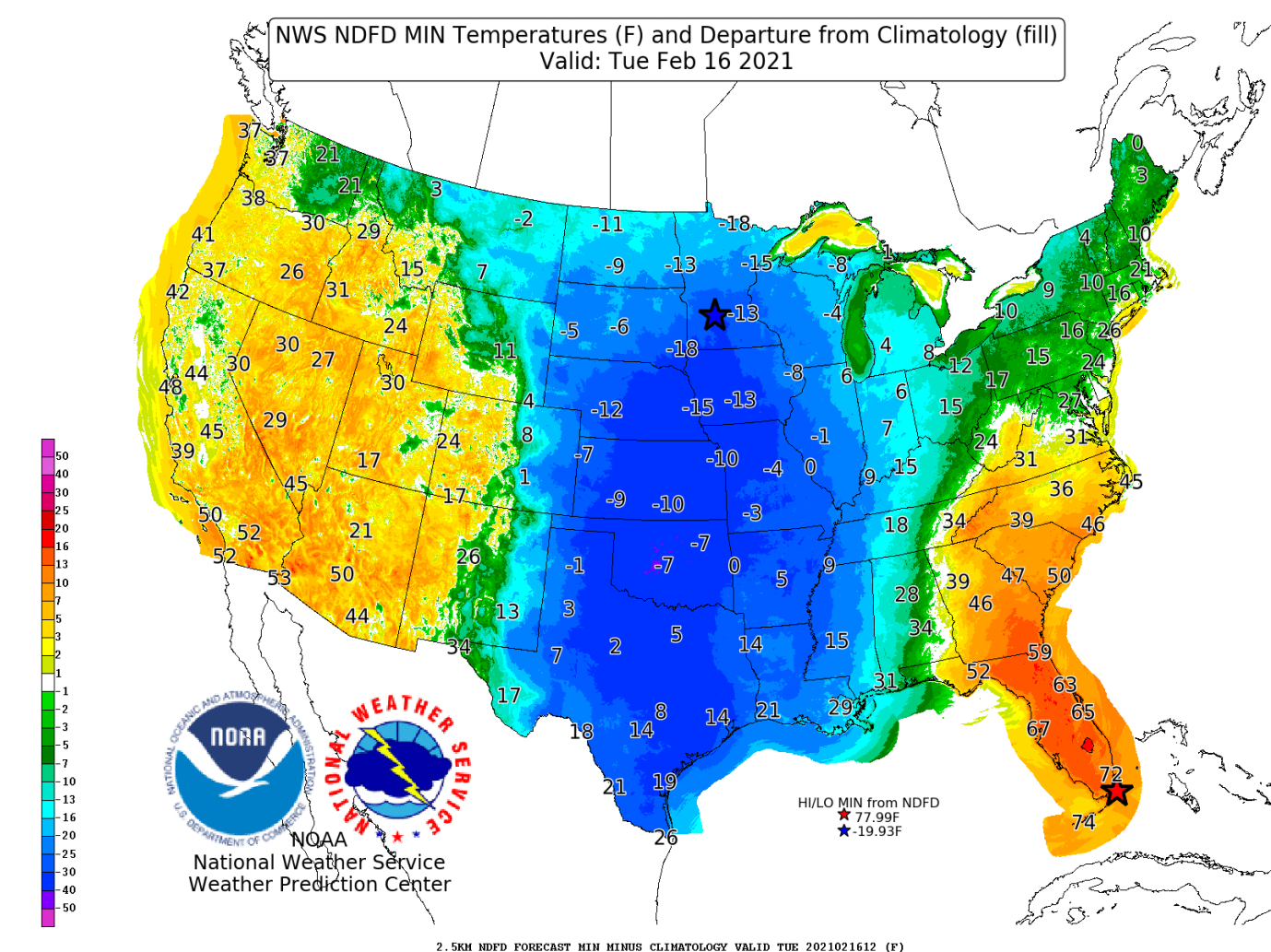
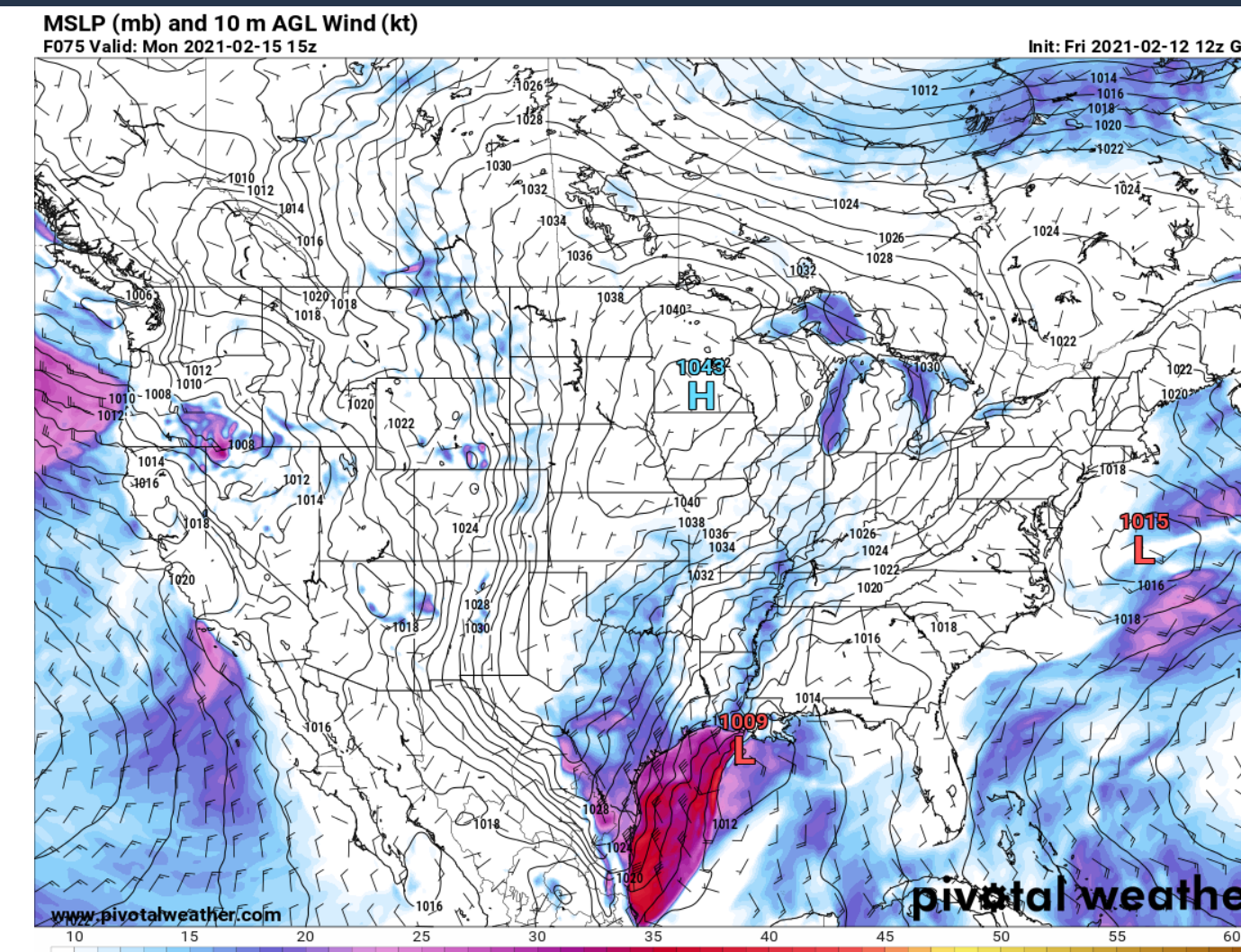
Situation Overview: The “Skinny”



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Bottom Lines:

- **Coldest weather of winter 2020/2021** is entrenched for the weekend into much of next week
- Freezes are becoming **more likely Monday and Tuesday mornings**, with Hard Freeze chances also increasing both mornings
- A period of **sleet (ice pellets) and freezing rain (glaze ice)** may occur between midnight Sunday night through mid morning Monday
- Through Tuesday, temperature will range from 25 to 35 degrees **below average**, possibly as much as 40-45 degrees below average Monday morning through Tuesday afternoon. Average is 75 by afternoon, 52-55 by daybreak.
- **Much below average temperatures** are now guaranteed through the end of next week (February 19)



Forecast position of arctic high (US model, top) and “expected” forecast and departure from average for minimum temps Feb. 15 (bottom)

Rio Grande Valley/Deep S. Texas Outlook



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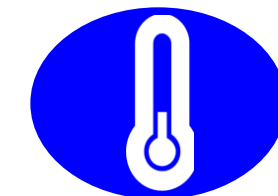
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Cold Gets Colder; Dangerous Wind Chills, a Freeze, and Wintry Precipitation

*Sunday Night through Tuesday:
Reasonable Worst Case Scenarios
as of February 12

Sunday

- Not quite as cold by day (45-50)
- Freezing/Frozen Precipitation Develop Late at Night
- “Feels Like” temperatures 37-43 day; 20s after midnight



Day

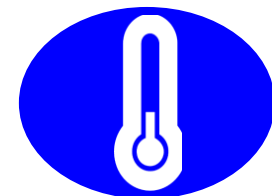


Late Night



Saturday

- Brisk, Raw, Gray; Patchy drizzle
- Temperatures 33-40 Early Morning; 39-44 Daytime
- “Feels Like” Temperatures 27 to 37
- Could nudge to freezing across ranchlands by Sunday sunrise



Monday

- Potential for Minor Icing and Sleet through Mid Morning
- “Feels Like” Temperatures could drop to 8 to 18 from dawn-9 AM
- Actual temperatures could fall to 23-29 by 7 AM; 30s rest of day Valley with continuous subfreezing temperatures possible ranchlands

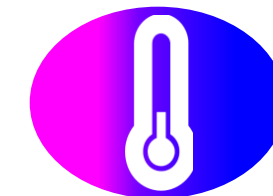


Late AM/Aftn



Tuesday

- Hard Freeze potential for many through mid morning...18-23 degrees.
- Slow recovery by afternoon



Reasonable Worst-Case Scenarios



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Sunday through Tuesday, Feb 14-16

- **Sunday Night/Early Monday (Feb 14-15):**
 - Arctic “blast” surges in between midnight and daybreak
 - Light sleet (ice pellets) between 3 and 10 AM Zapata-Kenedy; Light freezing rain during the same time for the Rio Grande Valley – but ice sleet could also occur into the Valley
 - Temperatures crashing from the low-mid 40s at sunset to between 23 and 29 between 6 AM and 9 AM Monday. Coldest readings across the ranchlands.
 - “Feels Like” Temperatures could be as low as 8 to 18°F, coldest near coast and across ranchlands
 - Untreated roads will be very dangerous in this scenario for the Monday commute!
- **Monday Afternoon (Feb. 15)**
 - Actual temperatures remaining below freezing Zapata through Kenedy; just above freezing elsewhere
 - “Feels like” temperatures only rising to 15 to 25°F, coldest toward the coast
- **Tuesday (Feb 16)**
 - Potential for hard freeze for all of the Rio Grande Valley/Deep S. Texas region; morning lows between 17 and 23°F
 - A slow rise in temperatures, finally getting above freezing by noon

Potential Impacts – On Land

Through Tuesday, February 16th



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- **Through the Period:** **Cold to dangerously cold** for persons exposed to the elements without adequate clothing or shelter. Critical danger for frostbite and death from 12 AM to Noon Monday, and midnight to 9 AM Tuesday.
- **Through the Period:** High use of heating could **stress the local and statewide power grid**, with potential neighborhood outages. Peak potential: 12 AM Sunday through 12 PM Tuesday.
- **Through the Period:** House fires could start from **incorrect use of space heaters** or other non-traditional heat sources
- **Sunday night through midday Tuesday:** Potential for **pipe bursts in residences** and water main breaks in communities due to extreme cold
- **12 AM Monday through 12 PM Monday:** Potential for **very dangerous driving conditions** on untreated roads due to the combination of light freezing/frozen precipitation and temperatures in the 20s.

Potential Impacts – On Water

Through Tuesday, February 16th



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- **12 AM Monday through 12 AM Tuesday** - Over Laguna Madre and the Gulf: Likelihood of a **Gale event with strong winds over 40 knots and very high and extremely rough seas** – Beaufort Scale 8 – from 12 AM Monday through 12 AM Tuesday (longest over the Gulf)
- **6 AM Monday through 9 AM Tuesday**: Over Laguna Madre and Gulf: “**Sea Smoke**” may form due to the very cold air overrunning the warm sea surface, reducing visibility below 1 nautical mile.
- **Through the Period**: Coastal waterways – **Pelicans may become trapped along Padre Boulevard** through Saturday, and again Sunday night through Monday evening. **Sea turtle “stunning”** is likely as early as Saturday but especially Monday through Wednesday.

Safety Infographics – Heaters

Through Sunday, February 14 and beyond



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NWS Brownsville, TX

Space Heater Safety Tips



- Place the heater on a hard, level, nonflammable surface, such as a ceramic tile floor.
- Plug your heater directly into a wall outlet, **DO NOT** use extension cords
- Make sure the heater is at least three feet away from any flammable materials, children and pets.
- Verify your space heater has tip over protection and is UL approval
- **NEVER** leave a space heater on when you go to sleep or leave a room
- **DO NOT** use portable propane space heaters indoors or in any confined space unless they are specifically designed for indoor use.

***Space heaters account for ~85% of all home heating deaths and nearly half of all home heating fires according to the National Fire Protection Agency**

Safety Infographics – Driving

February 15 (Midnight to Noon)



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freezing drizzle

The fine layer of ice that forms during freezing drizzle may be hard to notice on the road, but it is one of winter's most dangerous types of weather.

safety tips

- Slow down
- Don't use cruise control
- Leave plenty of distance between you and other vehicles

"Sneaky" Winter Hazards

The winter season brings many weather events that can "sneak" up on you. These are weather hazards that cause big impacts and make travel difficult without making big news.

weather.gov

The infographic features a background image of a car's interior looking out at a road covered in a fine layer of ice. A red circle on the road is connected by a red line to the "freezing drizzle" text box. The "safety tips" are listed in a red box. The "Sneaky" Winter Hazards section is in a large, bold, orange font. The NOAA logo is in the bottom right corner.

These tips also apply for light ice pellets (sleet)

Safety Infographics – Dressing

Through Sunday, February 14 and beyond



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DRESSING FOR COLD WEATHER

Adding layers will help keep you warm as the temperature drops

CHILLY

- 1-2 layers
- long layer
- outer layer to keep out wind, rain
- warm shoes water proof

COLD

- 2-3 layers
- warm hat
- gloves
- outer layer to keep out wind, wet snow
- boots water proof
- 1-2 layers

EXTREME COLD

- 3+ layers
- 1 insulating
- warm hat
- face mask
- gloves
- outer layer to keep out wind
- boots water proof
- 2+ layers

weather.gov/cold

“Cold to Chilly” – Through Sunday
Becoming “Extreme Cold” –
Late Sunday Night Through
Tuesday Noon

Safety Infographics – Four P's

Through Sunday, February 14 and beyond



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When Cold Weather Threatens, Remember to Protect Your...

People



Pets



Plants



Pipes



They Need Your Help, Don't Forget!



Protect People! Check on the elderly/infirm and other persons without heat, and ensure they have a safe, warm place to be this weekend. Check for open shelters in your community.

Protect Pets! Bring house pets indoors especially Sunday night through Tuesday, when freezing temperatures are most likely and they could be injured or die.

Protect Plants! Cover, or move indoors, new vegetation or tender tropical plants no later than Sunday at sunset to be on the safe side.

Protect Pipes! Cover (insulate) outdoor or exposed pipes not later than Sunday at sunset. Consider a slow drip of water if outdoor temperatures drop to 32°F or less

Safety Infographics – Pelican Watch


Through Sunday, February 14 and beyond



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Watch for Pelicans on Roads
Dangerous Driving Conditions Due to Pelicans Landing on Roadways

Weather Forecast Office
Brownsville/RGV, TX
Issued Feb 07, 2019 2:54 PM CST



CAUTION

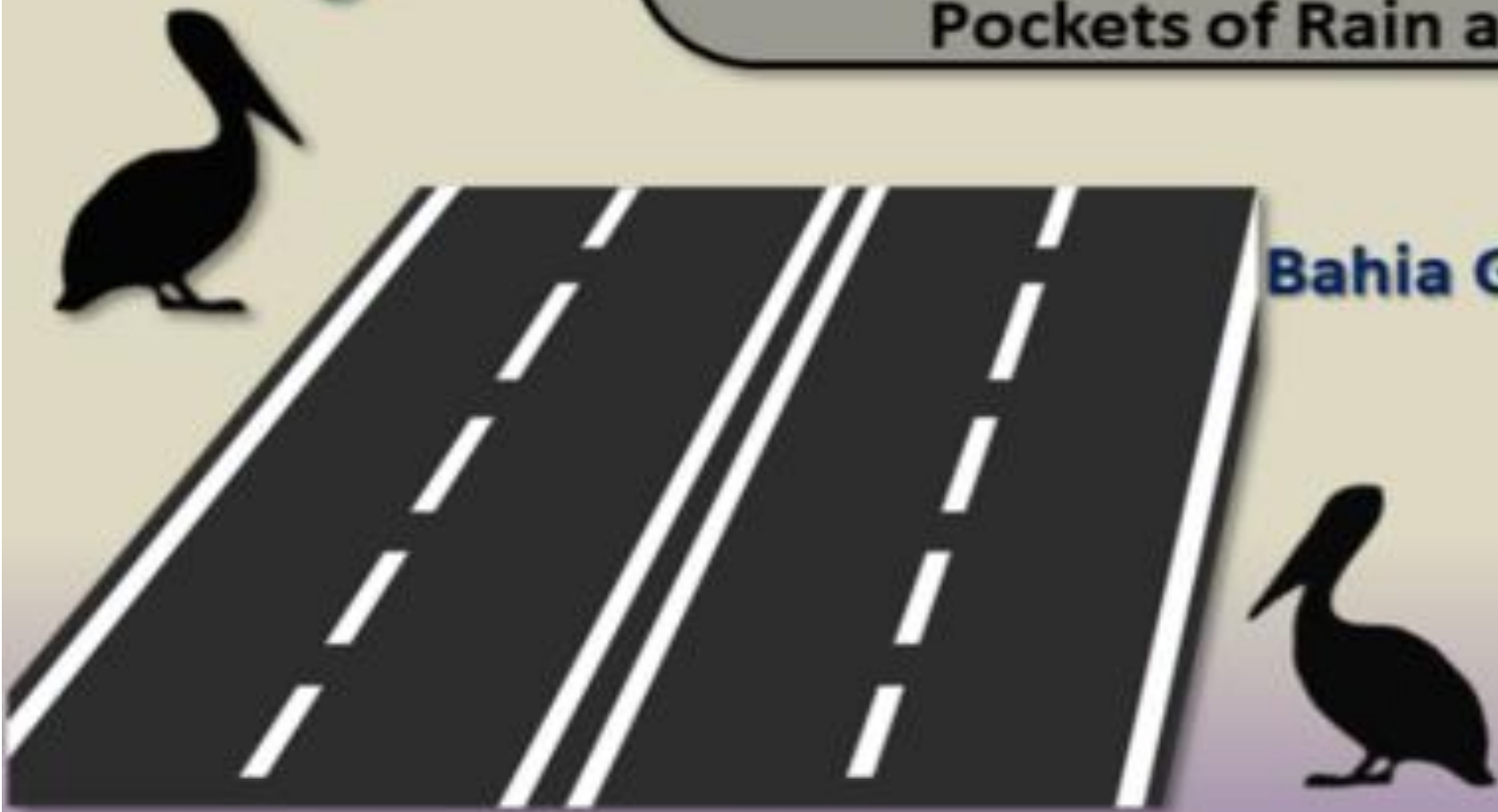
Conditions Favorable for Pelicans on Roadways




Behind the cold front, temperatures will steadily drop into 40s by tomorrow.
North Winds 15-25 mph, Gusts 30+ mph
Pockets of Rain and/or Drizzle

SLOW

Most Impacted Areas:
Bahia Grande/Gayman Bridge Area on HWY 48
Queen Isabella Memorial Causeway

Note:
Volunteers and members of local law enforcement may be in the area or on the roadways. Drive with caution!

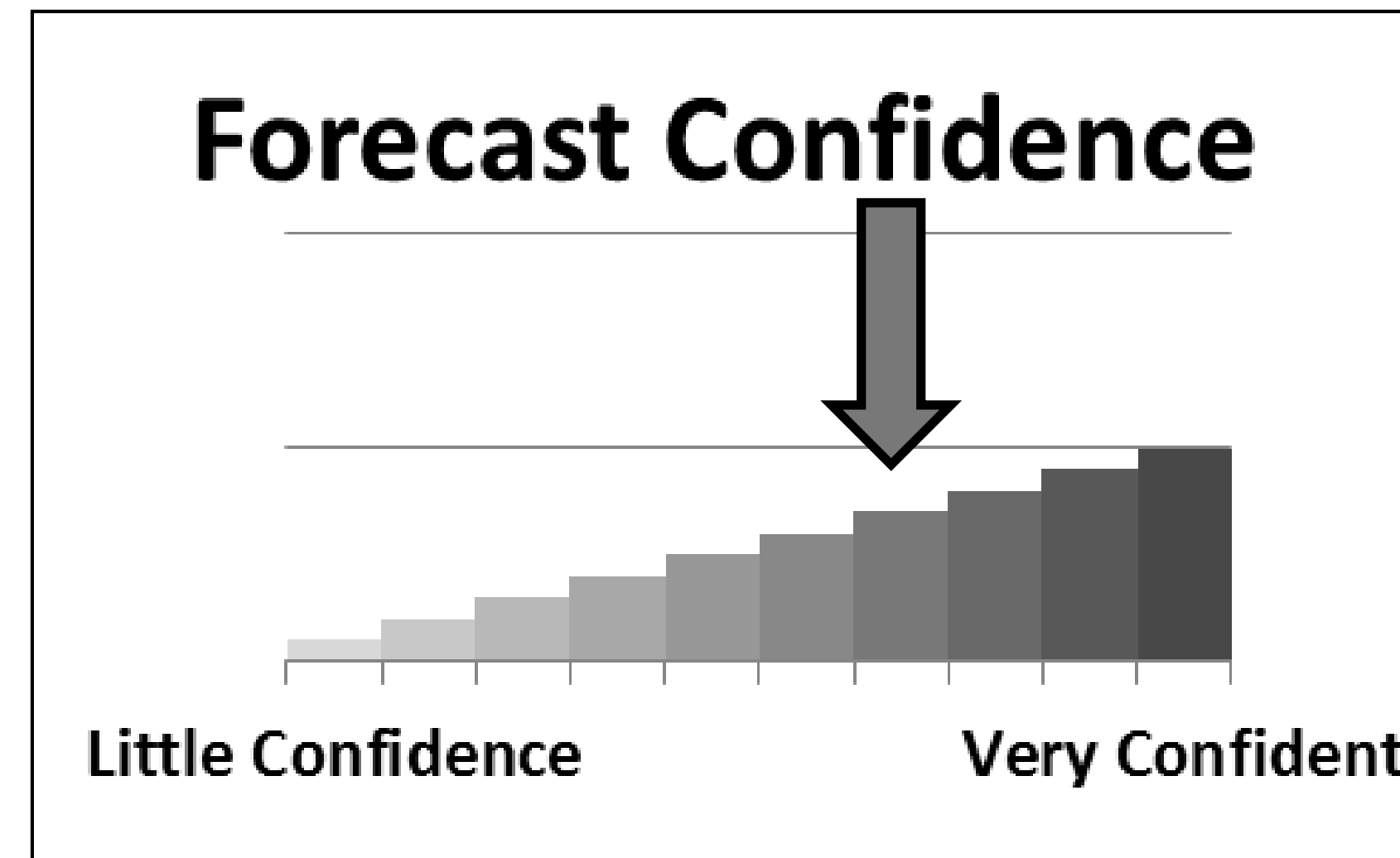


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Pelicans flying toward Bahia Grande, through Saturday and again Sunday night-Monday

- Prepare for a prolonged period of cold weather, with greatest impact potential from Sunday overnight through Tuesday noon (Feb 14-16)
- Duration of freezing ($\leq 32^{\circ}\text{F}$) Monday into early Tuesday could range from several hours to more than a day, which would be the most since [February 2-4, 2011's ice storm event](#)
- Duration and intensity of the cold will determine the extent of any agricultural damage, especially coming this late in the season





*The Next Briefing:
2-3 PM CT Saturday, February 13
Method: [TBD; Webinar or Email]*



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