

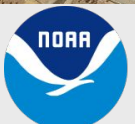


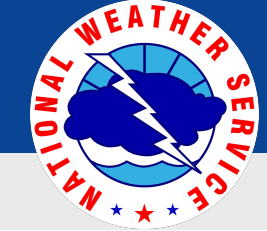
Drought Information Statement for Northern and Eastern Maine

Valid September 25, 2026
Issued By: WFO Caribou, ME

- Next update by Thursday, October 1st unless conditions warrant sooner
- Please see all currently available products at <https://drought.gov/drought-information-statements>.
- Please visit <https://www.weather.gov/car/DroughtInformationStatement> for previous statements.
- Please visit <https://www.drought.gov/drought-status-updates/car> for regional drought status updates.

- Drought conditions remain similar to last week.
- Streamflows are approaching near record low flows.
- Eastern & Northern Maine is seeing Below to Much Below Normal Groundwater & Streamflow conditions.
- Drought persistence expected through the fall.





U.S. Drought Monitor

September 25, 2026
4:10 AM EDT

Link to the [latest U.S. Drought Monitor](#) for Maine

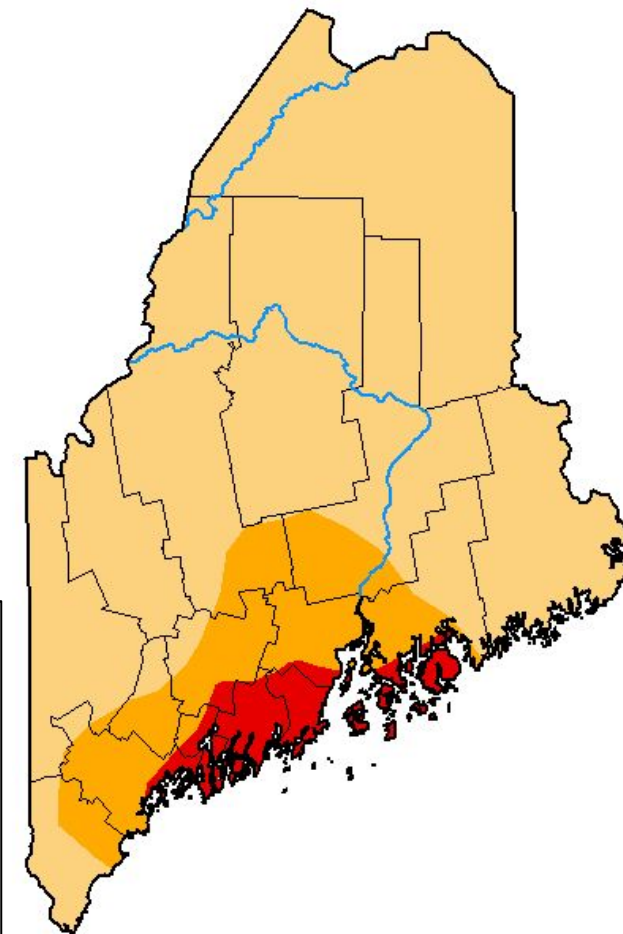
- **Drought Intensity and Extent:**

- **D3 (Extreme Drought):** Coastal Hancock County mainly MDI to Castine.
- **D2 (Severe Drought):** Southern Penobscot and Western Hancock counties
- **D1 (Moderate Drought):** All of Aroostook, Washington, Piscataquis, Northern & Central Penobscot and Northern Hancock counties.

Percentage of Maine in Drought

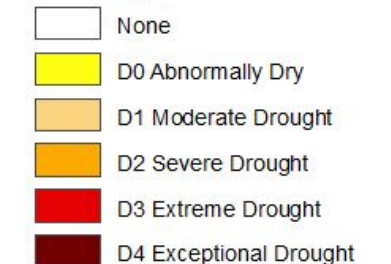
- No Drought: 0.00%
- **D0: (Abnormally Dry):** 0.00%
- **D1 (Moderate Drought):** 80.71%
- **D2 (Severe Drought):** 14.38%
- **D3 (Extreme Drought):** 4.92%

U.S. Drought Monitor Maine



September 22, 2026
(Released Thursday, Sep. 24, 2026)
Valid 8 a.m. EDT

Intensity:



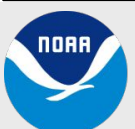
The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to <http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/About.aspx>

Author:

David Mocko
NASA/GSFC/SSAI

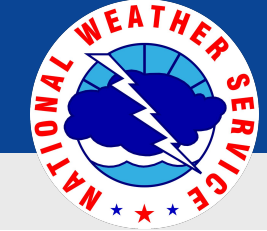


droughtmonitor.unl.edu



National Oceanic and
Atmospheric Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce

National Weather Service
Caribou, ME

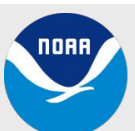
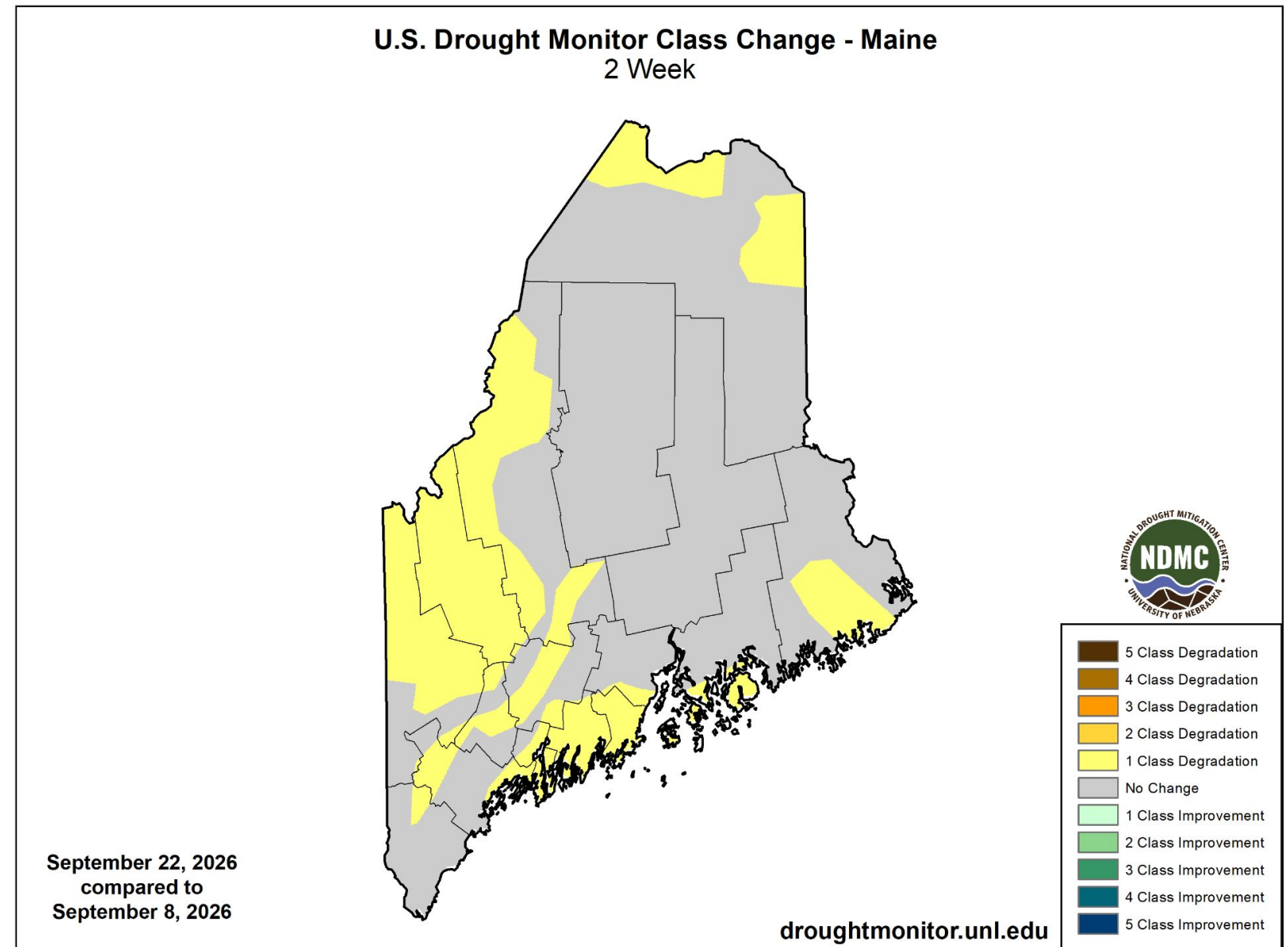


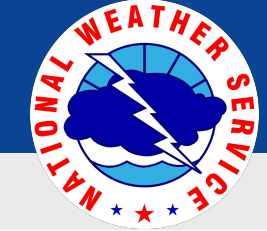
Recent Change in Drought Intensity

September 25, 2026
4:10 AM EDT

Link to the latest [2-week change map](#) for Northeast U.S.

- Two week drought monitor class change:
 - **Drought Worsened:** Portions of the St. John Valley, Northern Crown, and Eastern Aroostook County, as well as South-Central Washington County and coastal Hancock County.
 - **Drought Improved:** None.
 - **No Change:** Rest of the forecast area.



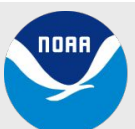
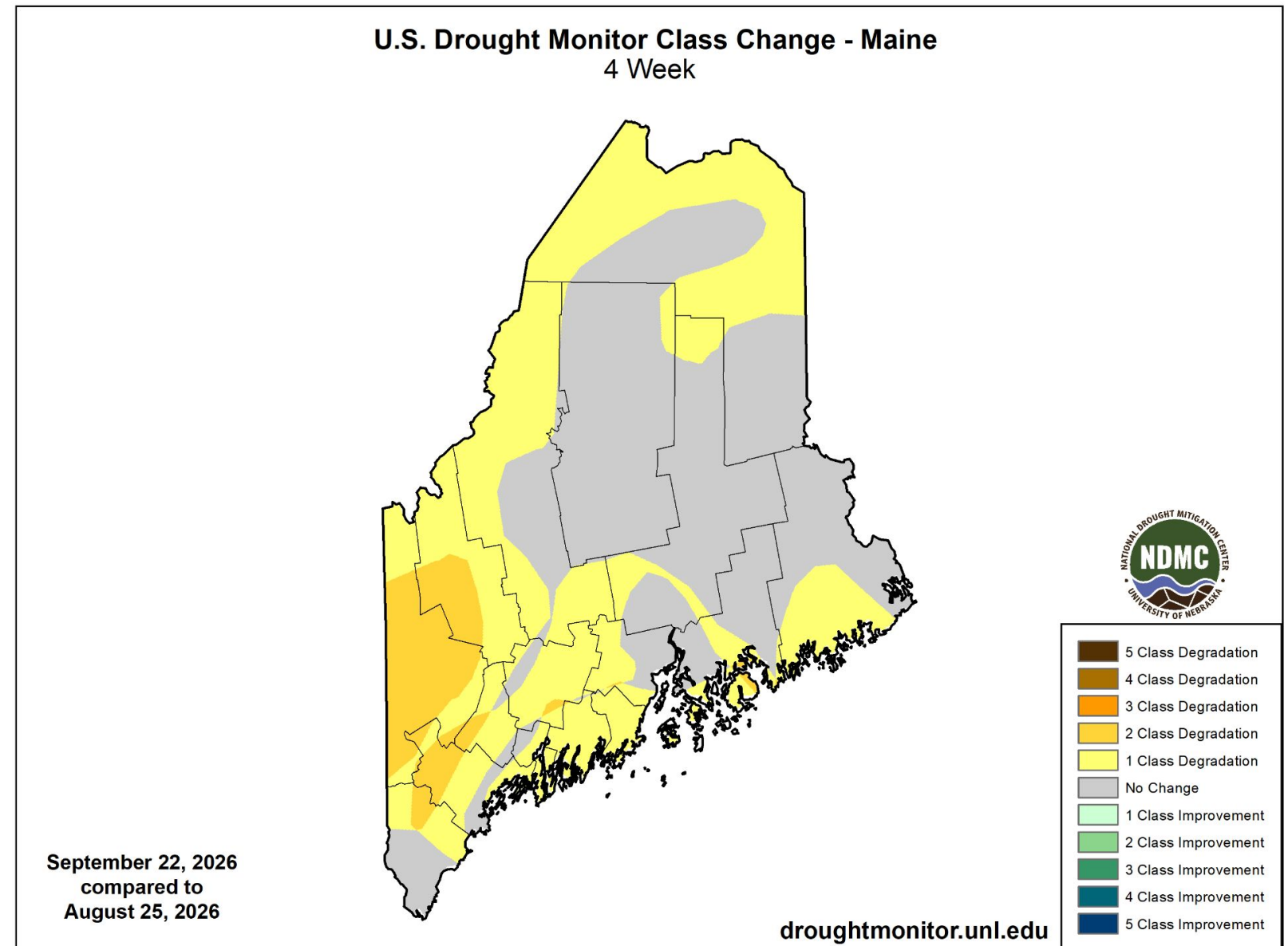


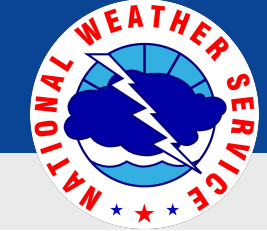
Recent Change in Drought Intensity

September 25, 2026
4:10 AM EDT

Link to the latest [1-month change map](#) for Northeast U.S.

- Four week drought monitor class change:
 - **Drought Worsened:** Large areas of Aroostook, Northeast Piscataquis, and extreme Northern Penobscot counties, as well as parts of Southern Penobscot, Southern Hancock, and Southern Washington counties.
 - **Drought Improved:** None.
 - **No Change:** Rest of the area.



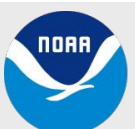
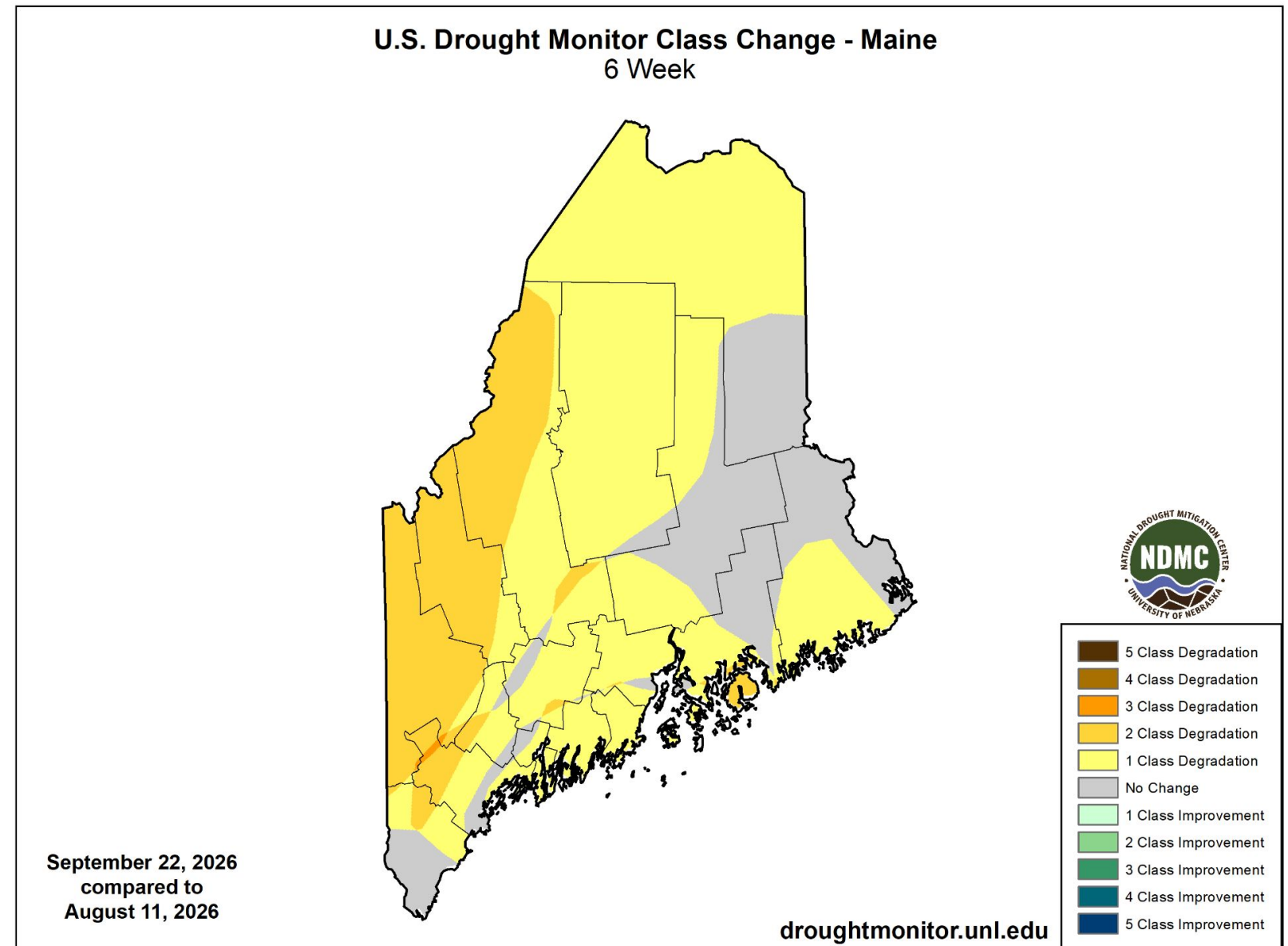


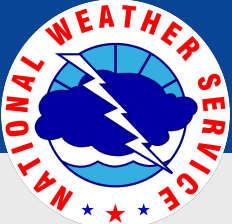
Recent Change in Drought Intensity

September 25, 2026
4:10 AM EDT

Link to the latest [6-week change map](#) for Northeast U.S.

- Four week drought monitor class change:
 - **Drought Worsened:** Northern & Northeast Aroostook, Nearly all of Piscataquis, Northern Somerset, Northern & far Southern Penobscot, Southwest Hancock and Southern Washington counties.
 - **Drought Improved:** None.
 - **No Change:** Central Penobscot, Northern & Eastern Hancock, Northern & far Eastern Washington counties.



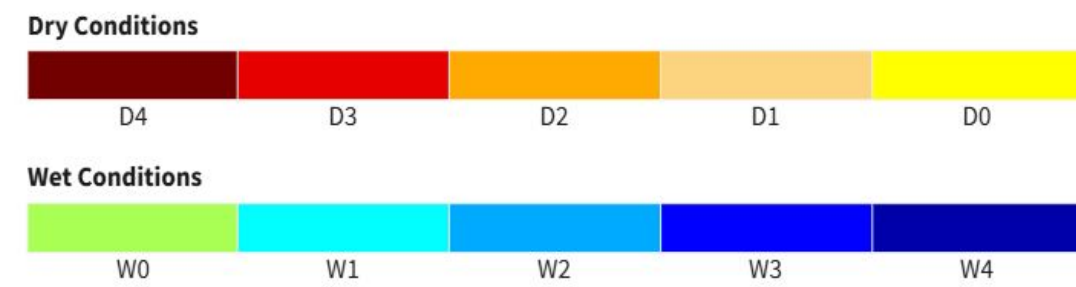
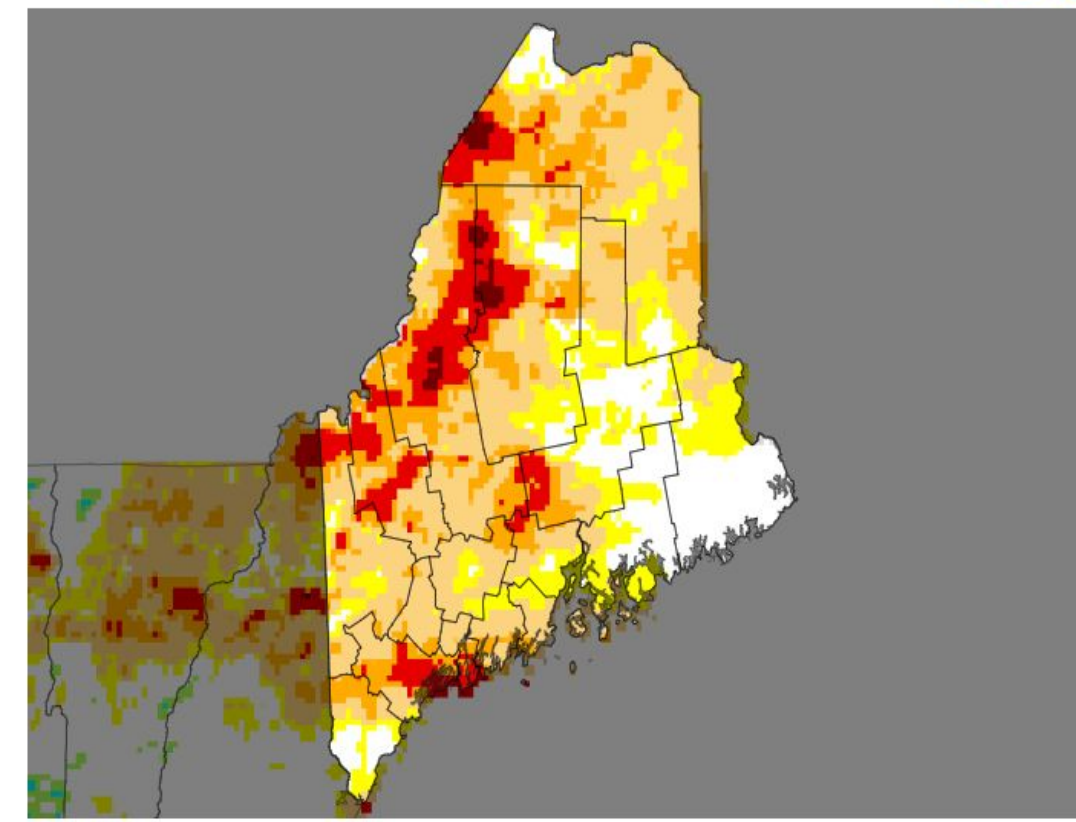


Short & Long Term Drought Index

Link to the Maine [Drought.gov](https://www.drought.gov) Maps: www.drought.gov/states/maine

- The Short-Term Multi-Indicator Drought Index (MIDI) estimates current short-term drought conditions by combining several indicators of drought into a single, map from changes in precipitation and moisture over the past 3 months.
- Continued worsening of groundwater & surface water conditions in large sections of the forecast area.
- The Long-Term Multi-Indicator Drought Index (MIDI) estimates current long-term drought conditions by combining several indicators of drought into a single map from changes in precipitation and moisture over the past 5 years.

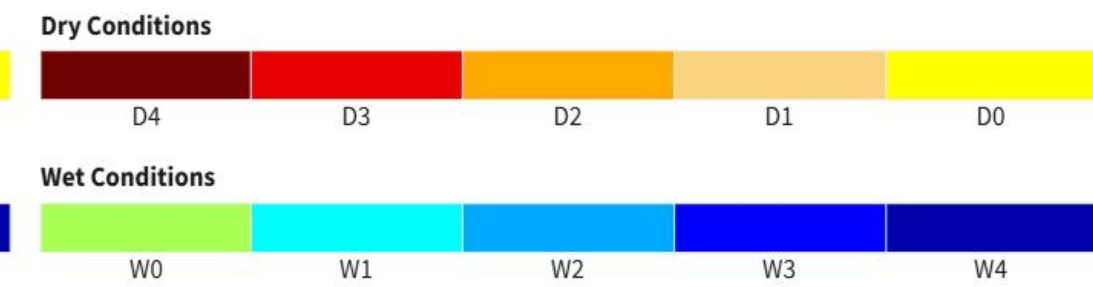
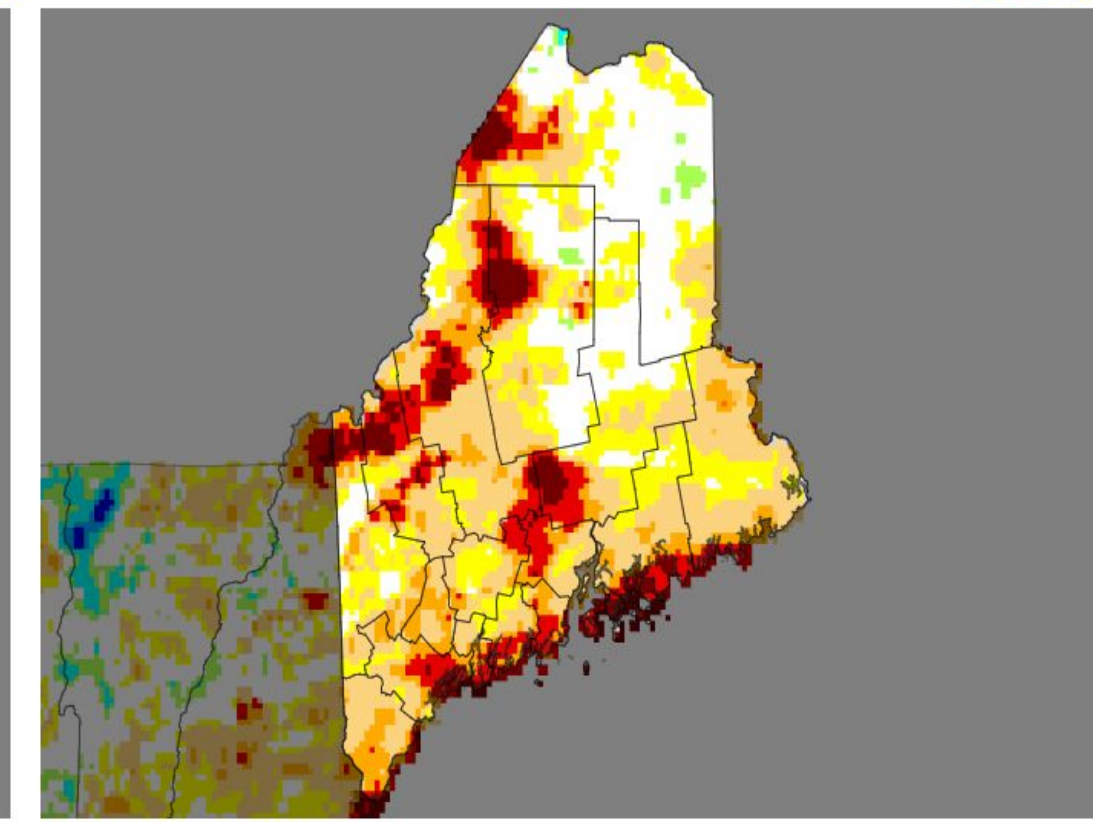
Short-Term Multi-Indicator Drought Index: Maine



Source(s): UC Merced, via Climate Engine
Data Valid: 09/17/26

Drought.gov

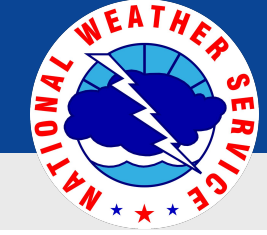
Long-Term Multi-Indicator Drought Index: Maine



Source(s): UC Merced, via Climate Engine
Data Valid: 09/17/26

Drought.gov



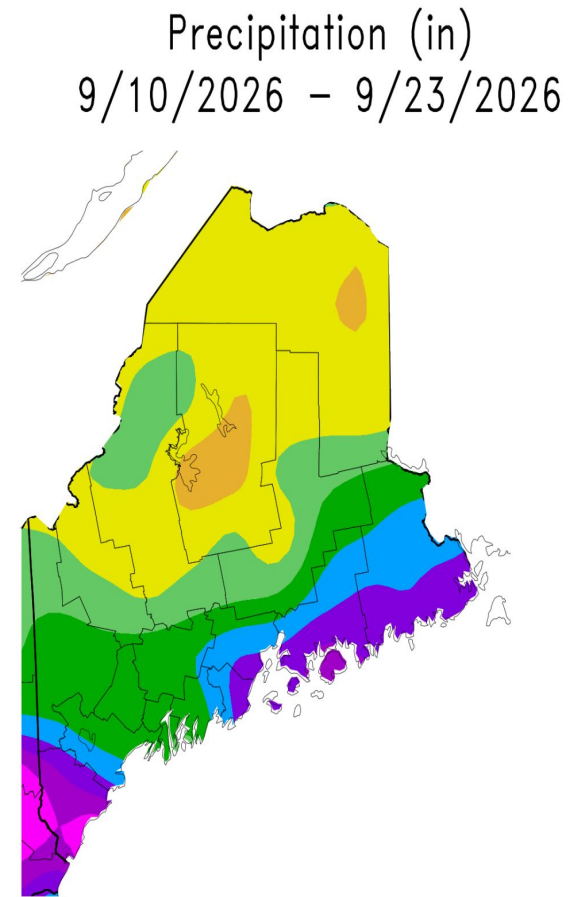


14 Day Precipitation

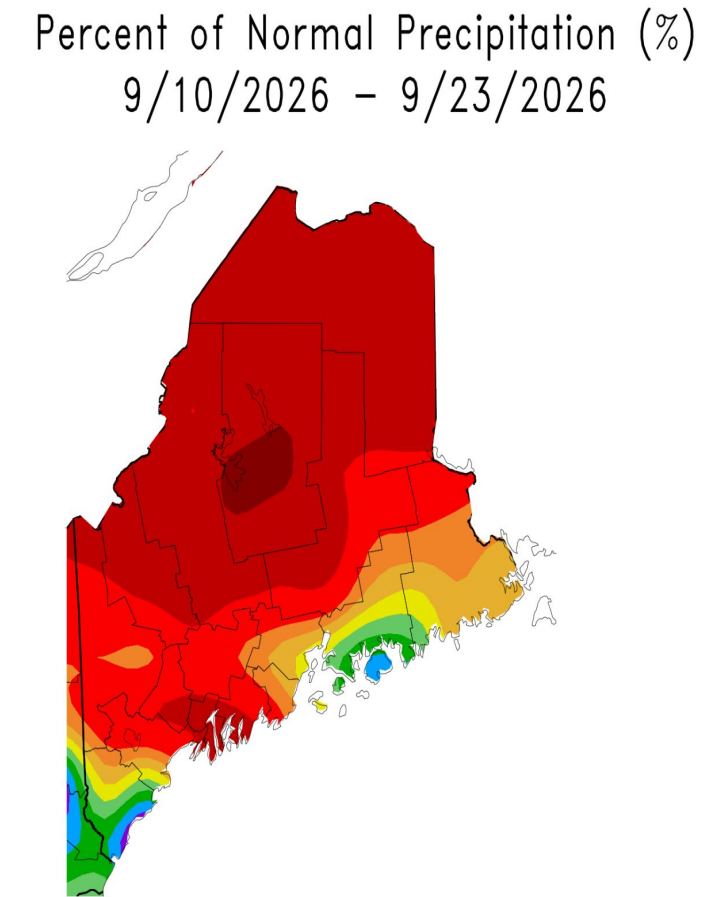
September 25, 2026
4:10 AM EDT

Link to [Northeast Regional Climate Center](#)

- Precipitation near Normal to slightly Above Normal across small portions of the Downeast.
- Nearly forecast area wide of Below to Much Below Normal across the remainder of the area.



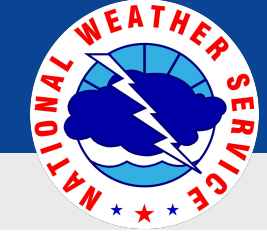
Generated 9/24/2026 using provisional data.



ACIS Web Services Generated 9/24/2026 using provisional data.

ACIS Web Services





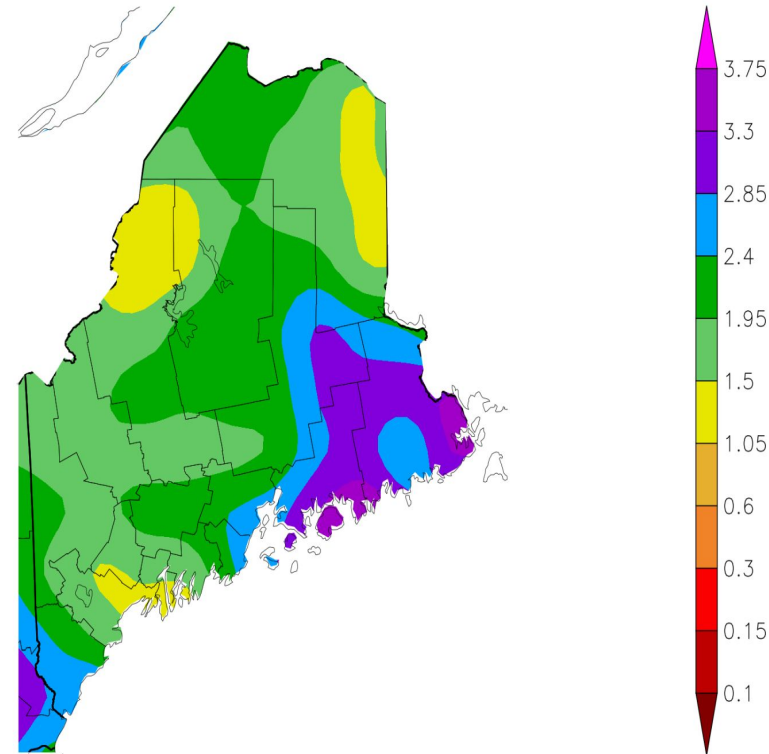
30 Day Precipitation

September 25, 2026
4:10 AM EDT

Link to [Northeast Regional Climate Center](#)

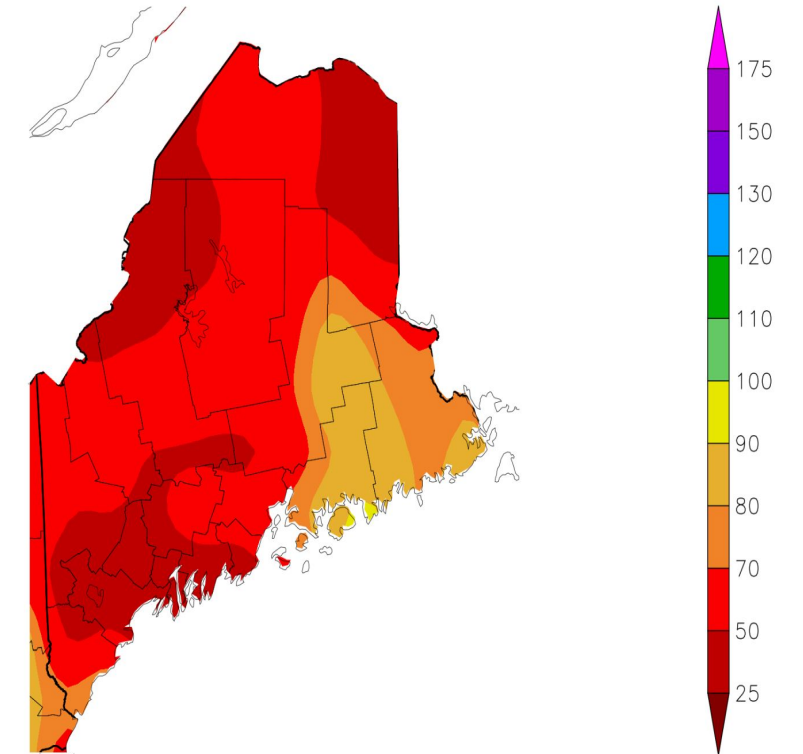
- Area wide of Below to Much Below Normal precipitation.
- “Best” areas (80-90% of normal) across portions of the Downeast extending northward into the eastern Penobscot Valley & Downeast Lakes region.

Precipitation (in)
8/25/2026 – 9/23/2026



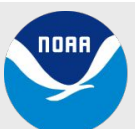
Generated 9/24/2026 using provisional data.

Percent of Normal Precipitation (%)
8/25/2026 – 9/23/2026



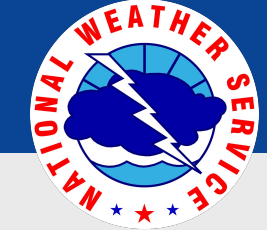
ACIS Web Services Generated 9/24/2026 using provisional data.

ACIS Web Services



National Oceanic and
Atmospheric Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce

National Weather Service
Caribou, ME

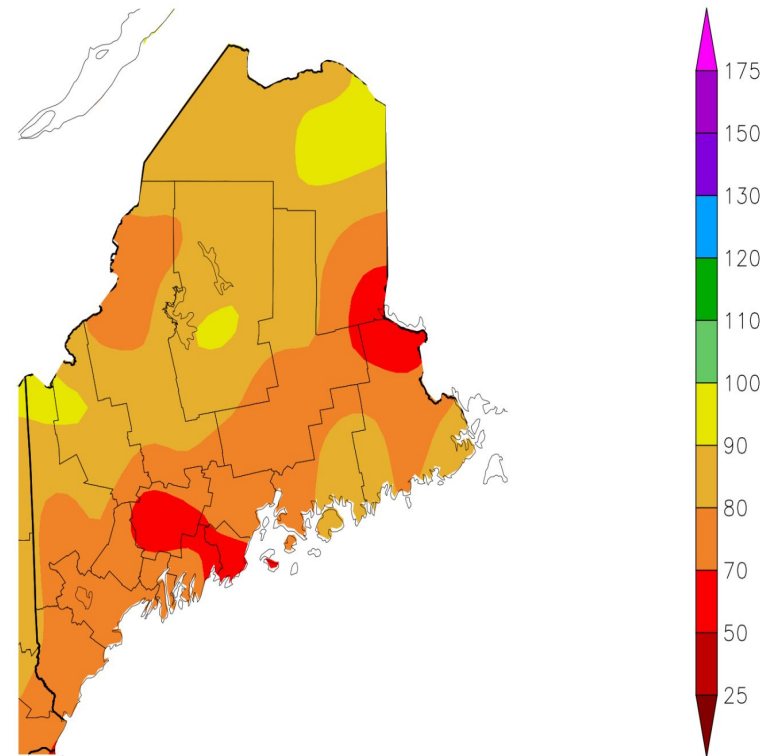


Precipitation Deficits

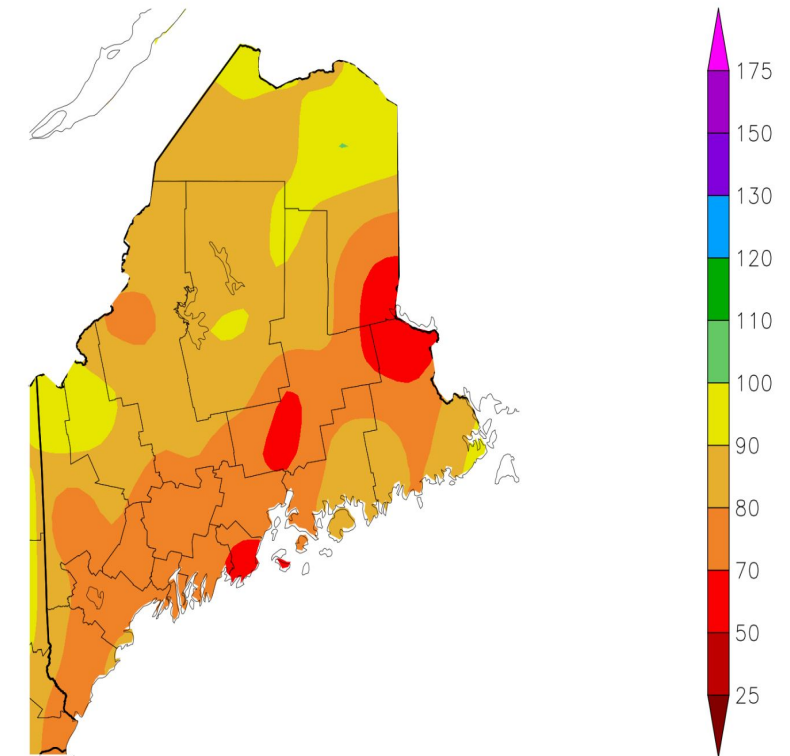
September 25, 2026
4:10 AM EDT

- 2026 precipitation deficits compounding the deficits from the 2025 Drought in much of the area.
- Northern Maine is running 90-100% of normal precipitation values for 2026 in a small area. This explains why there is a *slower degradation* of the ongoing dry conditions for the north, compared to other regions.

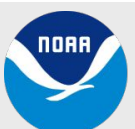
Percent of Normal Precipitation (%)
10/1/2025 – 9/23/2026

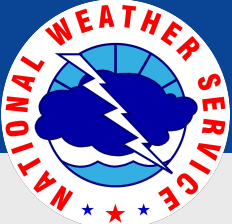


Percent of Normal Precipitation (%)
1/1/2026 – 9/23/2026



Much of the area is seeing compounding drought impacts.



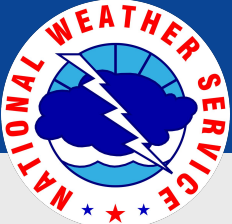


Precipitation Deficits

September 25, 2026
4:10 AM EDT

City	Precipitation Since Jan 1st	Departure from Normal since Jan 1st	Water Year to Date Oct 1, 2025 - Sept 24, 2026	Water Year to Date Departure Oct 1, 2025 - Sept 24, 2026
Caribou	29.51"	+0.43"	38.75"	-1.95"
Houlton	19.79"	-7.73"	28.15"	-11.13"
Millinocket	25.21"	-4.50"	35.05"	-7.55"
Bangor	19.24"	-9.50"	28.06"	-13.65"

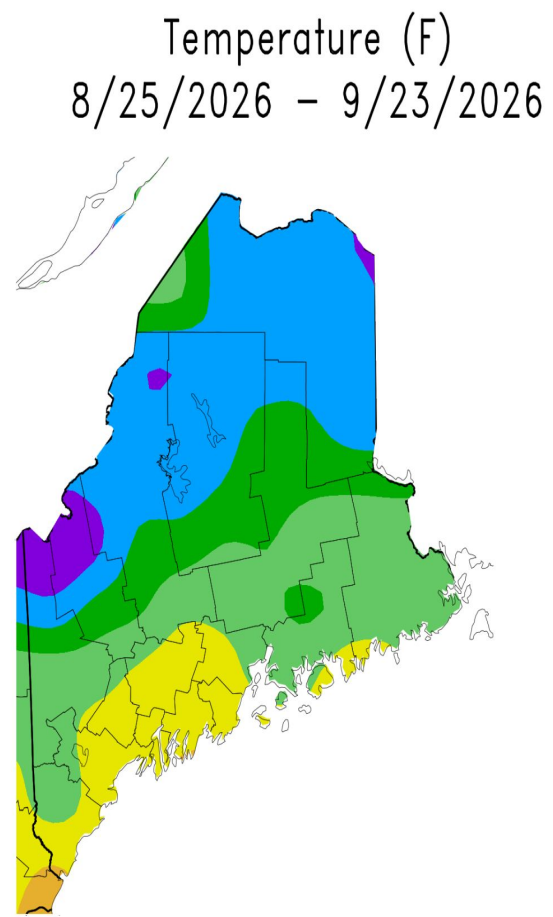
- Houlton is currently 6th driest year to date on record.
 - Records began in 1948
 - Bangor is currently 5th driest year to date on record.
 - Records began in 1948.
- Houlton on track for the 6th driest water year on record.
 - Millinocket on track for 26th driest water year on record.
 - Bangor on track for 4th driest water year on record.



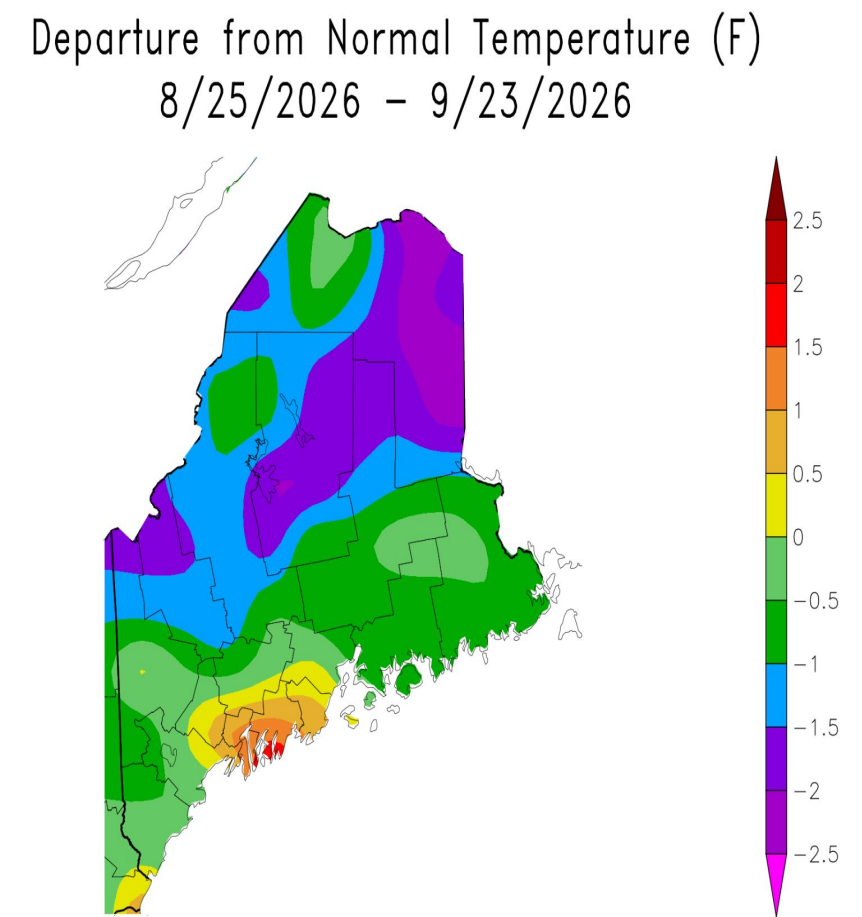
30 Day Temperatures

Link to [Northeast Regional Climate Center](#)

- 30 Day Temperatures have been running 0.5-1 degrees below normal across Bangor Region into Downeast Maine.
- 1-2.5 degrees below normal across the Central Highlands into Northern Maine.
- Cooling temperatures will lead to reduce evaporation demand combined with the end of the growing season.



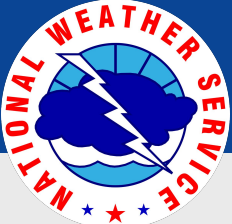
Generated 9/24/2026 using provisional data.



ACIS Web Services Generated 9/24/2026 using provisional data.

ACIS Web Services

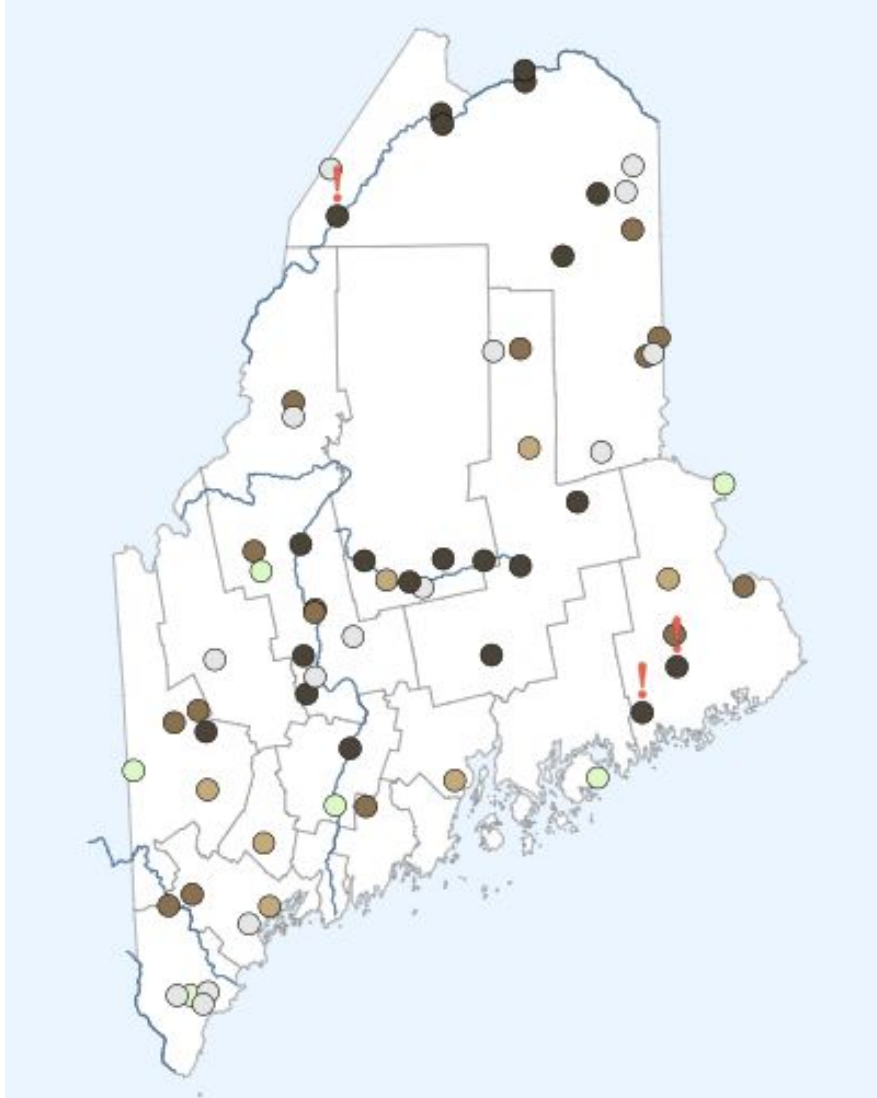




Hydrologic Conditions and Impacts

USGS Streamflow State of Maine Dashboard: <https://waterdata.usgs.gov/state/maine/>

- **Northern Basins:**
 - Below to Much Below Normal flows
 - 2 of 11 gages Below Normal
 - 11 of 14 gages Much Below Normal
 - 1 gage “not ranked”
- **Bangor, Central Highlands & Moosehead Regions:**
 - Below to Much Below Normal flows
 - 4 of 15 gages Below Normal
 - 8 of 15 gages Much Below Normal
 - 3 gages “not ranked”
- **Downeast Basins:**
 - Below to Much Below Normal flows
 - 2 of 9 gages Normal
 - 2 of 9 gages Below Normal
 - 3 of 9 gages Much Below Normal
 - 2 gages “not ranked”
- **Areawide Trends:**
 - Expect flows to remain below normal.

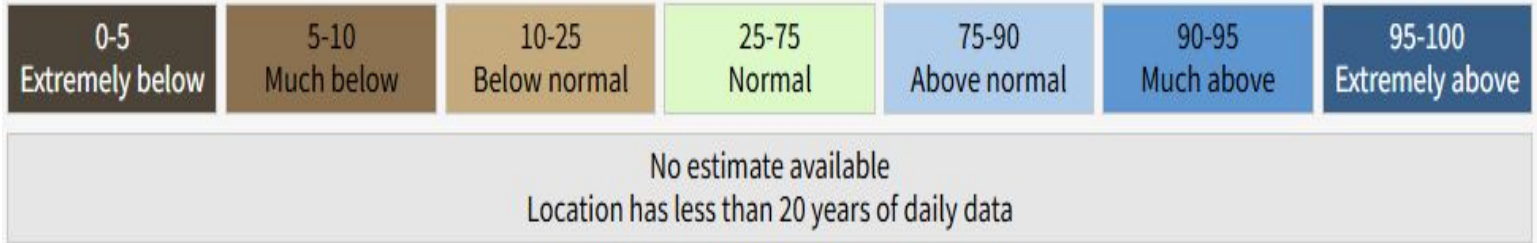


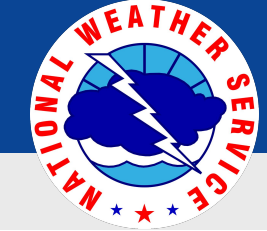
St. John River @ Nine Mile:
4th lowest flow since 1950

Aroostook River @
Masardis:
2nd lowest flow since 1957

Aroostook River @
Washburn:
7th lowest flow since 1930

Mattawamkeag River @
Mattawamkeag:
2nd lowest flow since 1934



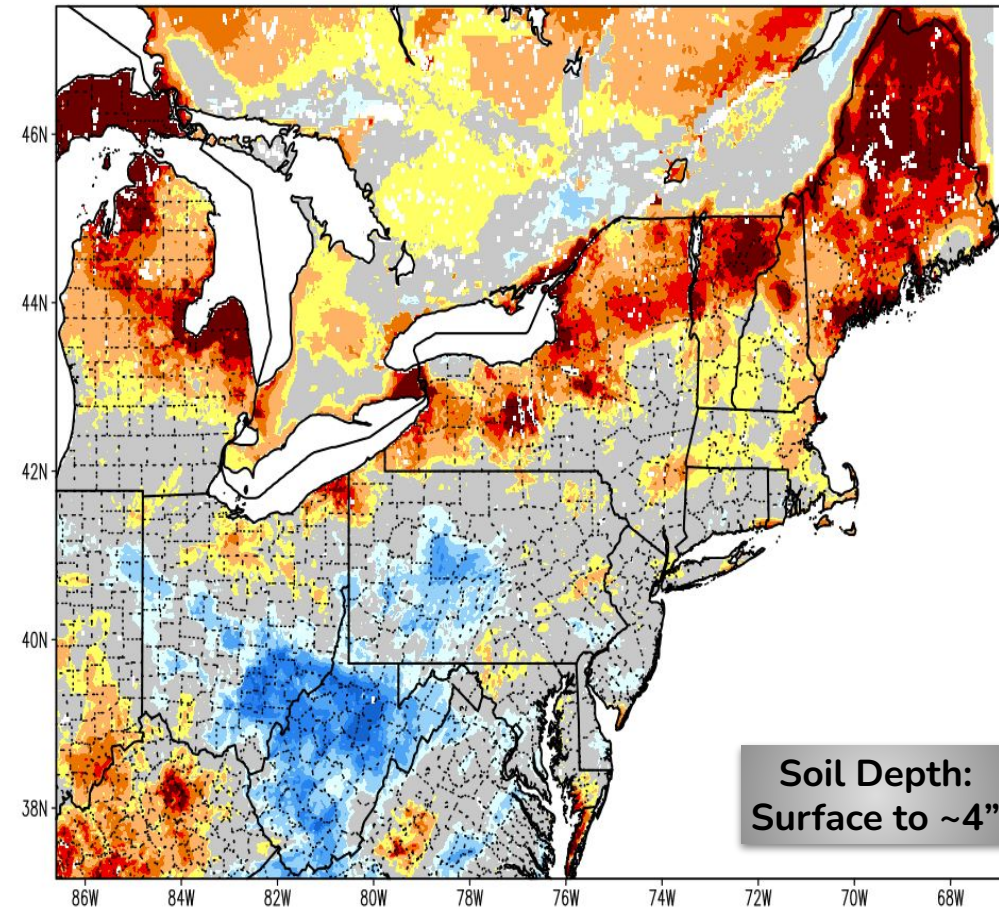


Groundwater Impacts

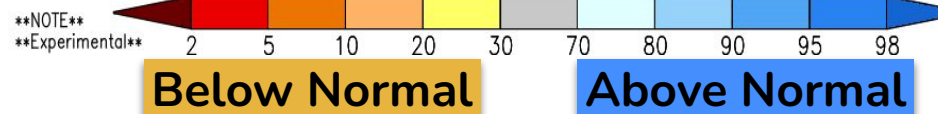
September 25, 2026
4:10 AM EDT

- Near surface soil moisture across much of Maine has continued to struggle and remains very dry. Minor areas of near normal in coastal Downeast Maine.
- Deeper soil moisture down to near 39" continues to struggle as surface plants soak up all the available water in addition to significant rainfall deficits.

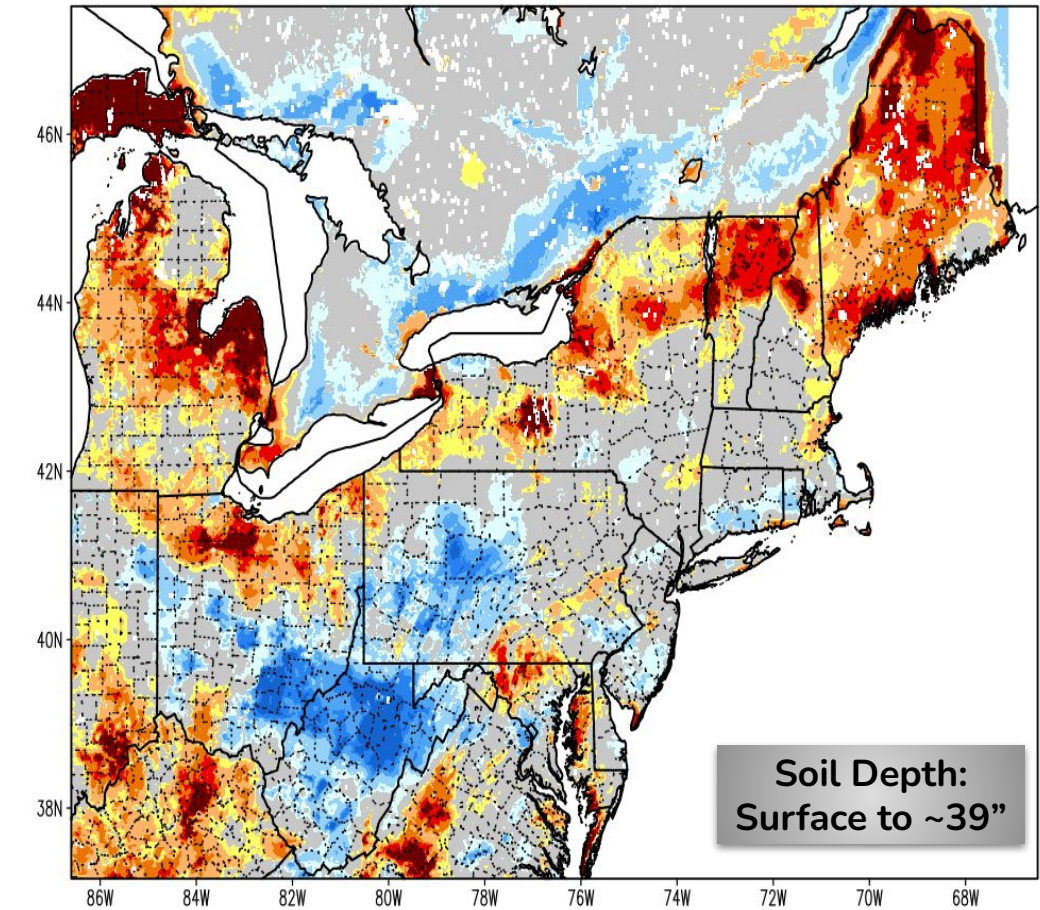
SPoRT-LIS 0-10 cm Soil Moisture percentile valid 25 Sep 2026



Soil Depth:
Surface to ~4"



SPoRT-LIS 0-100 cm Soil Moisture percentile valid 25 Sep 2026



Soil Depth:
Surface to ~39"

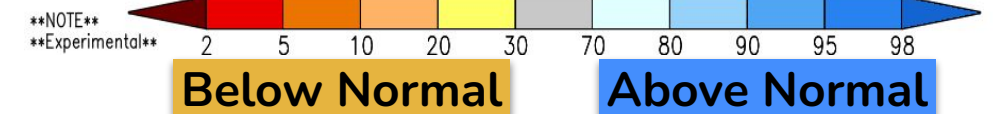
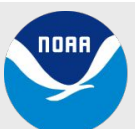
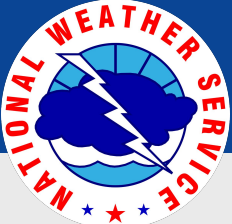


Image Captions:
National Water Model
[Soil Moisture Percentile 0-10cm Depth](#)
[Soil Moisture Percentile 0-100cm Depth](#)





Groundwater

September 25, 2026
4:10 AM EDT

- The 2025-26 Drought that did improve in the late spring only improved enough to lower drought conditions. Deeper moisture only improved slightly, but is being taxed heavily in the 2026 growing season combined with rainfall deficits in July and August 2026. This is leading to the well below normal groundwater conditions.

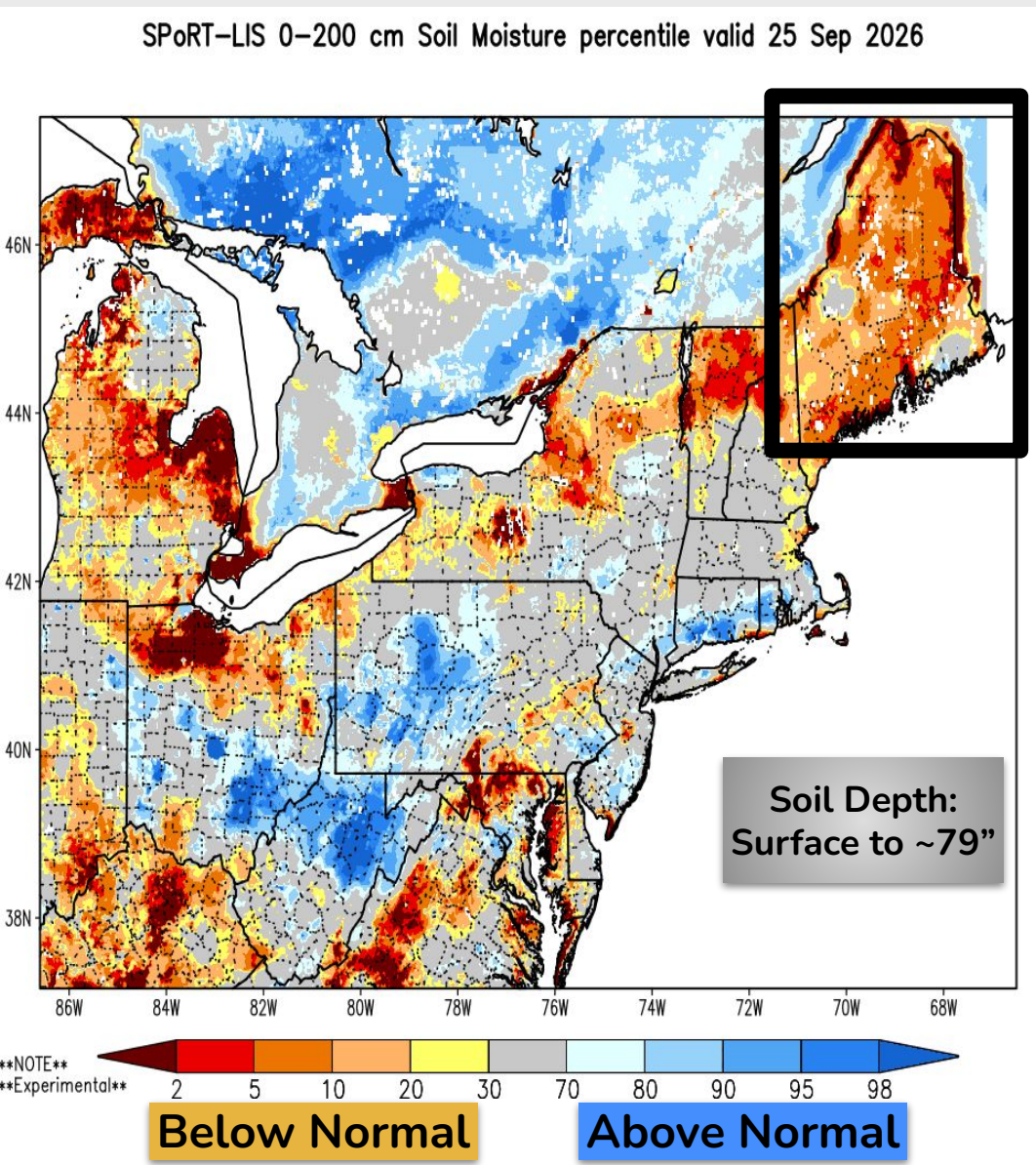
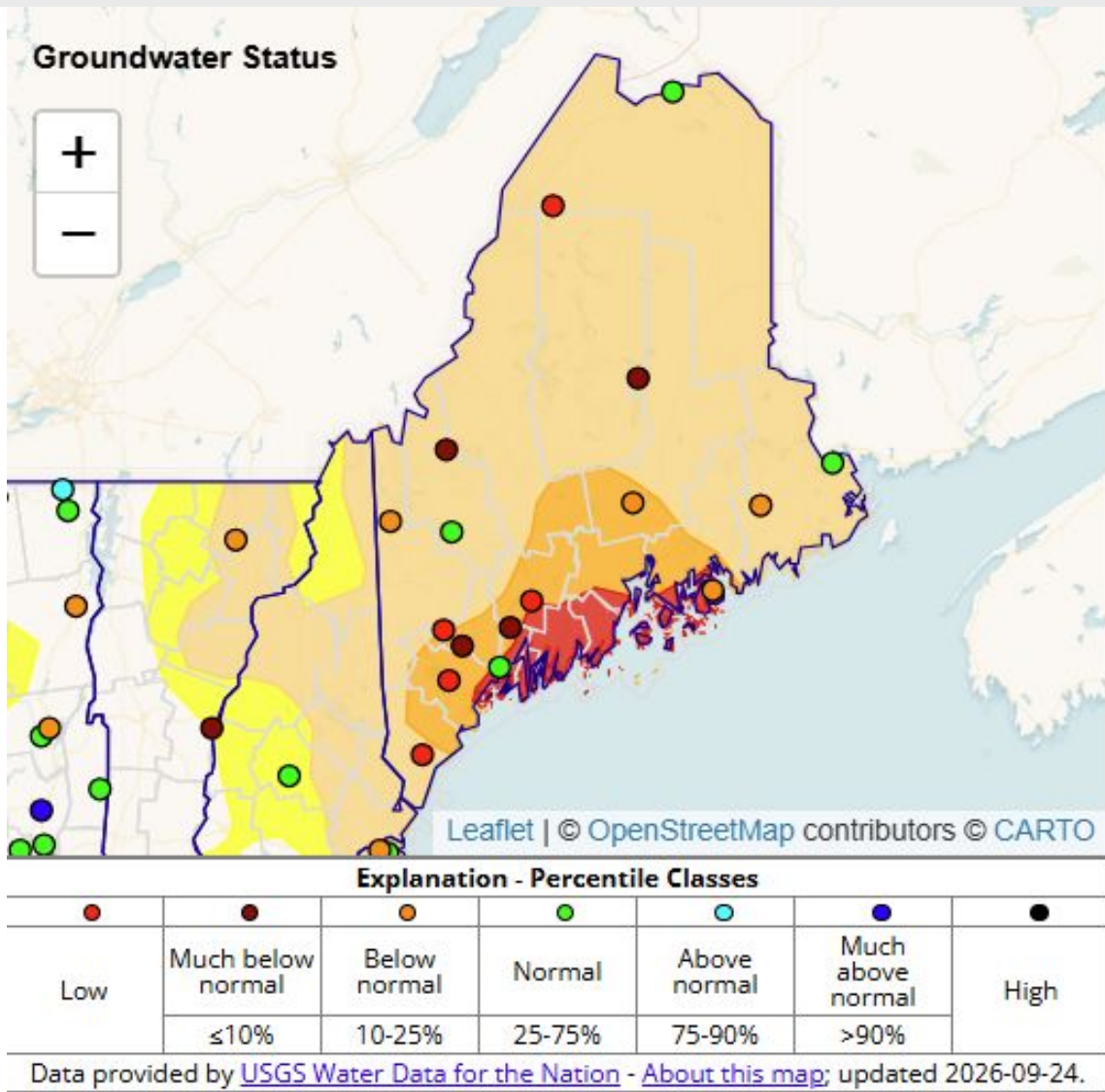
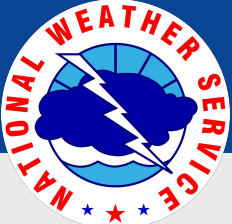


Image Captions:
[USGS Groundwater Gauge Status](#)
[Soil Moisture Percentile 0-200cm Depth](#)

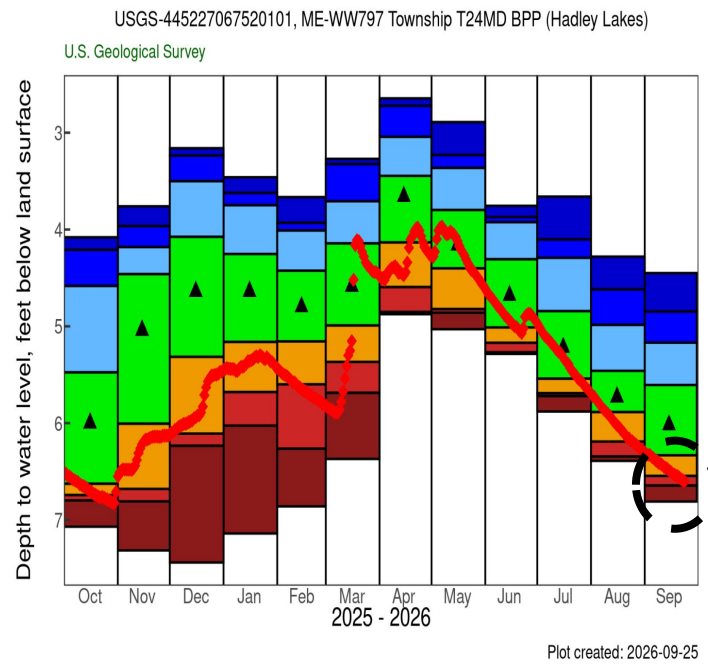
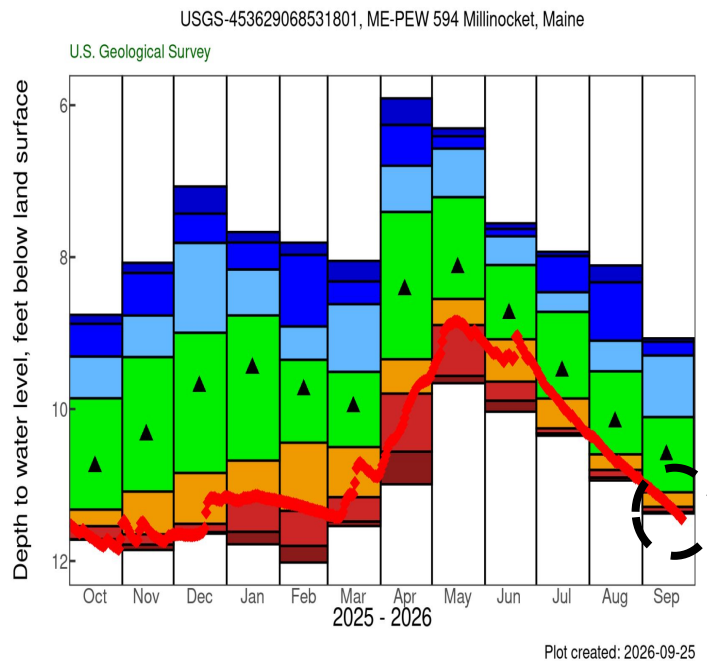
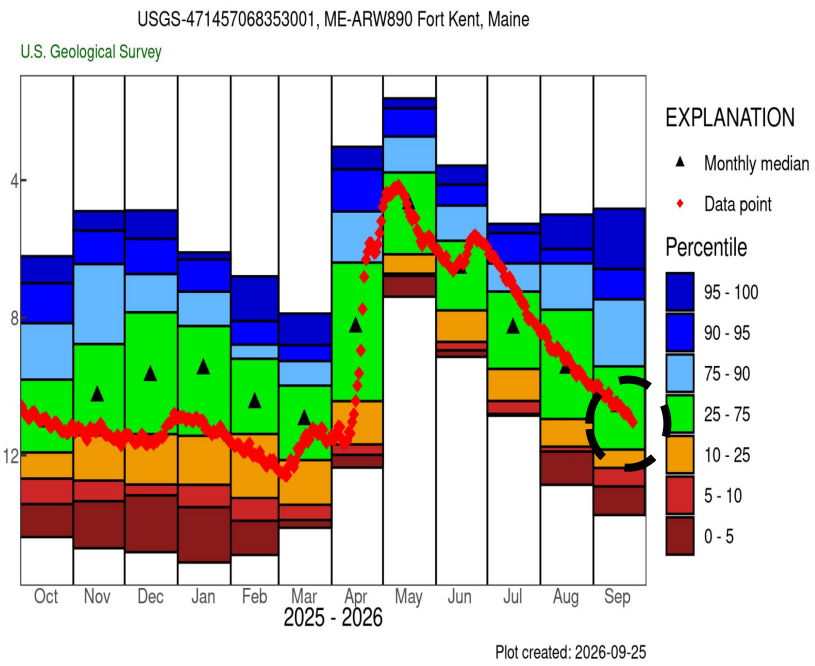




Groundwater Gage Plots

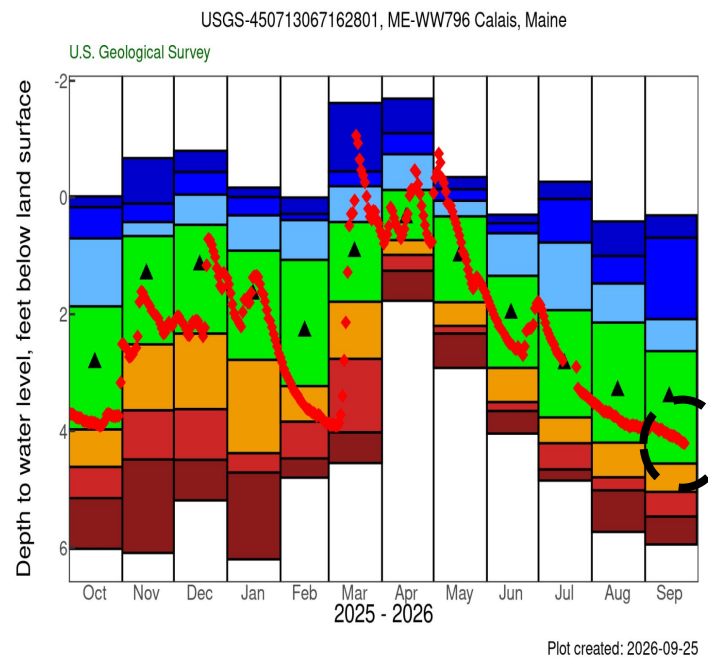
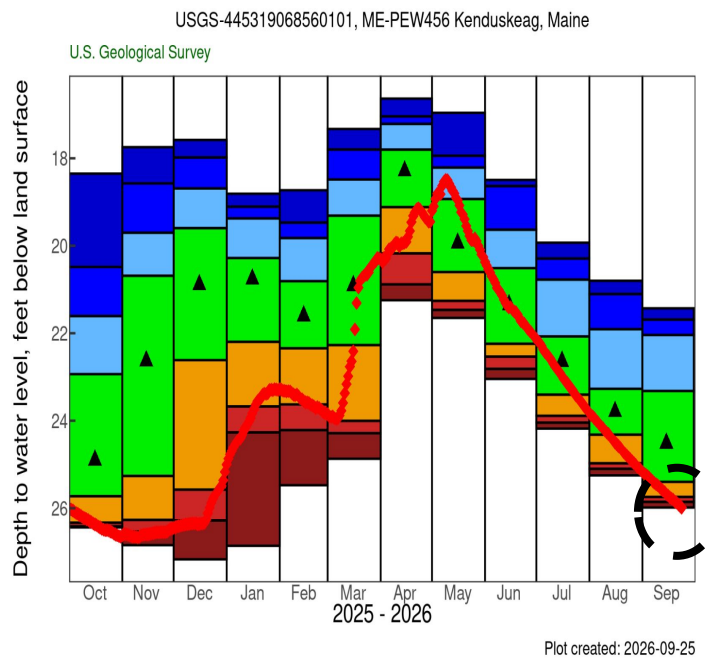
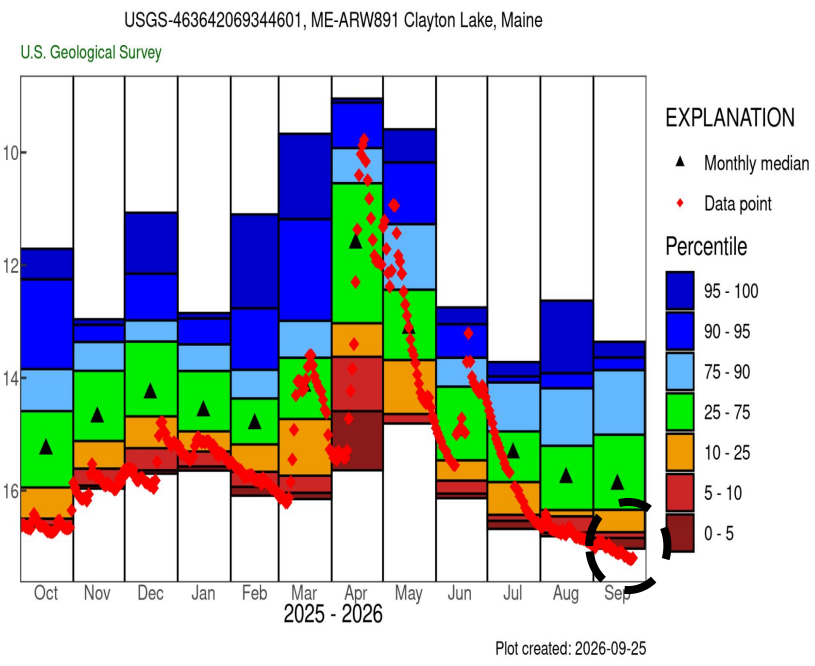
USGS Groundwater Levels in New England: https://newengland.water.usgs.gov/web_app/GWW/GWW.html

Depth to water level, feet below land surface



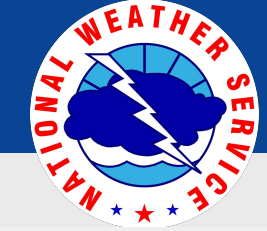
Groundwater gage data indicates high water system demand due to the growing season, compounded by a failure to fully recover from the 2025-26 drought. Consequently, multiple locations are currently reporting conditions at or near record lows.

Depth to water level, feet below land surface



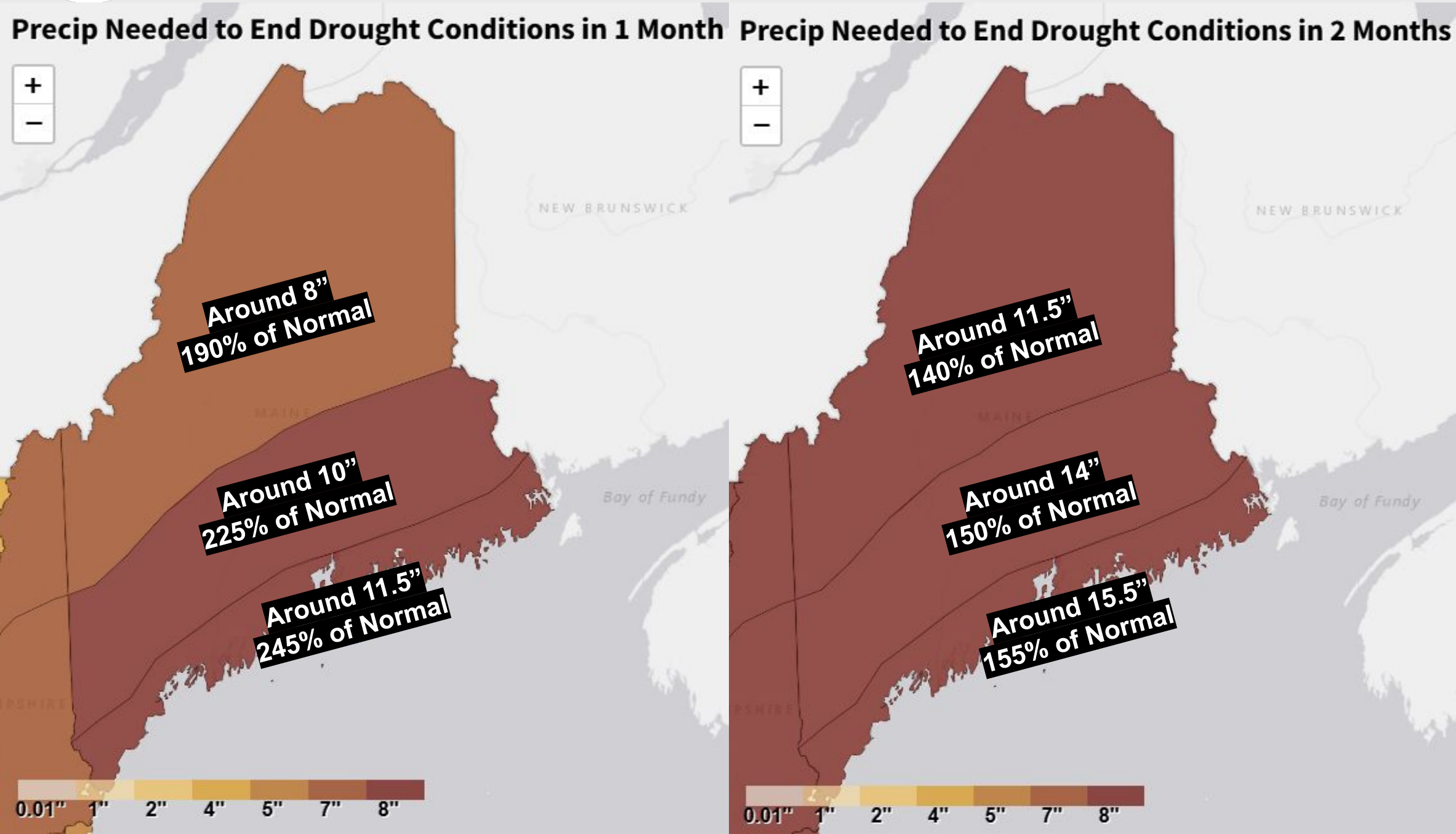
A few locations are “normal” but lower end normal conditions for September.



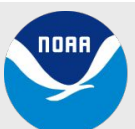


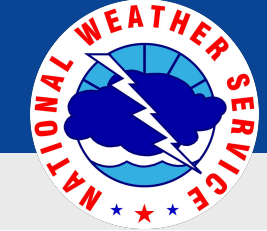
Rainfall Needed to “End the Drought”

September 25, 2026
4:10 AM EDT



- Steady, light-rain events with high absorption rates are ideal.
- These values have decreased slightly due to the upcoming end of the growing season. However, significantly above normal precip is needed to end the drought.





Summary of Impacts

September 25, 2026

4:10 AM EDT

Links: See/submit [Condition Monitoring Observer Reports \(CMOR\)](#) and view the [Drought Impacts Reporter](#)

Hydrologic Impacts

- Regional streamflows, lake levels, seasonal wetlands, and storage reservoirs are experiencing widespread drops due to a combination of seasonal drawdown, diminished surface runoff, and heightened water demand.
- Lakes/ponds running below normal exposing rocks posing threats to recreational activities.

Aquifer Deficits

- Groundwater recharge continues to lag across the region, maintaining significant, lingering storage deficits. Multiple monitoring wells across Eastern/Northern Maine are currently reading Below Normal to Much Below Normal compared to historical climatological baselines. A few sites are at record low groundwater conditions. Low water tables are compounded by multi-year precipitation deficits and depleted baseline levels carried over from previous dry seasons.

Dry Drinking Water Wells

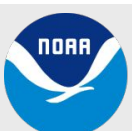
- A few new dry well reports; will monitor as conditions worsen.
- Maine EMA Dry Well Survey: <https://maine-dry-well-survey-maine.hub.arcgis.com/>

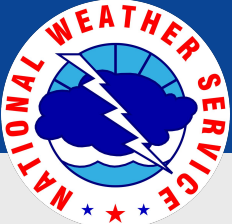
Agricultural Impacts

- Growing season is coming to an end but there has been agricultural impacts due to the ongoing drought. Please continue to report via the above CMOR link.

Mitigation Actions

- Please refer to your municipality and/or water provider for mitigation information.



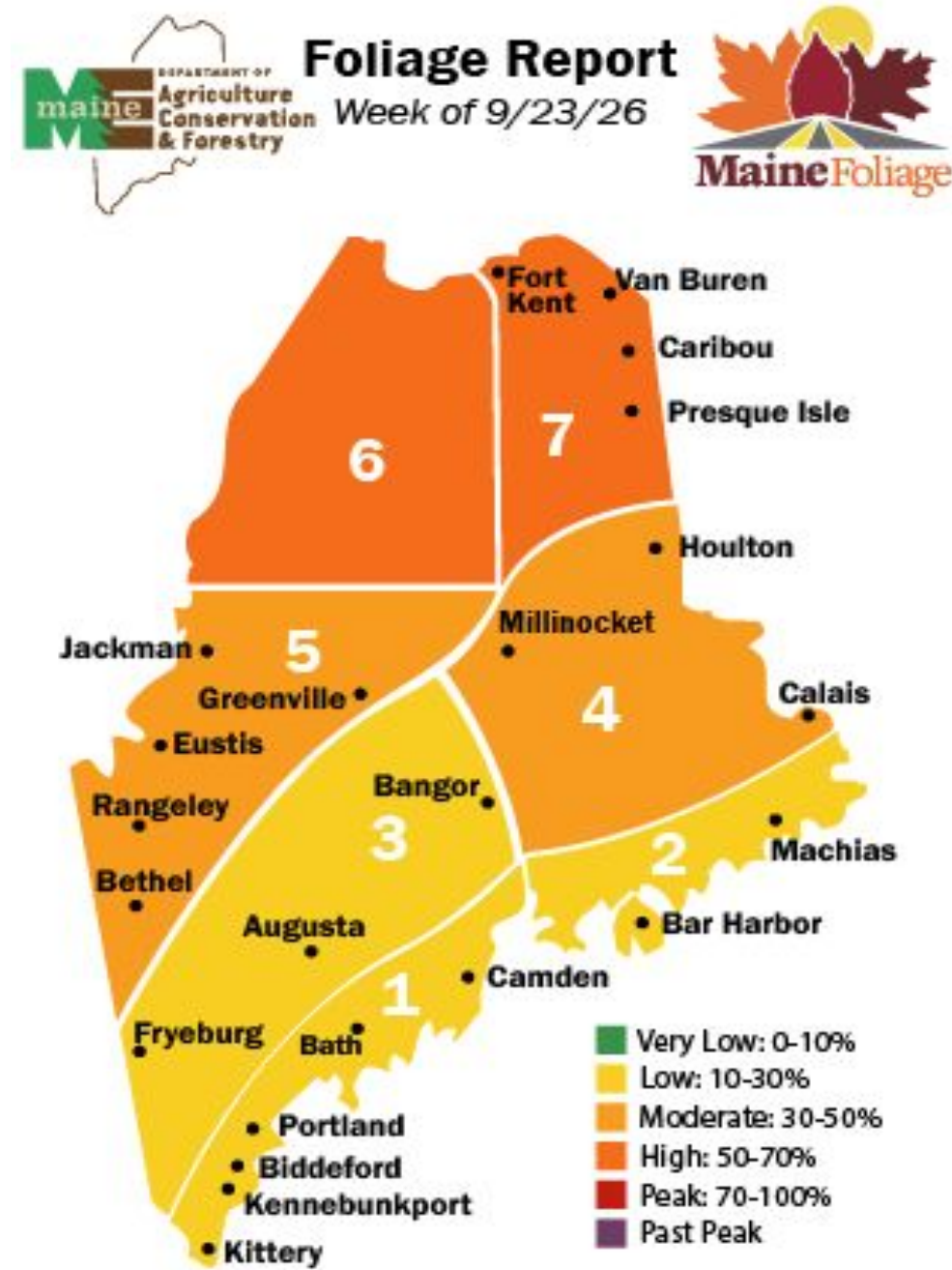


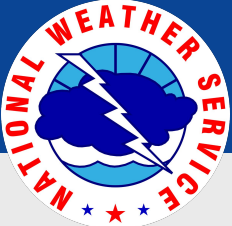
Fall Foliage Impacts

Maine Fall Foliage Report: www.maine.gov/dacf/mfs/projects/fall_foliage/report/index.shtml



While drought stress can lead to early leaf drop, browner leaves, and patchy color, sunny days paired with crisp, cool nights can still produce vibrant fall foliage across New England.

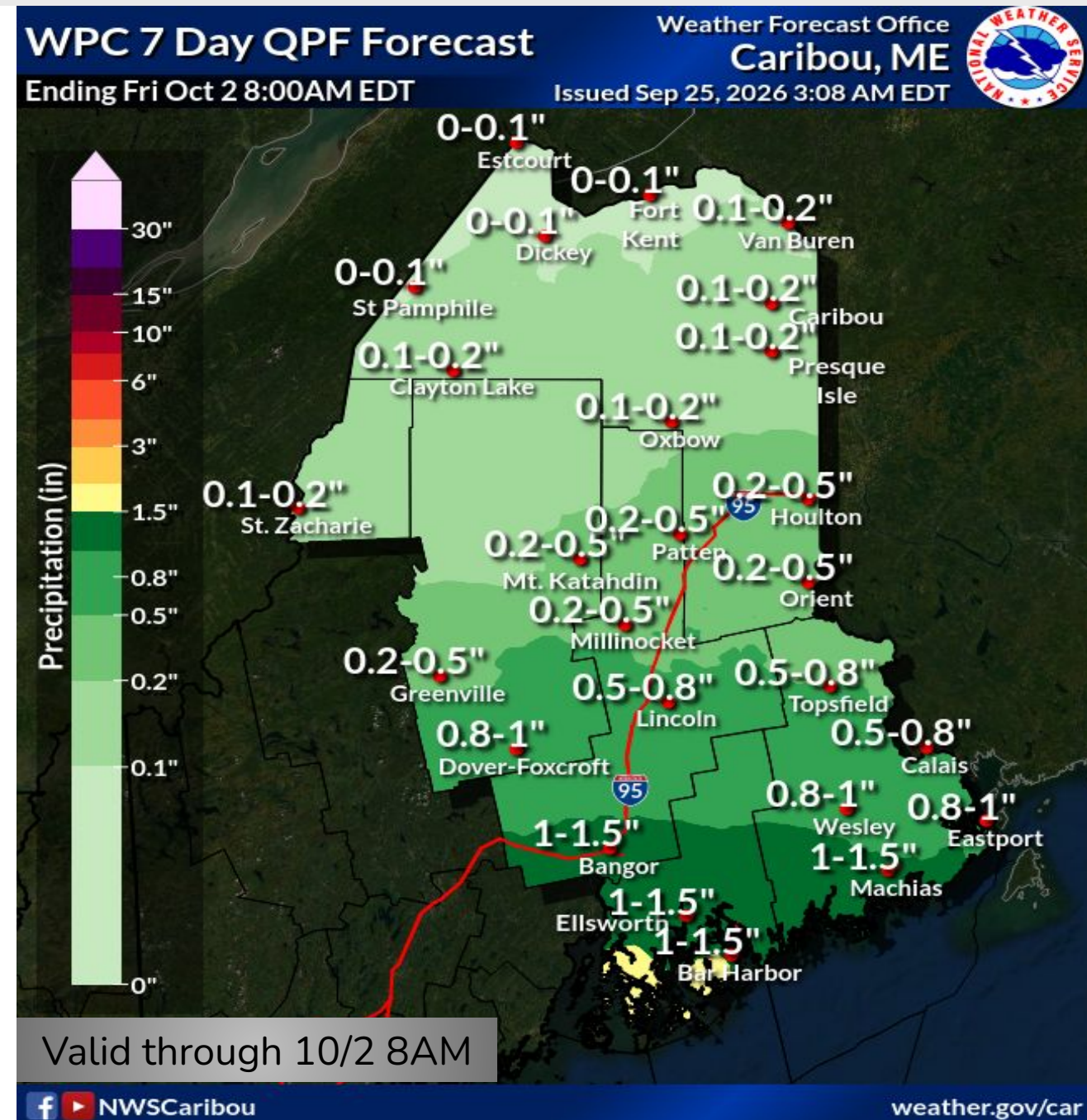


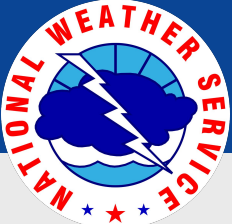


Seven Day Precipitation Forecast

September 25, 2026
4:10 AM EDT

- Very little if any precipitation across Northern Maine.
- Light precipitation expected across Central Highlands and interior Downeast Maine thanks to showers.
- Best chance of beneficial rainfall from the Bangor Region to Downeast coastline. The ground will absorb nearly all of this precipitation.





Long Range Outlooks (October)

The latest monthly and seasonal outlooks can be found on the [CPC homepage](#)

Main Takeaways for September:

- Moderate signal for above normal temperatures in the state.
- No significant signal for above/below normal precipitation in the state.

Pattern Outlook

- El Niño is continuing to strengthen but uncertainty remains on the subseasonal pattern influences in October. This is concerning given our ongoing dry conditions.

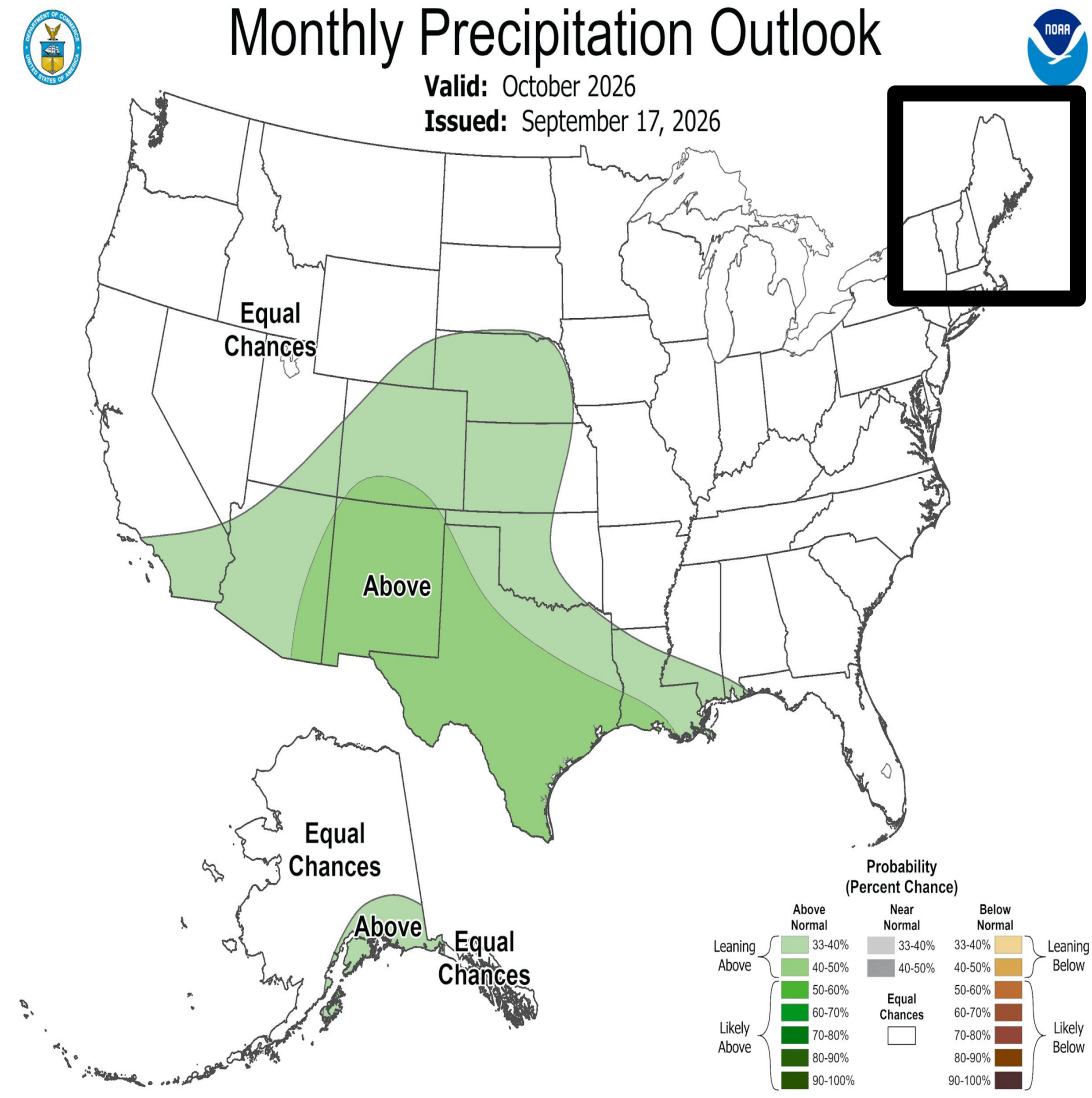
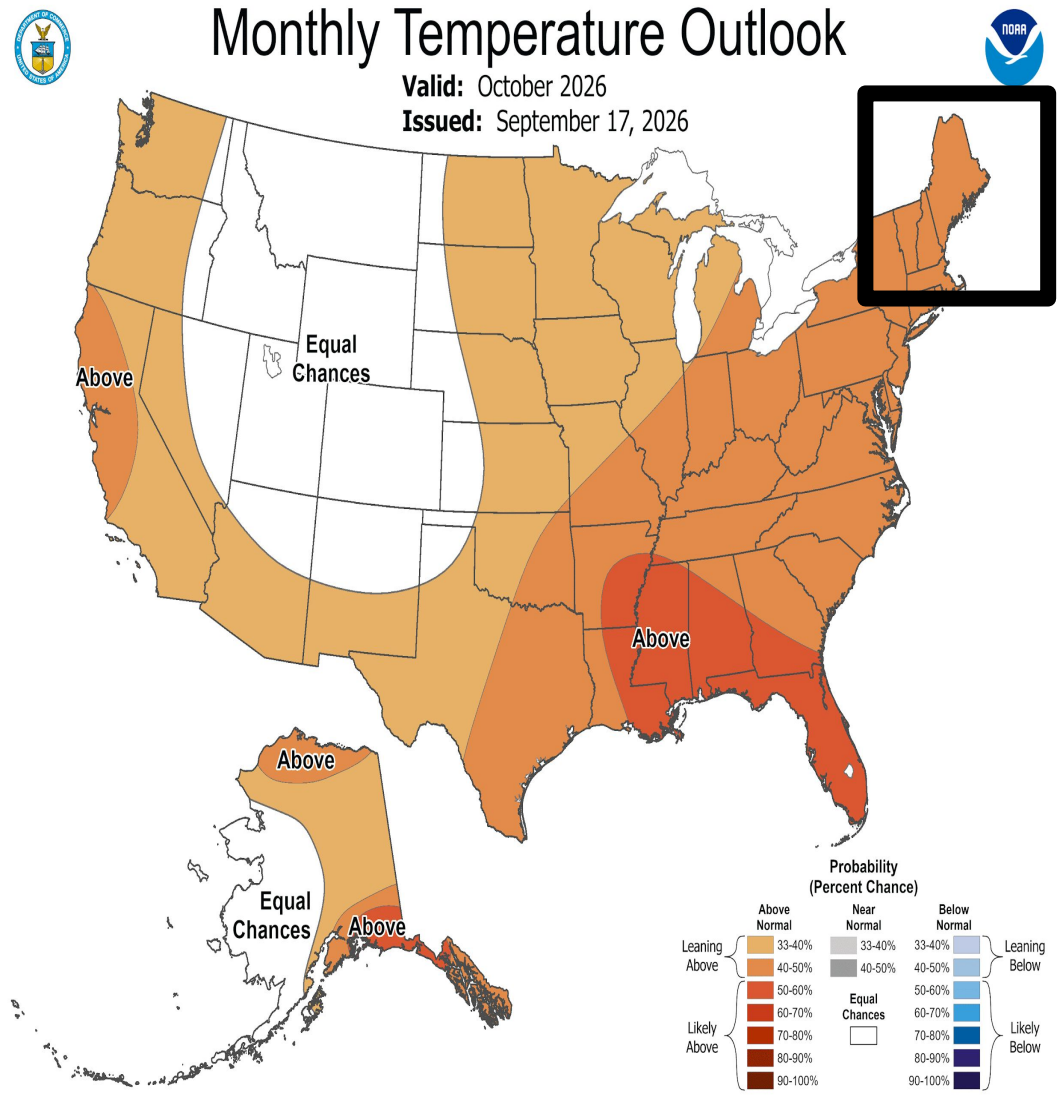
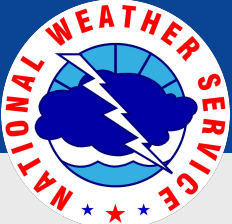


Image Captions:
Left - [Climate Prediction Center 1 Month Temperature Outlook.](#)
Right - [Climate Prediction Center 1 Month Precipitation Outlook.](#)





Long Range Outlooks (Oct-Dec)

The latest monthly and seasonal outlooks can be found on the [CPC homepage](#)

Main Takeaways for Oct-Dec:

- Moderate signal for above normal temperatures in the state.
- No significant signal for above/below normal precipitation in the state.

Pattern Outlook

- El Niño is continuing to strengthen but uncertainty remains on the subseasonal pattern influences this fall into early winter. This is concerning signals given our ongoing dry conditions.

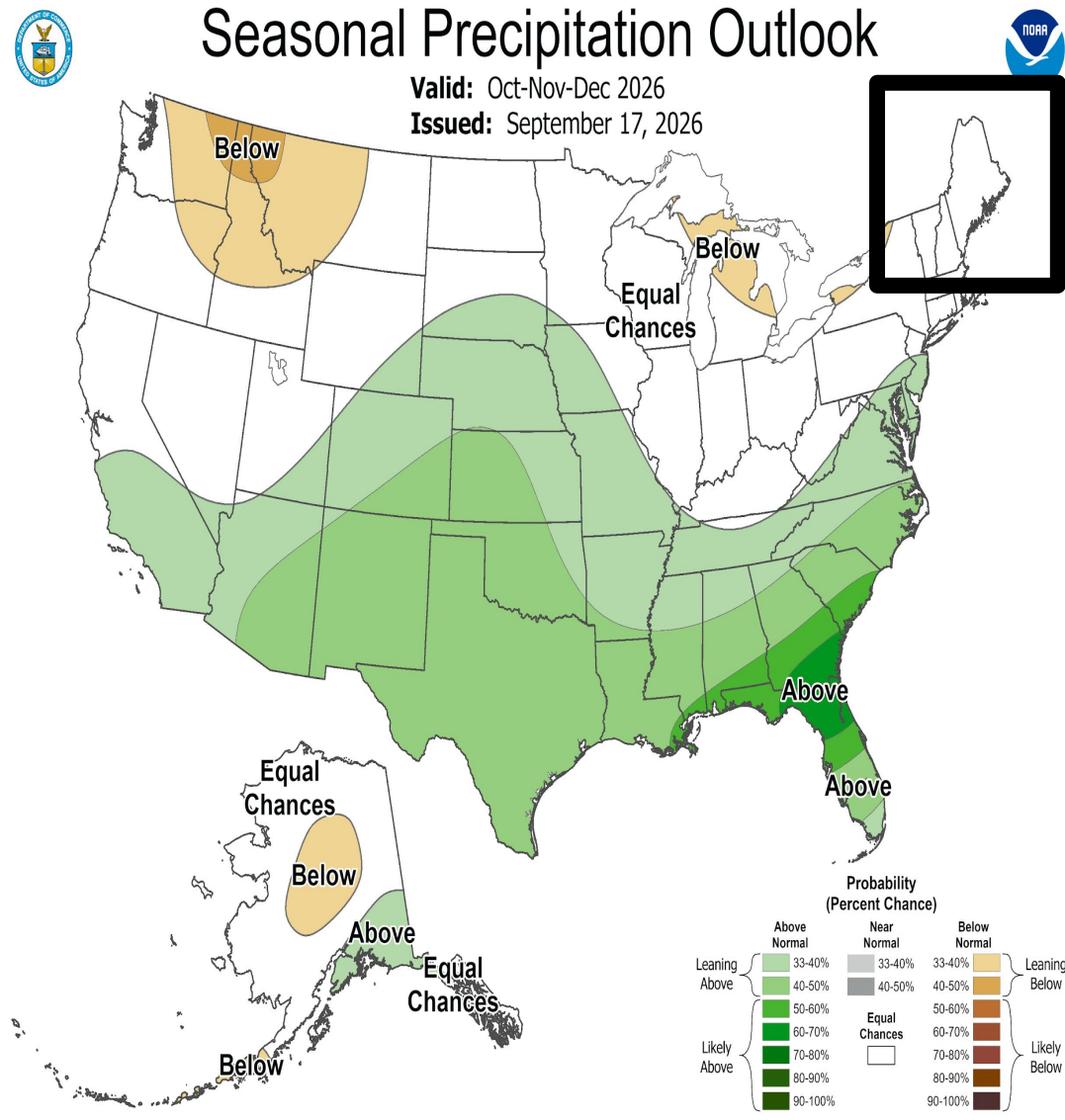
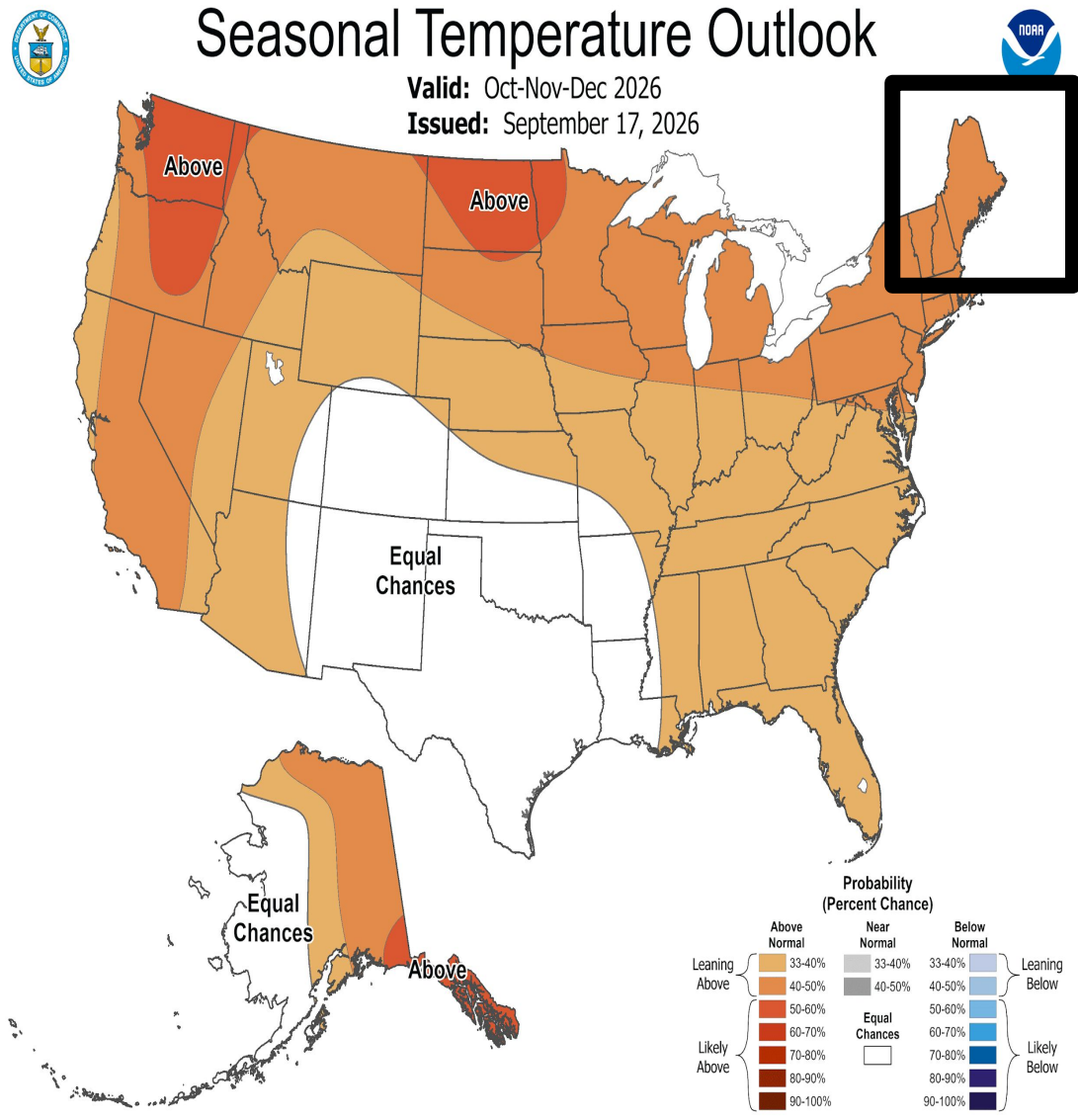
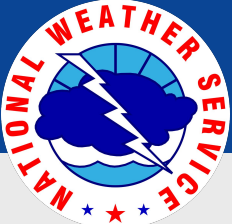


Image Captions:
Left - [Climate Prediction Center 3 Month Temperature Outlook.](#)
Right - [Climate Prediction Center 3 Month Precipitation Outlook.](#)





El Niño / Southern Oscillation (ENSO)

September 25, 2026
4:10 AM EDT

El Niño is strengthening, with a **greater than 90% chance** of a very strong event during the Northern Hemisphere fall and winter 2026-27. The CPC Official ENSO outlook indicates there is a **75% chance of a historic event** that would exceed the strength of previous El Niño events dating back to 1950.

Historical Winter Impacts in Maine

Strong to Very Strong events historically deliver above-normal winter temperatures and precipitation:

Storm Type & Precipitation

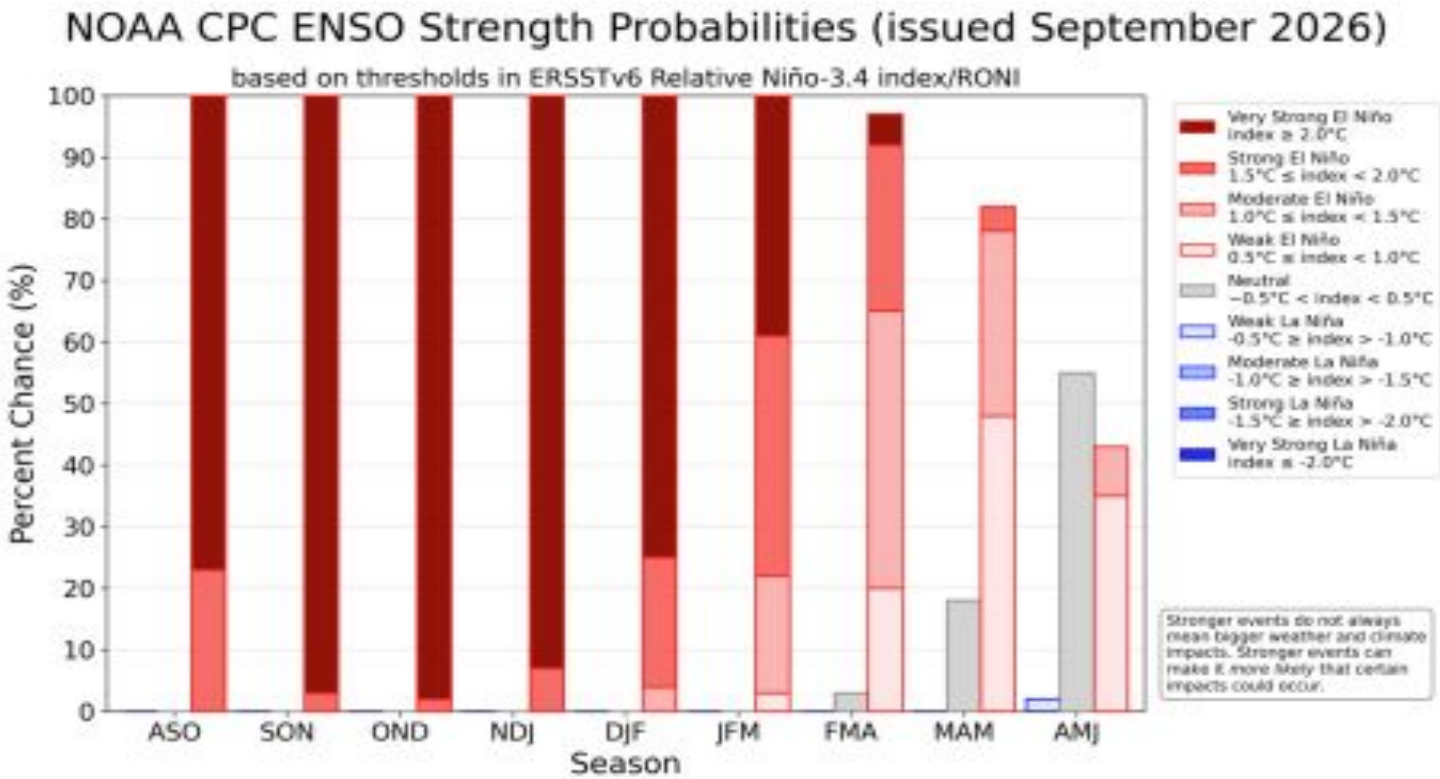
- Higher proportion of winter storms produce rain/sleet/freezing rain rather than long-lasting dry snow, particularly in coastal and southern areas.

Repeated Snowpack Melt

- Periods of mild temperatures between weather systems often cause existing snowpack to melt repeatedly throughout the season.

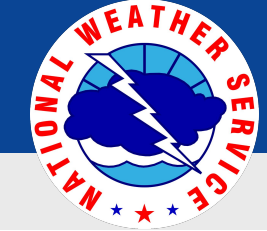
Runoff & Hydrologic Recharge

- Frequent runoff events favor robust surface water replenishment (lakes, reservoirs, streamflows), while shallow ground frost aids deep groundwater recharge. Northern Maine deep frost prevents recharge.



Net Drought Outlook: Even with expectations of a deficient seasonal snowpack, the net hydrologic impact is often favorable for reducing drought.

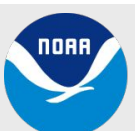




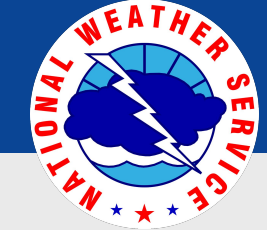
Main Takeaways

September 25, 2026
4:10 AM EDT

- **Bottom Line:** drought continues across Eastern and Northern Maine with no significant improvements expected. Short term rainfall likely to help near surface groundwater, although short lived.
 - *Full aquifer recovery is unlikely until Winter 2026 / Spring 2027.*
- Groundwater trends continue to show significant worsening.
- Outlook: Long-term prognosis remains concerning, but a strong El Niño Winter is hopeful.
 - Will need to monitor trends for fire danger as the growing season ends, drinking water supplies and surface water conditions.
- Repeating light wetting rains will be vital to improve soil moisture, otherwise evaporative losses will dominate.
- Growing season ending now will reduce the demand on the water system.
- Stakeholders should prepare for continued drought conditions this fall.
- ***Groundwater & streamflow levels are at climatological minimums in September to Early October.***







Useful Links

- <https://drought.gov/drought-information-statements>
- <https://www.weather.gov/car/DroughtInformationStatement>
- <https://www.drought.gov/drought-status-updates/car>
- <https://www.weather.gov/car/EMhome>
- <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>

Contact Information

Web

→ www.weather.gov/car

Phone (public)

→ (207) 492-0182

Questions? Email

→ nws.caribou@noaa.gov

→ james.sinko@noaa.gov *(Hydrology Program Manager)*