Drought Information Statement for North and Central Georgia

Valid March 19, 2026

Issued By: National Weather Service Atlanta / Peachtree City, GA

Contact Information: sr-ffc.webmaster@noaa.gov

- This product will be updated April 2, 2026 or sooner if drought conditions change significantly.
- Please see all currently available products at https://drought.gov/drought-information-statements.
- Please visit https://www.weather.gov/ffc/DroughtInformationStatement for previous statements.
- Please visit https://www.drought.gov/drought-status-updates for regional drought status updates.

Extreme drought continues to expand despite recent rains.

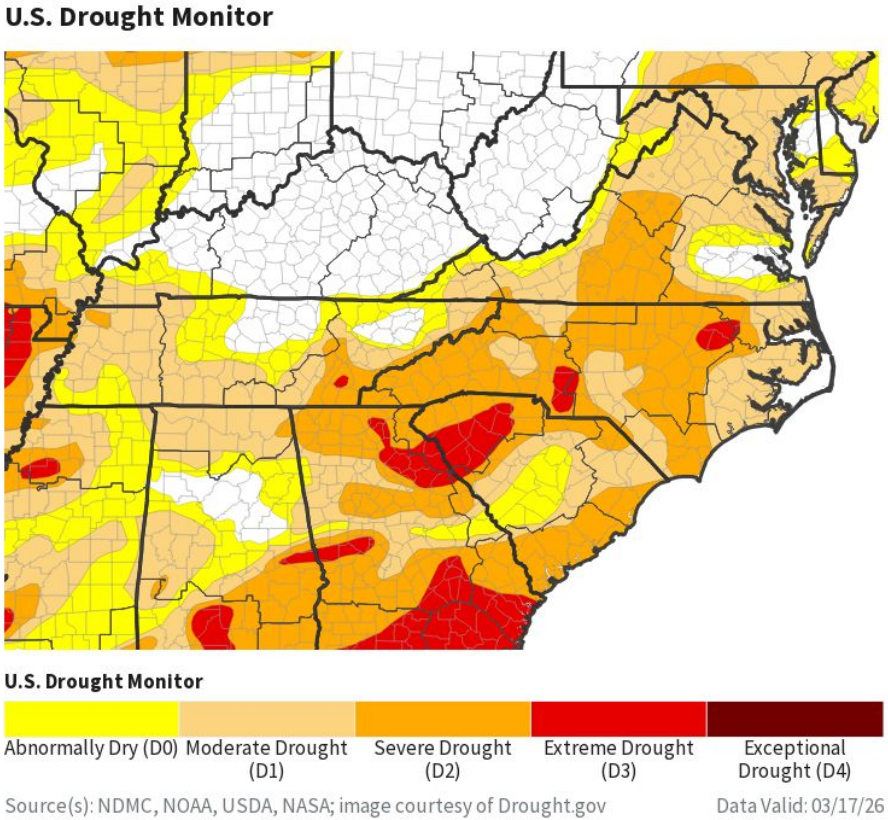
- D3 Extreme Drought did expand in coverage this week, despite the cumulative D2-D4 drought area has remaining steady.
- Hydrologic and fire weather impacts remain a concern across the state.
- A benign weather pattern through the rest of March will likely result in expansion of drought conditions.

U.S. Drought Monitor

Link to the latest U.S. Drought Monitor for North and Central Georgia

Drought intensity and Extent:

- **D4 (Exceptional):** None.
- **D3 (Extreme):** Banks, Barrow, Clarke, Crawford, Dodge, Emanuel, Fannin, Forsyth, Gwinnett, Hall, Harris, Jackson, Johnson, Lamar, Laurens, Lumpkin, Madison, Meriwether, Monroe, Montgomery, Muscogee, Oconee, Oglethorpe, Talbot, Taylor, Telfair, Toombs, Treutlen, Union, Upson, Wheeler, White, Wilcox, Wilkes
- **D2 (Severe):** Bartow, Bibb, Bleckley, Butts, Catoosa, Chattahoochee, Chattooga, Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, Crisp, Dade, Dawson, DeKalb, Dooly, Fayette, Floyd, Fulton, Gilmer, Glascock, Gordon, Greene, Hancock, Henry, Houston, Jasper, Jefferson, Macon, Marion, Morgan, Murray, Newton, Peach, Pickens, Pike, Pulaski, Putnam, Rockdale, Schley, Spalding, Stewart, Sumter, Taliaferro, Towns, Troup, Twiggs, Walker, Walton, Warren, Washington, Webster, Whitfield, Wilkinson
- **D1 (Moderate):** Baldwin, Carroll, Douglas, Haralson, Heard, Jones, Paulding, Polk
- **D0 (Abnormally Dry):** None.



Recent Change in Drought Intensity

Link to the latest 2-week and 4-week change map for Georgia.

Four Week Drought Monitor Class Change

(image not shown)

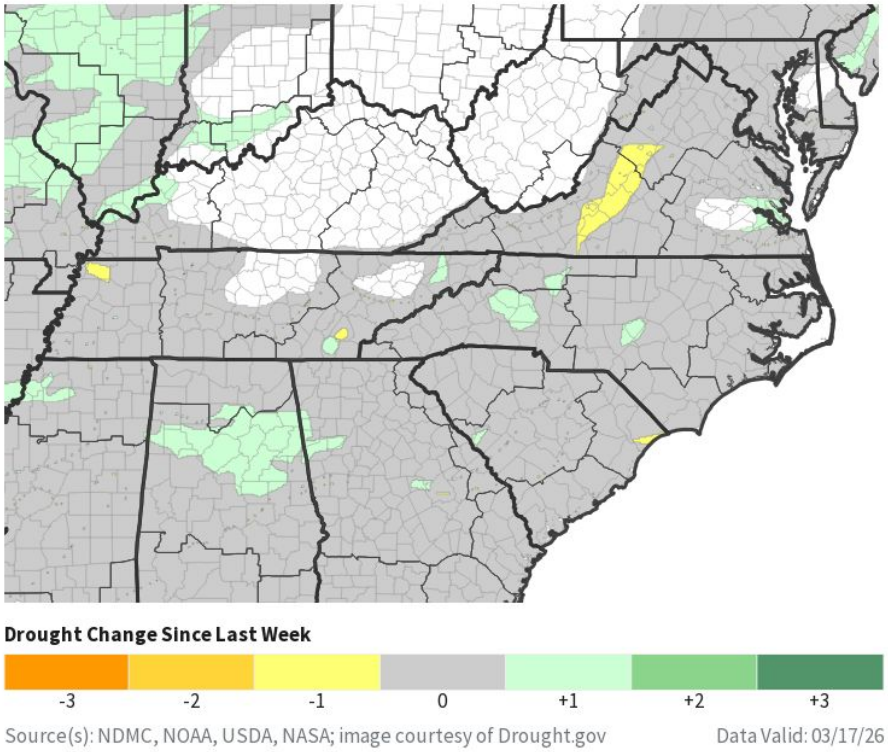
- **Drought Worsened:** Baldwin, Barrow, Bartow, Bibb, Carroll, Chattahoochee, Cherokee, Clarke, Cobb, Crawford, DeKalb, Douglas, Floyd, Forsyth, Fulton, Glascock, Greene, Gwinnett, Hall, Hancock, Haralson, Harris, Heard, Houston, Jefferson, Jones, Macon, Marion, Meriwether, Morgan, Muscogee, Newton, Oconee, Oglethorpe, Paulding, Peach, Pike, Polk, Rockdale, Talbot, Taylor, Troup, Twiggs, Walton, Washington, Wilkinson

- **No Change:** Bleckley, Butts, Catoosa, Chattooga, Clayton, Coweta, Crisp, Dade, Dawson, Dodge, Dooly, Emanuel, Fayette, Gilmer, Gordon, Henry, Jasper, Johnson, Lamar, Laurens, Monroe, Montgomery, Murray, Pickens, Pulaski, Putnam, Schley, Spalding, Stewart, Sumter, Taliaferro, Telfair, Towns, Treutlen, Upson, Walker, Warren, Webster, Wheeler, Whitfield

- **Drought Improved:** Banks, Barrow, Fannin, Forsyth, Gwinnett, Hall, Jackson, Lumpkin, Madison, Oglethorpe, Toombs, Union, White, Wilcox, Wilkes

The 4-week change map is available here.
The 1-week change map is shown right.

U.S. Drought Monitor 1-Week Change Map

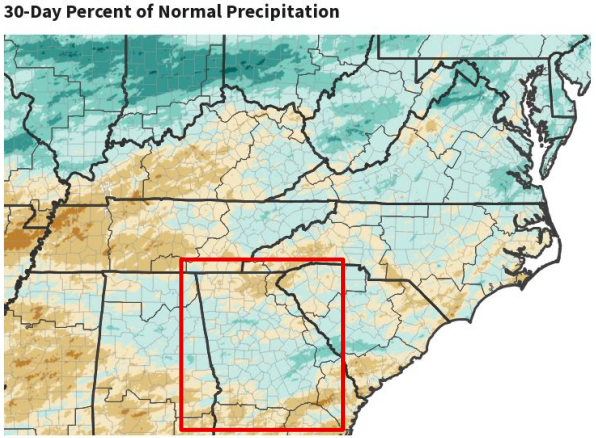


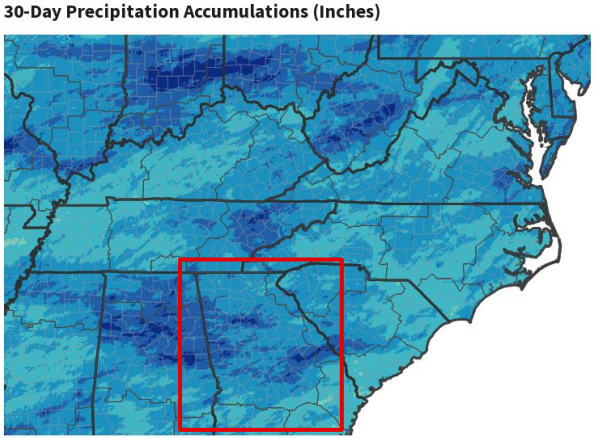
Precipitation - Past 30 Days

National Water Prediction Service link to the 30-day precipitation map for North and Central Georgia

Through Thursday, March 19, 2026, at 8AM:

	Last 30 Days		Last 60 Days	
	Rainfall (inches)	%Normal	Rainfall (inches)	%Normal
Rome (KRMG)	5.02	97%	7.18	71%
Athens (KAHN)	4.98	108%	7.48	83%
Peachtree-DeKalb (KPDK)	7.67	164%	9.56	104%
Fulton County (KFTY)	6.43	140%	8.17	92%
Atlanta (KATL)	5.66	118%	7.79	82%
Peachtree City (KFFC)	4.95	97%	7.01	73%
Macon (KMCN)	4.02	92%	6.62	76%
Columbus (KCSG)	4.80	96%	7.30	78%





Georgia has had a wetter, more active period over the last 30 days, with observed rainfall ranging from 4 to 8 inches (or 90-170 percent of normal) at the climate locations (see table). However, some areas missed the beneficial rainfall.

Over north and central Georgia, the lowest observed rainfall occurred in the general vicinity of Vidalia. In this area, 30-day rainfall totals were only 1.5 to 3.0 inches (or 40 to 70% of normal). The northeast Georgia mountains fared slightly better: 2.5 to 4.0 inches (or 40 to 75% of normal). The highest rainfall amounts (5 to 9 inches, or 100 to 180% of normal) occurred west of I-75 and I-85 over western Georgia, and in the greater Atlanta metro. An isolated area in DeKalb County exceeded 10 inches (210% of normal).

The Additional Rainfall Information product (MISATL) is available online at weather.gov/ffc.

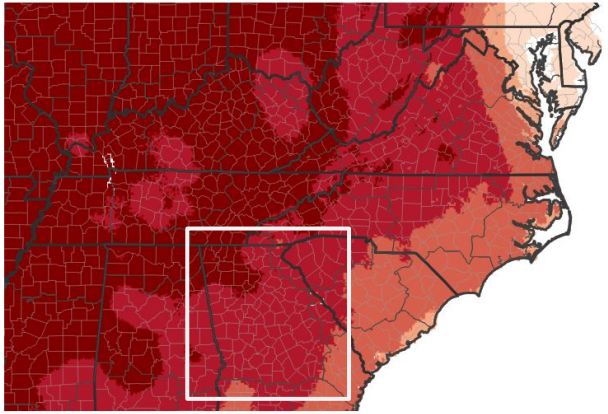
Temperatures - Past 30-, 7-Days

*Through March 15, 2026.**

	Last 30 Days (ending Mar 15)	
	Average High (Departure)	Average Low (Departure)
Rome (KRMG)	72.4° (+10.4°)	48.2° (+10.1°)
Athens (KAHN)	69.2° (+6.2°)	47.5° (+7.6°)
Peachtree-DeKalb (KPDK)	70.6° (+9.0°)	48.0° (+8.1°)
Fulton County (KFTY)	70.2° (+7.4°)	45.5° (+5.8°)
Atlanta (KATL)	70.4° (+8.1°)	50.4° (+8.1°)
Peachtree City (KFFC)	70.6° (+7.0°)	45.0° (+6.6°)
Macon (KMCN)	73.1° (+6.0°)	47.0° (+5.5°)
Columbus (KCSG)	73.6° (+6.5°)	50.3° (+6.1°)

**Note, the table values are for the period February 13-March 15, 2026, matching the latency for the 30-day and 7-day max temperature anomaly images (right).*

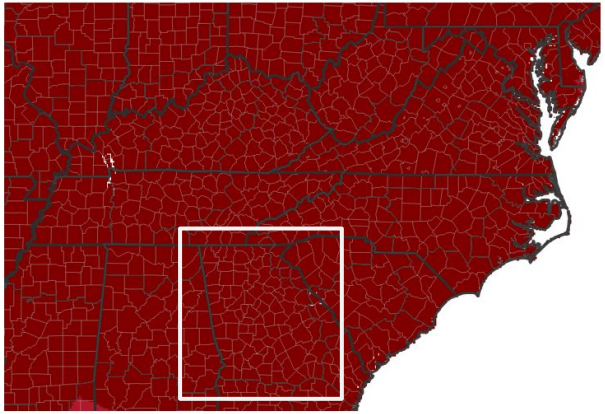
30-Day Temperature Anomaly



Source(s): NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Information; image courtesy of Drought.gov

Data Valid: 03/14/26

7-Day Temperature Anomaly



Source(s): NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Information; image courtesy of Drought.gov

Data Valid: 03/14/26

Over the 30 day period ending March 14 (middle image), average high temperatures were well above normal (+6 or more degrees) over north and central Georgia. The table (left) also includes the average low temperature trends for the 30 day period, which were nearly as extreme (+5.5 or more degrees).

The extremely anomalous warmth is even more evident for the 7 days ending March 14 (right image), with the entire Southeast U.S. blanketed with average high temperature anomalies of 8 or more degrees.

Summary of Impacts

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

Hydrologic Impacts

- Streamflow over the greater Atlanta metro area and in the Chattahoochee and upper Flint River Basins are normal for the last 14-days due to beneficial rainfall. Outside of this area, most streamflows are still within the below normal ranges. As warming temperatures encourage the green up, higher demand on water sources and increased evapotranspiration will further stress water supplies and soil moisture. See slide 7 for additional details.

Agricultural Impacts

- Water sources (e.g., holding ponds) remain low or mostly dry in many areas. Planting season officially begins in April, but concerns exist given the low water levels for irrigation. Most livestock producers are now out of hay, and pastures lack adequate rainfall to green up or produce forage crops.
- The Crop Progress & Condition report will begin updating again April 2026.

Fire Hazard Impacts

- Wildfire risk continues to be high enough that leaf and yard waste burning has been discouraged since late 2025. Some counties have noted an uptick in fire-related emergency calls.
- The prescribed burn season has begun, and officials are collaborating with NWS to identify safe burning periods.
- See slide 9 for more details.

Mitigation Actions

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

Hydrologic Conditions and Impacts

See the USGS 120-day streamflow map here.

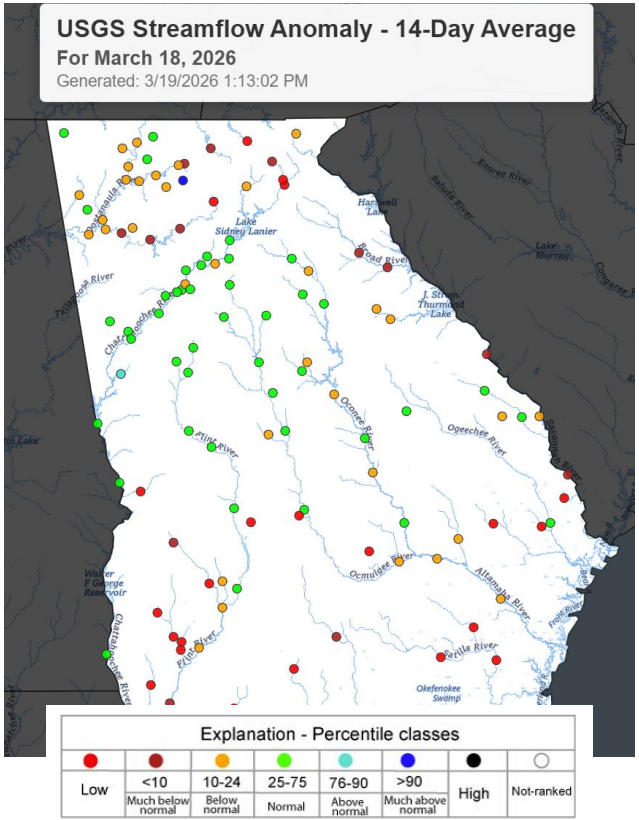
Main Takeaways

- In the last 14-days, rainfall in the greater Atlanta metro area has been sufficient enough to allow streamflows to return to normal levels. Many basins missed out on the beneficial rainfall over the last two weeks, including the Tennessee, Coosa, Savannah, and lower portions of the Oconee, Ocmulgee and Flint River basins. In these areas, streamflows remained in the below-normal ranges.

- Lake and Reservoir levels show a combination of the start of the spring recharge period and the lingering dry conditions from the last few months. The available elevation curves for USACE projects in the NWS Peachtree City area show:

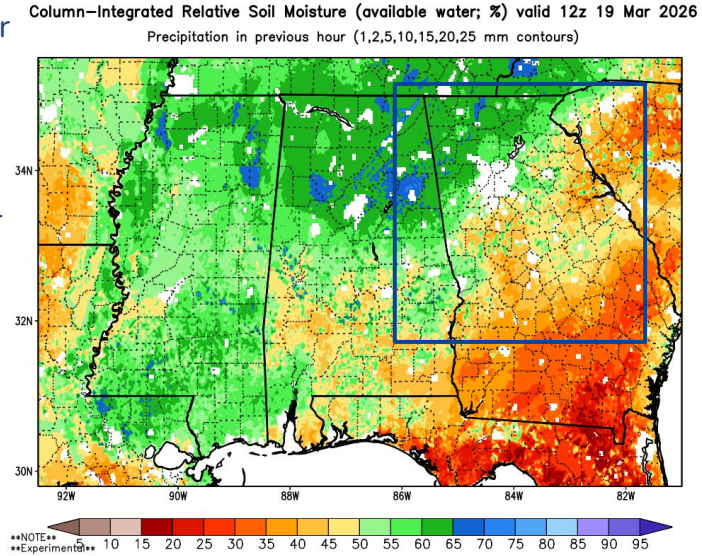
	USACE Lakes	
	Current Action Zone	Forecast Action Zone
Carters	Top of Conservation	Zone 2
Lanier	Zone 3	Zone 3
Allatoona	Top of Conservation	Zone 3
West Point	Top of Conservation	Top of Conservation

*Action zones used in some charts are defined here.



Agricultural Impacts

- Soil moistures remain dry over much of central and south Georgia (image right).
- Far north Georgia has the highest 0-200 cm relative soil moisture in the state, despite only seeing marginal improvement over portions of this area (image far right). West central and a stretch across east central Georgia saw the largest improvement.
- Planting season typically starts in April, but increased rainfall will be needed to balance the increasing water demand into the growing season.



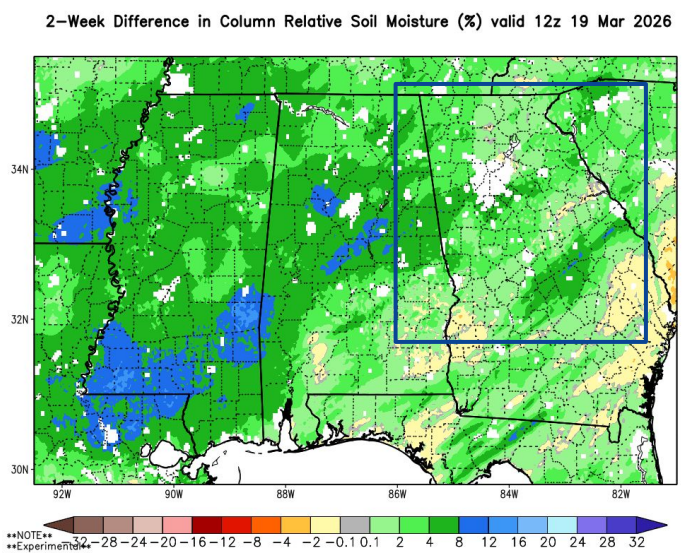
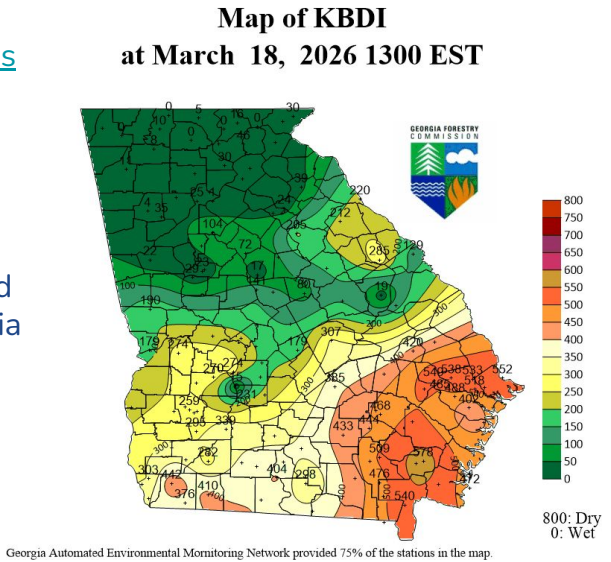


Image Captions:
Left: 0-200cm Relative Soil Moisture from NASA SPoRT valid March 19, 2026.
Right: 0-200 cm Relative Soil Moisture 2-week Change from NASA SPoRT valid March 19, 2026.

Fire Hazard Impacts

Link to Wildfire Potential Outlooks from the National Interagency Coordination Center.

- Keetch Byram Drought Index values over north and central Georgia are under 100 in most locations, with much of north Georgia showing values under 50.
- At this time, above normal wildland fire potential is expected for Georgia for March, as indicated in the Significant Wildland Fire Potential Outlook (far right). This above normal potential is expected to continue through Spring.
- The Wildfire Potential Outlook indicates **Moderate Risk (level 3 of 3)** for Georgia this weekend and into next week.



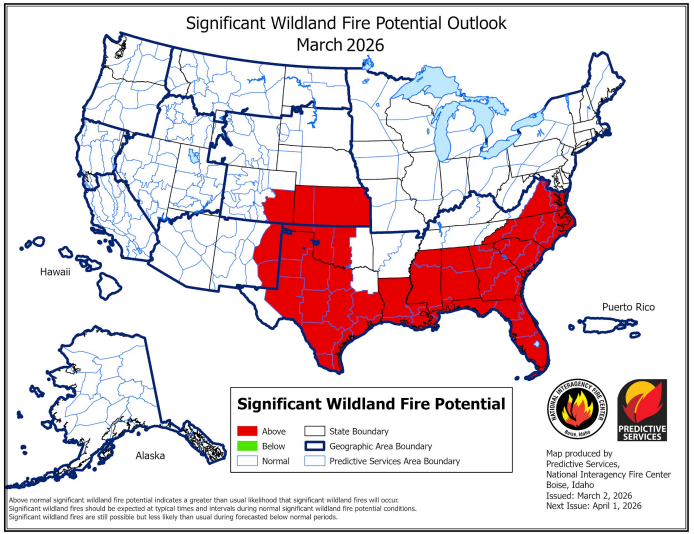
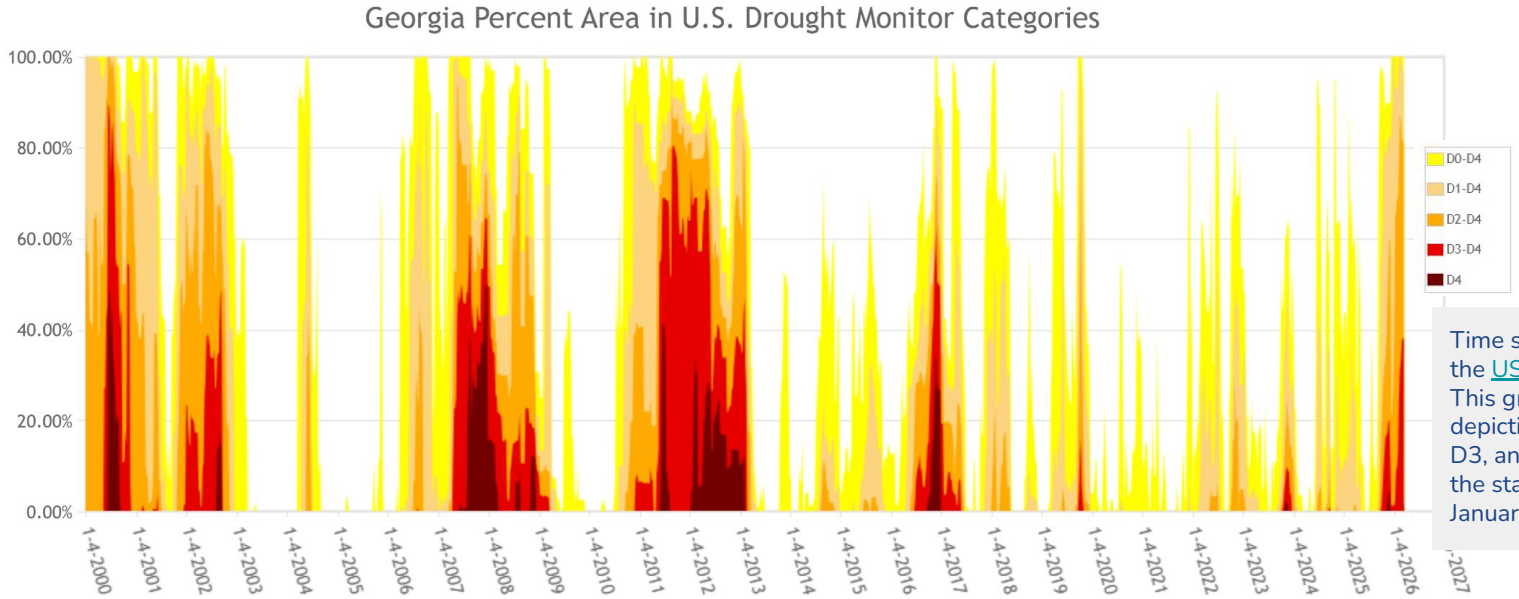


Image Captions:
Above: Significant Wildland Fire Potential Monthly Outlook for March 2026.
Left: Keetch Byram Drought Index for March 18, 2026.

Drought: Historical Context

Link to Drought Monitor Time Series



Time series is courtesy of the US Drought Monitor. This graph shows the depiction of the D0, D1, D2, D3, and D4 drought across the state of Georgia since January 2000.

For the Drought Event beginning in September 2025, *for the entire state of Georgia:*

First D2 (Severe) Drought in Georgia:
Sep 23, 2025

Maximum drought category so far:
D4 (Exceptional)
Nov 18, 2025

Current D2-D4 coverage in Georgia:
80.6% of GA
TODAY

Largest D2-D4 coverage in Georgia*
87.4% of GA
Feb 17, 2026
**for this drought period*

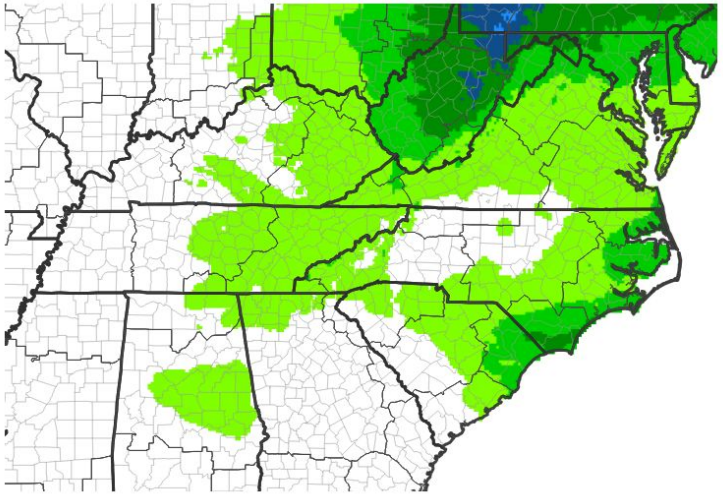
Last time there was at least 87% of GA in D2-D4:
Oct 4, 2011
87.6% of GA

Precipitation Outlook

The 7-day outlook (through March 26):

- Over the next seven days, rainfall is severely limited across the area.
- Far north Georgia could see small amounts of generally 0.10 inches or less.
- The 8-14 day outlook (Mar 25-31) shows lower than normal precipitation chances.

7-Day Quantitative Precipitation Forecast for March 19, 2026–March 26, 2026



Predicted Inches of Precipitation

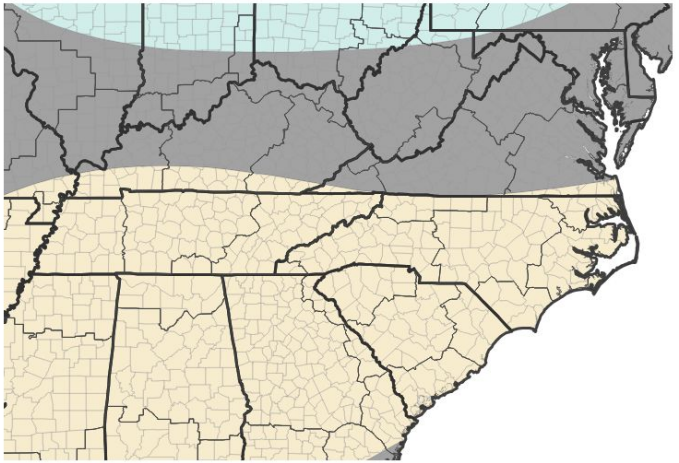
0 0.01 0.1 0.25 0.5 0.75 1 1.25 1.5 1.75

1.75 2 2.5 3 4 5 7 10 15 20

Source(s): National Weather Service Weather Prediction Center; image courtesy of Drought.gov

Last Updated: 03/19/26

8–14 Day Precipitation Outlook for March 25, 2026–March 31, 2026



Probability of Below-Normal Precipitation

33% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Probability of Above-Normal Precipitation

33% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Near-Normal Conditions

Source(s): Climate Prediction Center; image courtesy of Drought.gov

Last Updated: 03/17/26

Long-Range Outlooks

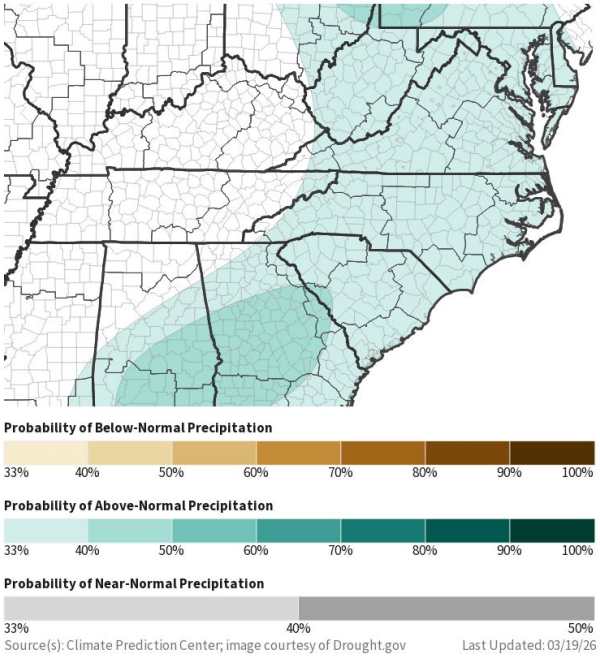
The latest monthly and seasonal outlooks can be found on the CPC homepage

For April through June:

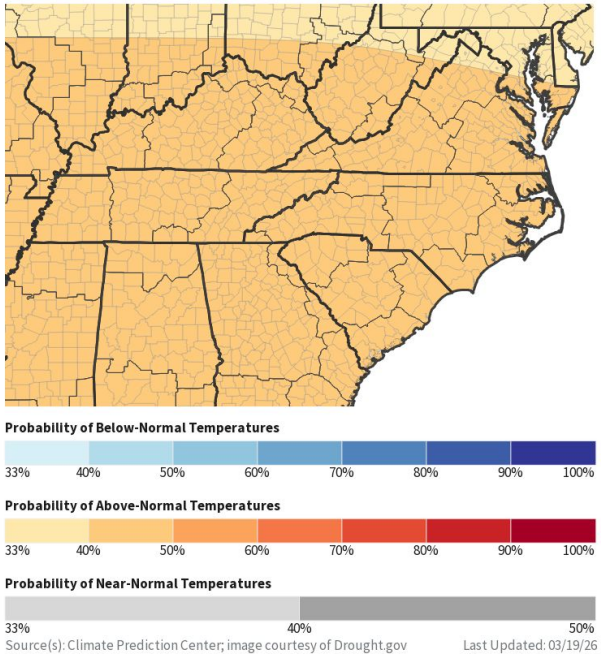
- Above normal chances of precipitation are expected across much of the state (image right).
- Above normal temperatures are expected over Georgia (far right).

	March		April		May	
Average	Temp	Rain	Temp	Rain	Temp	Rain
Rome	53.4°	4.99"	61.4°	4.46"	69.5°	3.78"
Athens Area	54.9°	4.37"	62.3°	3.52"	70.5°	3.28"
Atlanta Area	55.6°	4.68"	63.2°	3.81"	71.2°	3.56"
Peachtree City	55.3°	4.90"	62.4°	3.77"	70.4°	3.12"
Macon Area	57.7°	4.31"	64.5°	3.62"	72.9°	2.65"
Columbus Area	58.9°	4.92"	65.8°	4.03"	74.1°	3.24"

Seasonal (3-Month) Precipitation Outlook for April 1, 2026–June 30, 2026



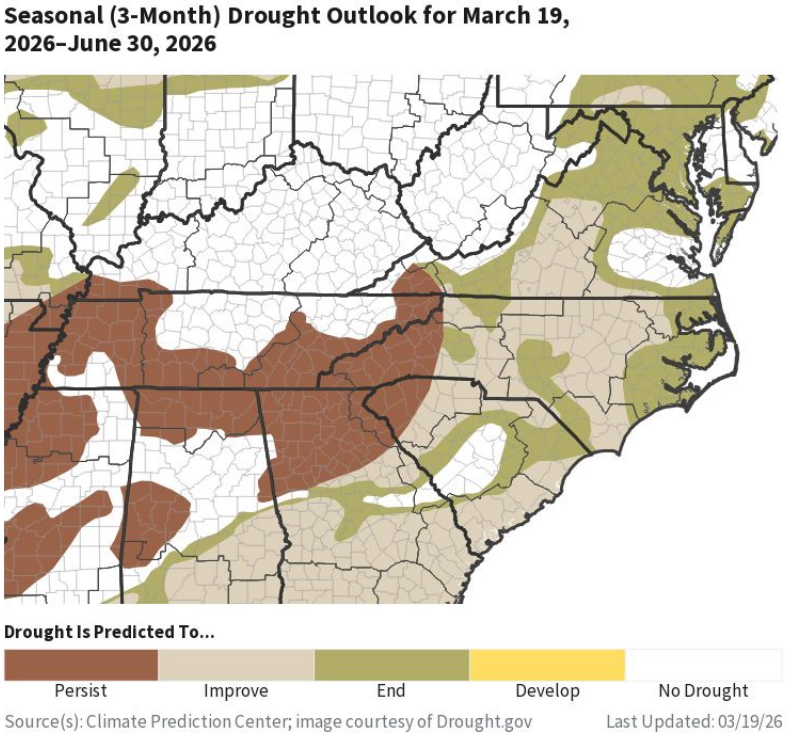
Seasonal (3-Month) Temperature Outlook for April 1, 2026–June 30, 2026



Drought Outlook

The latest monthly and seasonal outlooks can be found on the CPC homepage

- Drought is expected to persist across north Georgia into the summer months. Over central Georgia, some improvement or ending is possible.
- Drought Information Statements will be updated every two weeks while D2 Severe Drought (or worse) continues in north and central Georgia.



Links to the latest:
Climate Prediction Center Monthly Drought Outlook
Climate Prediction Center Seasonal Drought Outlook