

2016 Year in Review for Central and Southeast Illinois

Temperature Review:

The strong El Niño conditions resulted in temperatures averaging well above normal through the winter season. Peoria had its 4th warmest winter on record, while Springfield had its 6th warmest winter. Springfield failed to fall below zero for the first time since the winter of 2012-13. Near record warm temperatures prevailed through much of December, with temperatures averaging 9 to 13 degrees above normal in most areas. The weekend of December 12-13th was exceptionally mild, with average temperatures more than 30 degrees above normal. On December 12, highs were close to 70 degrees across much of central and southeast Illinois, and on the 13th, both Peoria and Springfield observed its warmest December low temperature on record at 61 degrees. The coldest conditions were around the middle of January, when lows of zero to 5 below occurred from about Macomb to Bloomington northward on the 18th.

Weather Review:

As the year began, the area was dealing with widespread river flooding which resulted from heavy rains that occurred at the end of December. Middle sections of the Illinois River crested at the 5th highest level on record, with 26.8 feet at Havana on January 4th, 29.23 feet at Beardstown on the 5th, and 28.02 feet at Meredosia on the 5th. The Sangamon River also had top 5 river flooding during this flood event, including 477.72 feet MSL at Oakford (2nd highest on record) on New Year's Day.

A strong winter storm affected parts of central and southeast Illinois on February 24th. While snowfall amounts of 3 to 6 inches were reported, winds gusting as high as 45-55 mph produced blizzard conditions at times, mainly east of I-55. One fatality occurred in Cumberland County due to the storm.

With the milder conditions, snowfall overall was below normal. Much of central and southeast Illinois saw less than a foot of snow through the period. Locations northwest of the Illinois River were 10 to 15 inches below normal for snow. Although precipitation actually averaged above normal for the 3-month period, this was due to the excessively wet December. The January and February period saw precipitation average 2 to 3 inches below normal in much of the area.

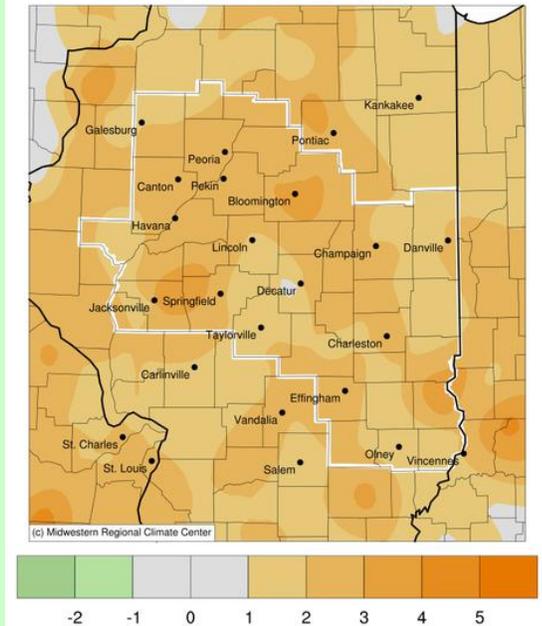
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Spring Season

(March 1 through May 31)

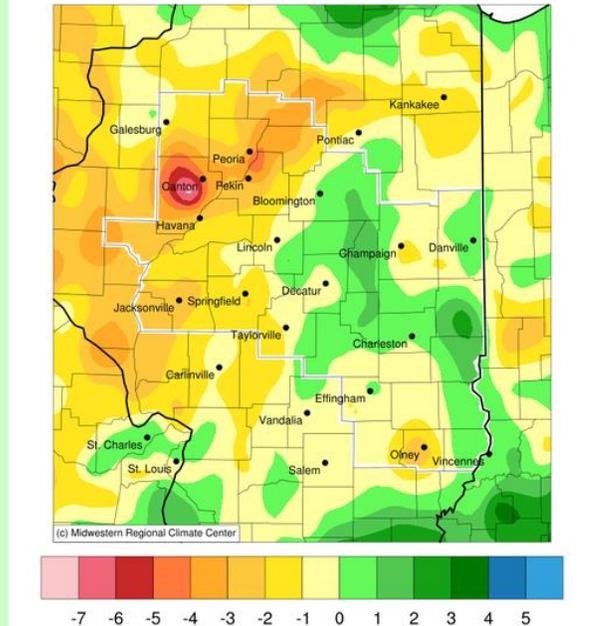
Temperatures: Above normal

Average Temperature (°F): Departure from 1981-2010 Normals
March 01, 2016 to May 31, 2016



Precipitation: Below normal west of I-55,
mostly above normal east of I-55

Accumulated Precipitation (in): Departure from 1981-2010 Normals
March 01, 2016 to May 31, 2016



Images courtesy Midwestern Regional Climate Center



This tornado near Curran in Sangamon County was one of four reported in central Illinois the evening of March 15. Photo courtesy of Chris Heater.

Temperature Review:

The trend of milder than normal weather continued into the spring months, with some cooler periods during the first half of April, as well as mid May. The last freeze of the season generally was observed between the 9th and 12th of April, which is near climatological average for this area. However, the warm weather in March (in the top 10 warmest March averages on record) caused the growing season to start a few weeks earlier than normal, so vegetation was more susceptible to the April chill.

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Weather Review:

The first major severe weather outbreak of the year occurred on [March 15th](#). Four tornadoes occurred in central Illinois on that date, the strongest of which (EF-2 intensity) tracked through central Peoria County west of Peoria. A long-tracked, strong tornado also moved out of Warren County into Fulton County before dissipating, and weaker tornadoes occurred just southwest of Springfield as well as in the northern fringes of Peoria. Several locations also saw hail of nickel to golf ball size, with 2 inch diameter hail in Jacksonville.

Intensifying low pressure over the Great Lakes caused strong wind gusts of 50 to 60 mph across much of central and southeast Illinois on [April 2](#), with slightly lower gusts of 40-55 mph on the 3rd. The highest gusts reported included 66 mph near Newman, 62 mph at Springfield, 61 mph at Mattoon, and 60 mph at Bloomington. Scattered damage occurred to trees, buildings, power lines, and highway signs.

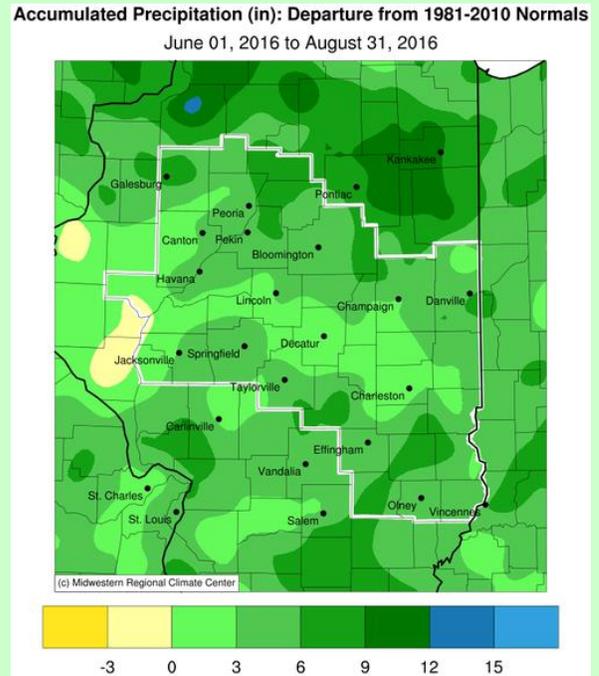
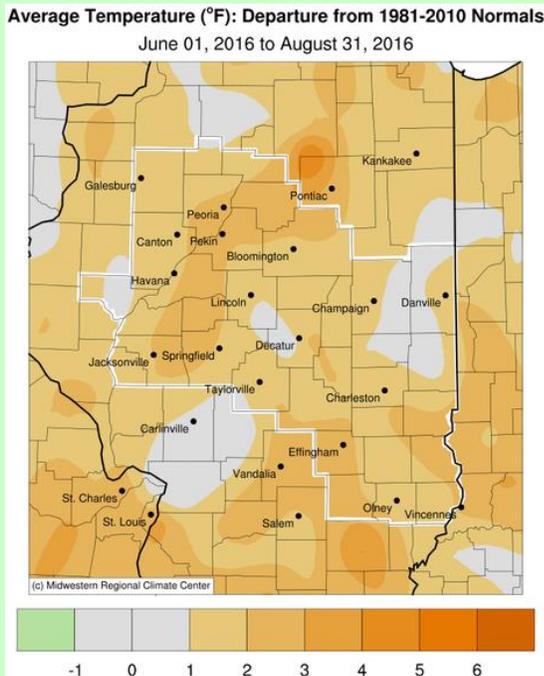
Other severe weather produced brief, weak tornado touchdowns near Altamont and Olney on April 27th, and 3 inch diameter hail in Edgar County on May 1st.

Summer Season

(June 1 through August 31)

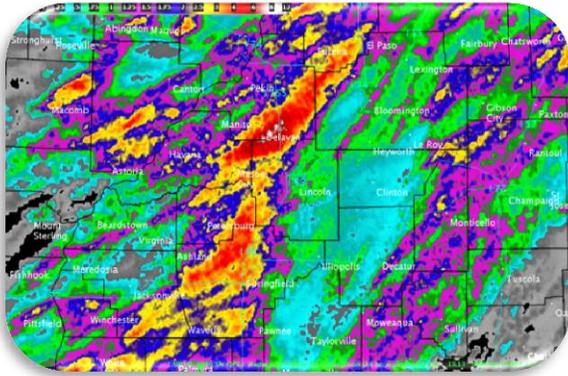
Temperatures: Above normal

Precipitation: Above normal



Images courtesy Midwestern Regional Climate Center

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Rainfall on August 12 of 4 to 8 inches is shown in the red and white shades, from around Springfield northward through Delavan.

Temperature Review:

In general, summertime kept up the above normal temperature trend, although overall averages were near normal in some locations. An extended period of hot weather occurred from June 9-20th. July started out quite cool, with highs only in the mid 60s to lower 70s on the 2nd and 3rd, setting some records for coolest high temperature on record for those dates.

Weather Review:

The main highlight during the period was on [August 12th](#), when persistent thunderstorms produced rainfall of 2.5 to 6 inches across western parts of Springfield and Sangamon County, northeast into southern Woodford County. Unofficial reports included 8 inches southeast of Delavan, and 6.08 inches at San Jose. Springfield reported 5.59 inches at Abraham Lincoln Capital Airport, including 3.34 inches in just one hour (which surpassed the normal for the entire month). That established a new all-time calendar day rainfall record, breaking the old record of 5.44 inches on September 8, 1926. The Illinois State Fairgrounds (where the fair had just started) were especially hard hit, with 58 campers and 25 vehicles damaged by flooding. Within the city of Springfield, 48 water rescues were made on city streets and viaducts.

Several days saw scattered severe thunderstorms. The most widespread event was on [July 13th](#), when a line of storms produced 60-70 mph wind gusts from the Illinois River valley eastward to the Indiana border. A downburst producing wind gust up to 90 mph overturned a mobile home in Clay County, injuring one person.

Drought conditions had started to develop in western Illinois during May and June, but wetter than normal conditions in July helped to alleviate the dry conditions. July rainfall totals in excess of 10 inches were reported near Chatham and Jacksonville, with a total as high as 11.59 inches in southern Shelby County near the town of Mode. Springfield saw its second wettest July on record with a total of 9.51 inches of rain.

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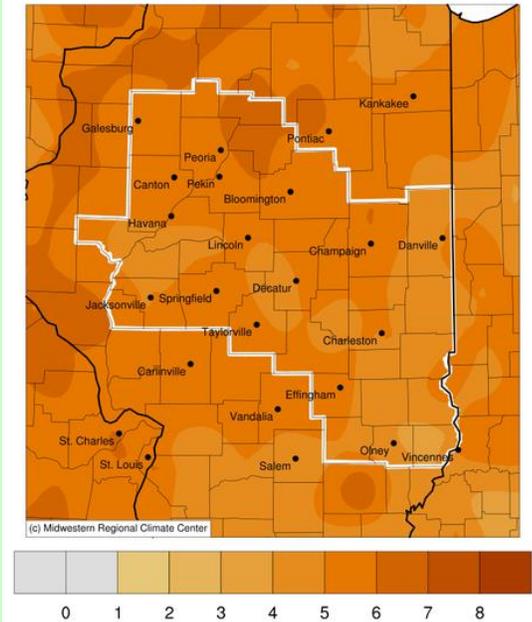
Autumn Season

(September 1 through November 30)

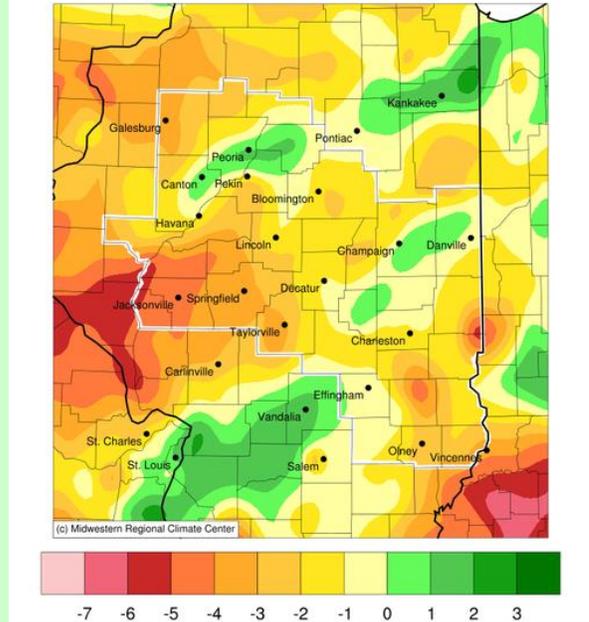
Temperatures: Much above normal

Precipitation: Mostly below normal

Average Temperature (°F): Departure from 1981-2010 Normals
September 01, 2016 to November 30, 2016



Accumulated Precipitation (in): Departure from 1981-2010 Normals
September 01, 2016 to November 30, 2016



Images courtesy Midwestern Regional Climate Center



Four tornadoes occurred in east central Illinois on September 9, including this EF-2 southeast of Sidney. Photo by Jeff Frame.

Temperature Review:

Meteorological autumn will be remembered as being exceptionally warm across the region. Much above normal temperatures dominated, with several locations finishing in the top 5 warmest autumns on record. Several days in September saw highs in the 90s. Highs around 90 degrees occurred in west central Illinois on October 17th, and temperatures in the lower 80s occurred as late as November 17th around Effingham and Winchester. The first freeze of the season didn't occur until mid-November in some areas, allowing abnormally late gardening in some instances.

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Weather Review:

Severe thunderstorms produced 4 tornadoes in parts of east central Illinois on September 9th. The strongest tornado was EF-2 strength and occurred in southeast Champaign County. A weak tornado in Clark County was the first one in that location since 2007.

Winter Season to date

(December 1-26)

Temperatures: Below normal

Precipitation: Below normal

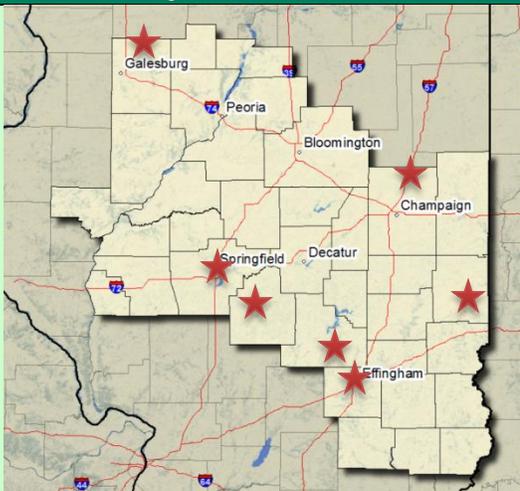
Temperature Review:

Cold weather finally moved into the area beginning on December 5th, as a series of Arctic air masses spread across the U.S. The coldest conditions were on the 14-15th and 18-19th, when highs were frequently in the teens and 20s, with lows below zero in some areas. A low of 13 below zero was reported northeast of Galesburg at Altona on the 19th, and widespread wind chills of 10 below to 25 below zero were reported. However, temperatures moderated for the last several days of the month, and a warm front brought temperatures into the 50s and 60s on Christmas night into the 26th.

Weather Review:

Despite the colder weather, snow was relatively scarce. However, there was one significant storm system that brought several inches of snow across northern Illinois on December 3-4th, with 2 to 3 inches occurring as far south as I-72. Some amounts near 6 inches occurred north of Peoria, but these types of amounts generally were along and north of I-80. Later in the month, an extended period of light freezing rain occurred on 16-17th ahead of an Arctic outbreak, causing extremely hazardous travel conditions primarily from I-72 northward, although an inch or two of snow also occurred along and west of the Illinois River.

Preliminary Statistics for the Lincoln NWS Coverage Area:



Highest Temperature	98°F at Effingham (June 27) and Rantoul (July 23)
Lowest Temperature	-13°F at Altona (December 19)
Most Rain in 24 Hours	5.59" at Springfield (August 12)
Most Snow in 24 Hours	6.0" at Paris (February 24-25)
Most Rain in 1 Month	11.59" at Mode 4NW (July)
Most Snow in 1 Month	10.9" at Kincaid (February)
Reported Tornadoes	11 By County: Peoria 2, Vermilion 2. One each in Champaign, Clark, Effingham, Fulton, Richland, Sangamon, Stark.