

Central Indiana

February 2020

Climate Summary

52nd Warmest on record at Indianapolis

26th Wettest on record at Indianapolis

64th Snowiest on record at Indianapolis

Temperatures

February experienced plenty of temperature swings with highs as warm as the 60s and lows dropping to the single digits on one or two mornings. Warmth started quickly with 60s on Groundhog Day, the 3rd and even on the 4th over much of the region and even a few locations reaching the lower 70s on the 3rd. Indianapolis established new record highs for both the 2nd and 3rd, reaching 63° and 67° respectively.

The passage of a cold front brought temperatures back closer to normal beginning on the 5th as highs would remain largely in the 30s to lower 40s through the middle of the month. Lows were in the 20s and lower 30s through the 12th. The passage of an Arctic front on the 13th would usher in the coldest temperatures of the month and one of the colder Valentine's Days on record. The high of 19° at Indianapolis marked the fifth coldest February 14th on record, tied with Valentine's Day 2007. Lows began in the single digits that morning with a few spots in northern parts of central Indiana beginning below zero.

The cold temperatures were brief, with mid and upper 40s returning as soon as the 15th and persisting through the 18th. A few spots warmed into the lower 50s during this period of days as well. The passage of another cold front would transition back to colder temperatures beginning on the 19th and continuing through much of the rest of the month. A brief warmup on the 22nd and 23rd brought highs up into the 50s, otherwise temperatures remained below 50° over the last 10 days of the month with the last few days remaining in the 30s during the day.

Average temperatures across central Indiana ended up warmer than normal by roughly 1 to 3°. While February would be the coldest of the three winter season months, the December to February period would finish well above normal on temperatures across the region.

Site	February 2020 Avg Temp	February 2020 Difference from Normal	Highest Temperature	Lowest Temperature
Indianapolis	33.3	+1.2	67 on 3	2 on 14
Lafayette	30.9	+0.4	62 on 2 and 3	-4 on 14
Muncie	33.6	+3.9	64 on 3	3 on 14
Terre Haute	34.6	+2.2	69 on 3	3 on 14
Bloomington	35.2	+2.1	71 on 3	6 on 14
Shelbyville	35.2	+3.5	69 on 3	7 on 14
Indy – Eagle Crk.	33.1	+1.1	66 on 3	2 on 14

At Indianapolis, there were 17 days with above normal average temperatures, 11 days with below normal average temperatures and 1 day with normal average temperatures.

February 2020 was the 52nd warmest in the Indianapolis area since weather records began in 1871.

Precipitation and Snowfall

February was another hydrologically active month with widespread minor flooding along the East Fork White, White, and Wabash Rivers as well as a few smaller streams in central Indiana. Area rivers began the month high, but generally below active stage and fell for the first week of February. Periods of rain brought fairly widespread flooding back to central Indiana the second week of the month with many points reaching into minor flood stage. Flooding returned during the third week of the month for the Wabash River as additional rain fell on elevated river levels. Rainfall amounts for the month ranged from less than 2” in the northern portions of central Indiana to over 5” in the far south. Rainfall percent of normal was between 100 and 150% for much of the area with some higher amounts around the Indianapolis area and across the southern counties. Snowfall amounts were below normal with 4.3” in the Indianapolis area and slightly higher amounts further north and much lower amounts south.

Light snow began on February 9th and transitioned to widespread rain which continued through the 10th. Upwards of 2” of rain fell which led to widespread minor flooding along the main stem rivers. A low pressure system moving through the Ohio valley then brought additional precipitation February 12th into early the 13th, with snowfall amounts

of mainly 2 to 4" north of I-70, snow and sleet totals around an inch along the I-70 corridor, and rain south of there. This event prolonged the ongoing flooding which continued through the middle of the month. Another frontal system brought a moderate rain event to central Indiana on the 17th. The heaviest rainfall with this system, around 0.5 to 0.75", fell across northwestern parts of central Indiana. This brought renewed flooding to the Wabash River basin which had not recovered from the flooding earlier in the month.

Flooding ended along the Wabash River by the 21st. Rain fell from the 24th through the 26th as another low pressure system slowly moved through the area, with the rain again transitioning to snow on the 26th. This system brought around an inch of rain to central Indiana, with two to four inches of snow across northern central Indiana on the 26th. This brought rivers back into action stage, but was not enough to produce flooding on any of the mainstem rivers.

Snowfall was again below normal across central Indiana through February. Indianapolis finished with 4.3" which was a little over 4" below normal.

Site	February 2020 Precipitation	February 2020 Difference from Normal	Wettest Day	Longest Dry Stretch
Indianapolis	3.89	+1.57	1.30 on 9	5 days 19-23
Lafayette	2.15	+0.39	0.63 on 17	5 days 19-23
Muncie	1.79	-0.52	0.54 on 9	5 days 19-23
Terre Haute	2.81	+0.88	1.03 on 9	5 days 19-23
Bloomington	2.89	+0.13	0.87 on 9	5 days 19-23
Shelbyville	2.78	+0.42	0.64 on 9	5 days 19-23
Indy – Eagle Crk.	1.69	-0.44	0.79 on 9	5 days 19-23

February 2020 was the 26th wettest in the Indianapolis area since weather records began in 1871.

Severe Weather

No severe weather occurred across central Indiana in February.

For information on severe weather in other areas during February, visit the Storm Prediction Center "Severe Weather Event Summaries" website at <http://www.spc.noaa.gov/climo/online/>.

Miscellaneous

The maximum wind gust at the Indianapolis International Airport was 42 mph from the southwest on the 3rd. Fog or haze was reported at Indianapolis on 16 days during the month. Freezing rain and drizzle occurred on 7 days during the month with ice pellets also occurring on 2 days in February.

March 2020 Outlook

The official outlook for March 2020 from the Climate Prediction Center indicates a much greater chance for above normal temperatures and greater chance of above normal precipitation across central Indiana. At Indianapolis, the average temperature for the month is 42.2 degrees. The average precipitation for March at Indianapolis is 3.56", with 2.6" of snowfall.

Spring 2020 Outlook

The official outlook for meteorological spring (March-May 2020) from the Climate Prediction Center indicates greater chances for above normal temperatures and precipitation. At Indianapolis, the average temperature for the spring season is 52.6 degrees. The average spring season precipitation is 12.42 inches along with 2.8 inches of snowfall, most of which typically falls during the month of March.

Data prepared by the Indianapolis Forecast Office.