

Central Indiana

May 2018

Climate Summary

Warmest on record at Indianapolis

Tied for 9th Driest on record at Indianapolis

Temperatures

After the persistent chilly weather that impacted central Indiana in March and April, a complete about face occurred in May as a large high pressure ridge at the surface and aloft developed across the Ohio Valley. The result was much warmer temperatures all month with temperatures that resembled summer. Average temperatures were generally 8° to 10° above normal for the entire month.

The coolest weather of the entire month occurred during the first week of May and in fact really wasn't all that cool. The combination of increased cloud cover and a few days with at least some rain kept highs in the 70s and lower 80s. After the 8th however, the more summer-like pattern took hold over the region and largely persisted for the rest of the month. Indianapolis would only have one day, the 18th, where highs remained below 80° after the 8th, a remarkable achievement. Additionally, the first morning of the month would be the only one with a low under 50°. Other locations across central Indiana would see a few mornings fall into the 40s during the first 10 days of May but beyond that, the entire area would see lows no cooler than the 50s.

Indianapolis broke several records for the month as a result. The average temperature of 72.6° obliterated the previous warmest May on record by nearly 2°, occurring back in May 1896. 25 days during the month experienced highs at or above 80°, also a new record. All 31 days during the month would end up above normal, the first time that had occurred since July 2012, the hottest month on record in the city's history. The high of 88° on the 13th marked the warmest Mother's Day on record, while the sizzling 95° registered on the 28th would easily establish the warmest Memorial Day on record at Indianapolis, and mark the third warmest May day on record and warmest temperature experienced in May since May 28, 1911 when the high reached 96°. High temperatures

on the 28th rose into the upper 90s in some locations across central Indiana with Muncie hitting 98° and Shelbyville 97°.

Site	May 2018 Avg Temp	May 2018 Difference from Normal	Highest Temperature	Lowest Temperature
Indianapolis	72.6	+9.9	95 on 28	48 on 1
Lafayette	69.1 (*)	+7.2	96 on 28	44 on 1
Muncie	72.1	+10.3	98 on 28	44 on 8
Terre Haute	72.2	+9.6	96 on 28	44 on 1
Bloomington	72.2	+9.6	92 on 28	42 on 1
Shelbyville	73.2	+10.3	97 on 28	45 on 8
Indy – Eagle Crk.	72.1	+9.3	96 on 28	45 on 1

At Indianapolis, there were 31 days with above normal average temperatures.

May 2018 was the warmest in the Indianapolis area since 1871.
 (*) – Minimum and average temperatures missing at Lafayette on 5/31.

Precipitation

Monthly rainfall totals ranged from slightly over an inch in central Indiana to nearly 10 inches in southwest and extreme north central Indiana. Monthly rainfall was much below normal across most of the state except for northern and southwestern Indiana where rainfall was much above normal. This was the driest May since 1988 for Indianapolis.

Rainfall during the first 2 weeks of May was concentrated in northern Indiana. Much of this area received 3 to 8 inches of rainfall during this time, while most of central and southern Indiana measured less than an inch of rainfall. A dry spell prevailed over most of the state from the 15th through the 28th. Much of the area received less than an inch of rainfall. Rainfall during the first 28 days of May in many areas of central and southern Indiana totaled from 0.5 to 3.0 inches; less than half of the normal. As a result, abnormally conditions developed in parts of southwest and central Indiana.

The remains of Tropical Storm Alberto and other weather systems brought needed rains to the state from the 29th through the 31st. Rainfall totaled from a trace in portions of east central Indiana to 5 inches in southwest Indiana.

No river flooding occurred in central and southern Indiana during May. As May ended, most rivers and streams had shown little response to the recent rains. Streamflow was below normal in most of central and southern Indiana.

Site	May 2018 Precipitation	May 2018 Difference from Normal	Wettest Day	Longest Dry Stretch
Indianapolis	1.42	-3.63	0.55 on 18	4 days 22-25
Lafayette	4.03 (*)	-0.16	1.70 on 30	3 days 27-29
Muncie	0.74 (**)	-3.67	0.13 on 10	4 days 5-8 and 11-14
Terre Haute	2.23	-4.40	1.23 on 30	4 days 22-25
Bloomington	3.47	-1.77	0.73 on 21	5 days 11-15
Shelbyville	2.02	-3.26	0.33 on 20	4 days 22-25
Indy – Eagle Crk.	2.24	-3.03	0.61 on 3	4 days 22-25

May 2018 was tied for the 9th driest in the Indianapolis area since weather records began in 1871.

(*) – Precipitation missing at Lafayette on 5/31.

(**) - Precipitation missing at Muncie on 5/19.

Severe Weather

Severe weather remained limited through the month by the abrupt transition to a more summer-like pattern. This resulted in isolated strong to severe storms on several afternoons through the month that produced wind damage and hail. The only substantial severe weather to impact central Indiana occurred during the afternoon and evening of May 31. A long-lived squall line tracked across the lower Ohio Valley and southern half of central Indiana during the afternoon, producing widespread wind damage. Additional storms developed north of the squall line and would also produce wind damage and large hail during the late afternoon and evening.

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

Miscellaneous

The maximum wind gust at Indianapolis International Airport was 47 mph out of the southwest on the afternoon of the 31st as thunderstorms moved through the Indianapolis metro area. Fog or haze was reported at Indianapolis on 15 days during the month, with dense fog occurring on the 22nd. Thunder was reported on 8 days during the month.

June 2018 Outlook

The official outlook for June 2018 from the Climate Prediction Center indicates a much greater chance for above normal temperatures for central Indiana. At Indianapolis, the average temperature for the month is 72.0 degrees. The outlook also calls for an equal chance of near, above or below normal precipitation. The average precipitation for June at Indianapolis is 4.25”.

Data prepared by the Indianapolis Forecast Office.