

Central Indiana

May 2020

Climate Summary

Tied for the 47th Coolest on record at Indianapolis

Tied for the 16th Wettest on record at Indianapolis

Temperatures

After an overall cooler April, the unseasonably cool weather continued through much of the first half of May before more typical temperatures for late spring finally settled in for the last 10 or so days of the month.

A brief but notable warmup greeted the month's beginning as highs peaked in the lower 80s on the 2nd. The warmth was short-lived however as a cold front would pass on the 3rd with a persistent upper level trough then setting up over much of the eastern United States for the better part of the next two weeks. This would bring consistently cooler than normal temperatures, with most locations not making it to 70° for 10 consecutive days beginning on the 4th. Through that stretch, there were several days where highs were unable to even make it to 60°. Frost accrual became an increasing concern throughout this period as well with overnight lows repeatedly falling into the 30s. An unusual late season hard freeze occurred across much of central Indiana on the morning of the 9th as temperatures fell into the mid and upper 20s. Indianapolis would set an all-time record for the coldest temperature ever recorded in the month of May with a low on the 9th of 27°. After another surge of cool air in wake of a front, high temperatures on the 11th struggled to get out of the 40s, a solid 20-25° below average.

Beginning on the 14th, the pattern would shift to a much more typical regime for May as temperatures recovered back into the 70s and even a few spots rising into the lower 80s. A brief cooldown with highs in the upper 50s to mid 60s would return from the 18th to the 21st courtesy of a slow moving upper level low pressure system that kept cool and damp conditions across the region. Then on the 22nd, a much warmer and more humid airmass would finally make an appearance across the Ohio Valley and remain for much of the rest of the month. Highs would rise consistently into the mid and upper 80s with a

few spots recording their first day above 90° over the Memorial Day weekend. A cold front would bring cooler and drier air for the last two days of the month in the 70s.

The 7 days with highs at or above 80° at Indianapolis was the least amount in May since 2009. On the flip side, nearly half of the month’s days saw highs remain below 70°, the most in the month of May since 2008. For lows in Indianapolis, 8 mornings saw lows fall to 40° or colder, the most in May since 2002.

Site	May 2020 Avg Temp	May 2020 Difference from Normal	Highest Temperature	Lowest Temperature
Indianapolis	60.7	-2.0	88 on 25	27 on 9
Lafayette	63.1	+1.2	91 on 24 and 25	28 on 9
Muncie	62.0	+0.2	90 on 25 and 26	29 on 9
Terre Haute	61.8	-1.2	88 on 25	30 on 9
Bloomington	61.7	-0.9	89 on 25	29 on 9
Shelbyville	62.7	-0.2	90 on 25 and 26	31 on 9
Indy – Eagle Crk.	61.0	-1.8	88 on 25	30 on 9

At Indianapolis, there were 14 days with above normal average temperatures and 17 days with below normal average temperatures.

May 2020 was tied for the 47th coolest in the Indianapolis area since 1871.

Precipitation

Rainfall amounts for the month of May varied across central Indiana with the northeastern portions of the area receiving 50 to 75% of normal precipitation to over 150% across some sections of the I-70 corridor. Much of this rainfall fell during the middle portion of the month and would lead to fairly widespread minor flooding along the White and Wabash Rivers along with several smaller streams. Some of the highest rainfall amounts for the month occurred in an axis from the southern Indianapolis metro area south-southeast along the I-65 corridor to near Seymour. Several cooperative observer sites within this area received in excess of 7” for the month, including Indianapolis International Airport which received 7.13”. An additional axis of heavier rainfall observed near and above 6” for the month extended from Martin County north through Greene and Clay Counties.

A rain event on the 2nd brought a swath of half an inch to over two inches across a strip from north of Terre Haute to Franklin to Columbus. Rainfall amounts over 1.5 inches were confined mainly to east of I-65. On the 3rd, there was another swath of rain from a quarter inch to over an inch across the southern counties, from north of Vincennes to Bloomington to Seymour. The 4th brought more widespread rain of 0.25 to 0.75 inch south of I-74. Mainly dry weather then ensued for the next week and a half.

The 13th brought rain amounts of a quarter inch to an inch along lower portions of the Wabash and White basins. The 14th saw half an inch to 1.5 inches across central parts of the state, with widespread rains of over an inch over northern Indiana, including an area of heavy rain of 2 to 3 inches over far northwestern Indiana. The 15th saw half an inch to 1.5 inches along the Ohio River. The 16th saw half an inch to around two inches over western Indiana, with the highest amounts south of Terre Haute. The 17th saw heavy rain across nearly all of central Indiana, with the highest amounts of 2 to 4 inches across an area from Kokomo to Indianapolis to Bloomington to Vincennes. On the 18th this system moved off to the east and produced even higher rainfall amounts over western Ohio.

A break in the rain over central Indiana from the 18th through the 22nd allowed some recovery in area streams and allowed the ground to dry some as well. Off and on thunderstorms arrived for the holiday weekend, with the most coverage on Saturday the 23rd. Even then, due to the convective nature of the rainfall, there were swaths of half an inch of rain, with embedded portions of over 1.5 inches, as well as several dry areas. Pop up storms on the 24th brought a quarter to half an inch wherever they occurred. On the 25th most storms occurred outside of the forecast area. The 26th saw rainfall of a quarter inch to over an inch over the eastern half or so of central Indiana. Additional rainfall of around an inch on the 28th and 29th allowed for brief minor flooding to return at the East Fork White River near Seymour.

Site	May 2020 Precipitation	May 2020 Difference from Normal	Wettest Day	Longest Dry Stretch
Indianapolis	7.13	+2.08	1.64 on 23	2 days 6-7, 12-13 and 30-31
Lafayette	2.54	-1.65	1.24 on 17	3 days 11-13, 20-22 and 24-26
Muncie	3.67	-0.74	0.92 on 18	2 days 6-7 and 12-13
Terre Haute	5.02	-1.61	1.14 on 17	3 days 20-22
Bloomington	4.67	-0.57	0.82 on 28	3 days 21-23
Shelbyville	5.33	+0.05	1.04 on 3	3 days 11-13
Indy – Eagle Crk.	2.86	-2.41	1.00 on 17	2 days 6-7, 12-13 and 30-31

May 2020 was tied for the 16th wettest in the Indianapolis area since weather records began in 1871.

Severe Weather

Instances of severe weather in general were far less than normal for what is typically one of the busiest months in central Indiana for severe storms. There were several smaller events through the month that produced wind damage and hail, but nothing widespread. The largest event of the month occurred on the afternoon and evening of the 23rd as multiple lines and clusters of storms impacted the region. Indianapolis recorded a 55 mph gust as an intense storm tracked through the metro area during the afternoon. The most extensive damage from the 23rd occurred during the late afternoon in northwest Rush County as a bowing line of storms with an embedded microburst produced more extensive wind damage in a small area north of Arlington. Three barns sustained significant damage and multiple trees and power poles were knocked down.

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 55 mph out of the west on the 23rd 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 23rd. Thunder was reported on 7 days during the month.

June 2020 Outlook

The official outlook for June 2020 from the Climate Prediction Center indicates a greater chance for above normal temperatures for central Indiana. At Indianapolis, the average temperature for the month is 72.0 degrees. The outlook also indicates an equal chance for above, below or near normal precipitation for the month. The average precipitation for June at Indianapolis is 4.25”.

Data prepared by the Indianapolis Forecast Office.