

Central Indiana

September 2020

Climate Summary

Tied for 61st Warmest on record at Indianapolis

Driest on record at Indianapolis

Temperatures

Seasonable temperatures in late August continued as the calendar turned to September as highs were generally in the low to mid 80s for the first several days of the month including Labor Day weekend. A brief surge in warmth followed just after Labor Day with highs peaking in the upper 80s and lower 90s on the 8th and 9th. As it would turn out, this would be the last time any portion of central Indiana made it to 90° for the rest of the month, a stark difference from Septembers in recent years which have had multiple days into the lower 90s throughout the month.

The passage of a frontal boundary would bring highs back into the 70s for the 10th and 11th. Over the next few days through mid-month, highs would oscillate between the upper 70s and mid 80s across much of the area. Lows ranged from the mid 50s to mid 60s through this period as well. Beginning on the 18th, temperatures would shift cooler and largely remain so for the rest of the month. Many locations would not reach 80° again after the 17th. Highs would remain in the 70s with even a few days in the mid and upper 60s throughout most of the last two weeks of the month. Lows in the 40s and 50s were common as well, although a few spots cooled into the upper 30s on the mornings of the 19th and 20th with patchy light frost.

Indianapolis was only able to make it to 90° on the 8th, marking the least number of 90°+ days in September since 2016. There were also five mornings throughout the month where lows fell into the 40s, the most in September since 2014.

Site	September 2020 Avg Temp	September 2020 Difference from Normal	Highest Temperature	Lowest Temperature
Indianapolis	67.8	+0.8	90 on 8	44 on 29
Lafayette	67.7	+1.5	89 on 3 and 8	42 on 19
Muncie	67.3	+1.8	90 on 8	37 on 19
Terre Haute	67.0	+1.1	92 on 8	37 on 19
Bloomington (*)	67.3	+1.7	91 on 8	38 on 20
Shelbyville	67.6	+2.1	90 on 9	43 on 20 and 21
Indy – Eagle Crk.	67.4	+0.3	90 on 8	43 on 19

(*) Bloomington Temperature Data missing on Sept 19.

At Indianapolis, there were 15 days with above normal average temperatures, 10 days with below normal average temperatures and 5 days with normal average temperatures.

September 2020 was tied for the 61st warmest in the Indianapolis area since 1871.

Precipitation

September ranked as the driest September and the fourth driest month on record for Indianapolis with just 0.12” of rainfall. It was one of the driest Septembers for much of west central Indiana as well with most areas receiving less than a quarter inch. Higher rainfall amounts approaching 3 inches occurred in the far northern and southern portions of central Indiana. A locally heavier amount of rain fell across portions of northern Tipton County on the afternoon and evening of the 7th which led to amounts near 7 inches for the month.

The first few days of the month, light rain fell across much of central Indiana with rain amounts generally less than a tenth of an inch. The first significant rainfall of the month fell during the late evening hours of September 7th with the heaviest rainfall occurring in north central Indiana. Almost 6 inches of rain fell in the small town of Windfall in northern Tipton County. Some minor flooding was noted within the town but with the dry antecedent conditions, impacts were fairly minimal. Additional rain and storms impacted north central Indiana on the afternoon and evening of the 8th.

Much of the middle to latter portions of the month remained dry with small rain events on the 12th and 28th. Each of these rain events were generally less than a quarter of an inch.

With little to no rainfall during much of September, drought conditions began to worsen with areas of moderate drought (D1) expanding into west central Indiana by the end of the month. Burn bans began in Martin County on the 10th and by the end of the month had expanded to 10 of the 39 counties in the Indianapolis forecast area.

Site	September 2020 Precipitation	September 2020 Difference from Normal	Wettest Day	Longest Dry Stretch
Indianapolis	0.12	-3.00	0.08 on 28	14 days 14-27
Lafayette	2.19	-0.47	0.49 on 12	14 days 13-26
Muncie	1.45	-1.51	1.29 on 7	14 days 14-27
Terre Haute	0.35	-3.07	0.21 on 28	15 days 13-27
Bloomington	0.28	-3.07	0.10 on 28	10 days 14-23
Shelbyville	0.29	-2.88	0.16 on 28	14 days 14-27
Indy – Eagle Crk.	0.35	-1.90	0.24 on 13	14 days 14-27

September 2020 was the driest in the Indianapolis area since weather records began in 1871.

Severe Weather

Strong thunderstorms with gusty winds occurred on a few days early in the month, including on Labor Day. A thunderstorm briefly intensified to severe levels over Tippecanoe County on the afternoon of the 8th, producing golf ball size hail. Otherwise, no severe weather occurred in central Indiana in September.

For information on severe weather in other areas during September, 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 33 mph out of the northeast on the 18th. Fog or haze was reported at Indianapolis on 10 days during the month with dense fog occurring on the 10th. Thunder was not reported at all in September.

October 2020 Outlook

The official outlook for October 2020 from the Climate Prediction Center indicates an equal chance of near, above or below normal temperatures for central Indiana. At

Indianapolis, the average temperature for the month is 55.0 degrees. The outlook also suggests a much greater chance for below normal precipitation. The average precipitation for October at Indianapolis is 3.12" and average snowfall is 0.4".

Data prepared by the Indianapolis Forecast Office.