NWS FORM E-5 (11-88) (PRES. by NWS Instruction 10-924)	**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE** NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE	HYDROLOGIC SERVICE AREA (HSA) **NWFO NEW ORLEANS/BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA**
MONTHLY REPORT OF RIVER AND FLOOD CONDITIONS		REPORT FOR: MONTH **MARCH** YEAR **2004**
TO: Hydrometeorological Information Center, W/OH2 NOAA / National Weather Service 1325 East West Highway, Room 7230 Silver Spring, MD 20910-3283		SIGNATURE Paul S. Trotter, Meteorologist-In-Charge DATE April 15, 2004

When no flooding occurs, include miscellaneous river conditions, such as significant rises, record low stages, ice conditions, snow cover, droughts, and hydrologic products issued (NWS Instruction 10-924)

... March 2004 Extremely Dry over Southeast Louisiana, Southwest Mississippi and the Gulf Coast ...

After considerable flooding over southern Mississippi and southeastern Louisiana in February, flood waters on the Atchafalaya, Lower Pearl, and Pascagoula Rivers subsided in early March. Minor flooding occurred on the Atchafalaya River at Morgan City, as the river repeatedly rose and receded through the first week. Flooding ended at Morgan City on March 6. On the Lower Pearl River, moderate flooding occurred at Bogalusa and at Pearl River. Flooding ended March 1 at Bogalusa and on March 5 at Pearl River. In Mississippi, minor flooding occurred on the Pascagoula River at Graham Ferry; flooding ended March 2.

On March 1, a frontal boundary stalled over northern Louisiana and produced rain statewide. The system eventually moved north as a warm front by March 3 with more rain. The front stalled, pushed south again, and produced rainfall March 5 through March 6. Many sites recorded four to five days of light rain. Areal average rainfall totals were less than 0.50 inch.

Weak cold fronts pushed into Louisiana and southern Mississippi during the second week of March. The first two fronts on March 9 and March 12 brought little rain. Heavier rainfall upstream pushed the Lower Pearl River into a minor flood at Pearl River, LA by March 12. The river crested at 14.2 feet, 0.2 feet above its flood stage. Most sites had only one day of rain, which occurred with the third front on March 14. Areal average rainfall amounts for the week were less than 0.25 inch.

A near-stationary frontal boundary became draped over the region and produced light rain on March 15 and March 16. A few locations reported totals of one to two inches. Flooding developed on the Atchafalaya River at Morgan City on March 16 and continued into April. By March 20, the Lower Mississippi River rose at Red River Landing, LA. The river crested 2.8 feet above its 48.0 feet flood stage. After March 16, high pressure produced dry weather over southern Louisiana and coastal Mississippi. Areal average rainfall amounts for the week ranged from 0.25 inch to near 0.75 inch.

A weak front moved through the area by March 22 with light rain. High pressure and dry conditions returned through March 28. The region remained below its normal rain amounts for the fourth week. Areal rainfall averaged near 0.01 inch.

By the end of March, a stronger cold front brought significant rainfall into the region. Many locations received 1 to 2 inches for March 29 through March 30. Areal rainfall amounts averaged from 0.30 inch to near 0.75 inch.

For March 2004, rainfall totals were more than 50% of normal for many locations, making the area abnormally dry. Several locations were 4 to 5 inches below normal rainfall amounts for the month. For example, McComb, MS was 4.74 inches below normal; Boothville, LA was 4.46 inches below normal; New Orleans Lakefront was 4.14 inches below normal. Gulfport, MS measured 0.58 inch in March, this amount was 5.45 inches below normal.