



**MIAMI-SOUTH FLORIDA**  
**National Weather Service**  
**Forecast Office**  
<http://www.weather.gov/miami>

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## MARCH 2018 WEATHER SUMMARY

### Dry Pattern Persists

### Drought Conditions Parts of South Florida

**April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2018:** The dry pattern which became established across South Florida early in 2018 continued in earnest in March. Many areas received less than an inch of rain for the entire month (Figure 1), with parts of northern Miami-Dade County receiving less than a quarter of an inch. In fact, North Miami Beach recorded no rain during the entire month, a first for that location since records began at that site in 2000. The highest rainfall amounts were in western Collier County, but even here totals failed to reach 2 inches for the month.

Although several cold fronts moved through the area in March, these fronts were mostly dry, with the only rainfall episodes of note occurring on March 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> and March 20<sup>th</sup>. Strong wind gusts in excess of 45 mph were recorded with thunderstorms affecting the Naples and Marco Island areas on March 20<sup>th</sup>.

The persistent dry pattern led to the development of moderate drought conditions over parts of South Florida during the latter part of March (Figure 3), as well as contributing to several large wildfires across portions of Collier, Hendry and Miami-Dade counties. Ironically, the Greenway wildfire in western Collier County in the Picayune Strand State Forest was triggered by a lightning strike from the thunderstorms of March 20<sup>th</sup>, burning a total of over 17,000 acres as of the end of the month.

Below are March rainfall totals in inches for select South Florida sites:

<b>Location (Beginning of Period of Record)</b>	<b>March 2018 Rainfall</b>	<b>Departure from Normal/Rank</b>
Brighton Reservation (Glades Co.)	<b>1.09</b>	
Cape Florida	<b>1.55</b>	
Canal Point (1941)	<b>0.35</b>	<b>-3.77 /6<sup>th</sup> driest</b>
Fort Lauderdale/Hollywood Int'l (1912)	<b>1.25</b>	<b>-2.11</b>
Fort Lauderdale Dixie Water Plant	<b>1.20</b>	<b>-2.16</b>
Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport	<b>0.86</b>	
Fort Lauderdale Beach	<b>1.11</b>	
Hialeah (1940)	<b>0.33</b>	<b>-3.40/ 3<sup>rd</sup> driest</b>
Hollywood (1963)	<b>1.25</b>	<b>-2.11</b>
Homestead General Airport (1990)	<b>0.25</b>	<b>-2.25</b>
Immokalee (1971)	<b>0.89</b>	<b>-2.04/T9<sup>th</sup> driest</b>
Juno Beach	<b>0.23</b>	
Marco Island	<b>1.83</b>	
Miami International Airport (1911)	<b>0.19</b>	<b>-2.81/5<sup>th</sup> driest</b>
Moore Haven (1918)	<b>2.09</b>	<b>-2.63/14<sup>th</sup> driest</b>
Muse	<b>0.29</b>	
North Miami Beach	<b>0</b>	
Naples East/Golden Gate	<b>1.38</b>	
Naples Municipal Airport (1942)	<b>1.33</b>	<b>-1.05</b>
NWS Miami	<b>0.26</b>	
Oasis Ranger Station (1979)	<b>0.57</b>	<b>-2.37</b>
Opa-Locka Airport	<b>0.03</b>	
Ortona (1940)	<b>0.25</b>	<b>-3.42/2<sup>nd</sup> driest</b>
Palm Beach Gardens	<b>0.34</b>	
Palm Beach International Airport (1888)	<b>0.80</b>	<b>-3.79/17<sup>th</sup> driest</b>
Pembroke Pines – North Perry Airport	<b>0.85</b>	
Pompano Beach Airpark	<b>0.63</b>	
Miami Executive Apt – West Kendall	<b>0.29</b>	
The Redland (1942)	<b>0.59</b>	<b>-2.32/11<sup>th</sup> driest</b>
Okeelanta/South Bay 15S	<b>0.83</b>	

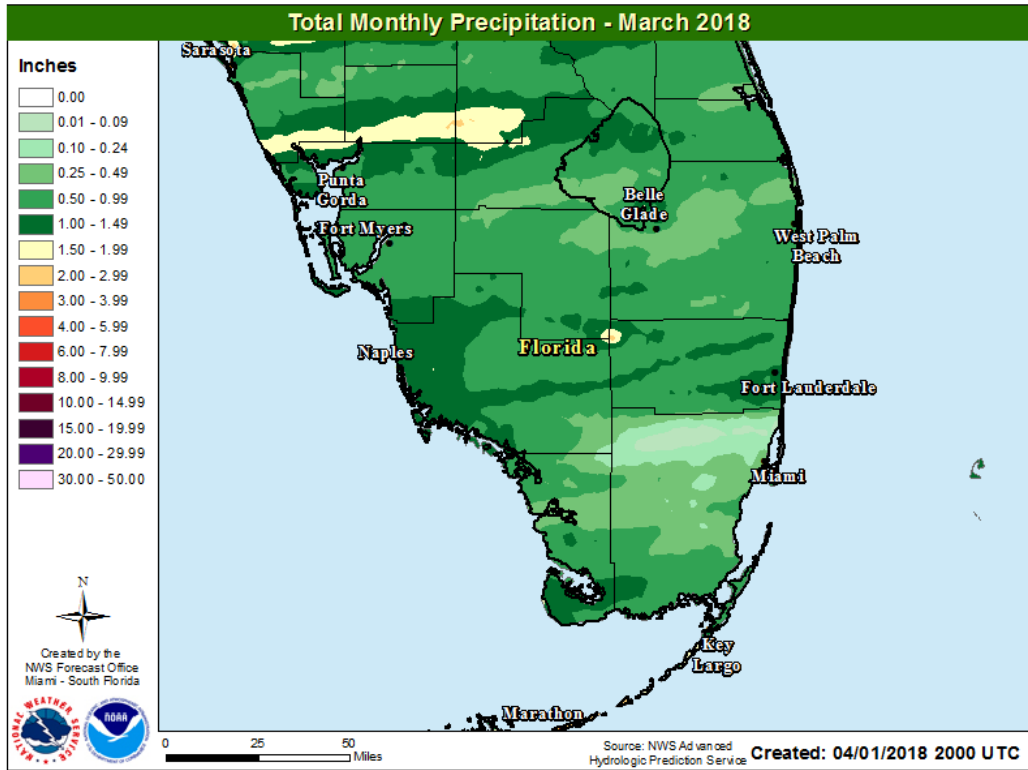


Figure 1: March rainfall in inches

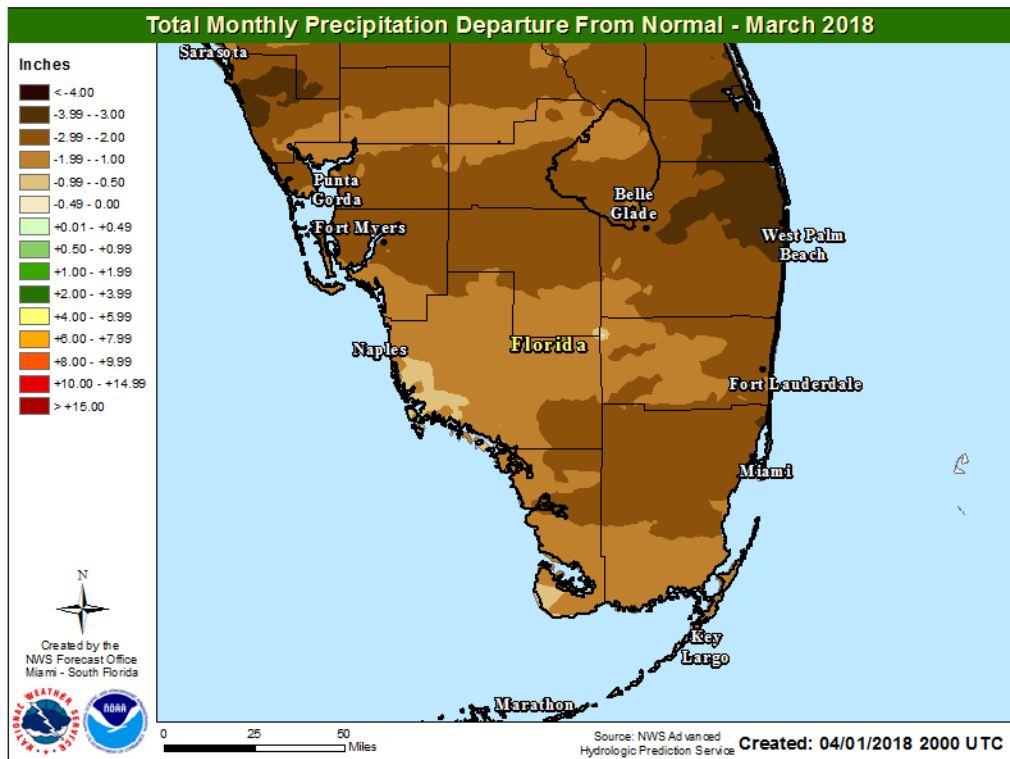
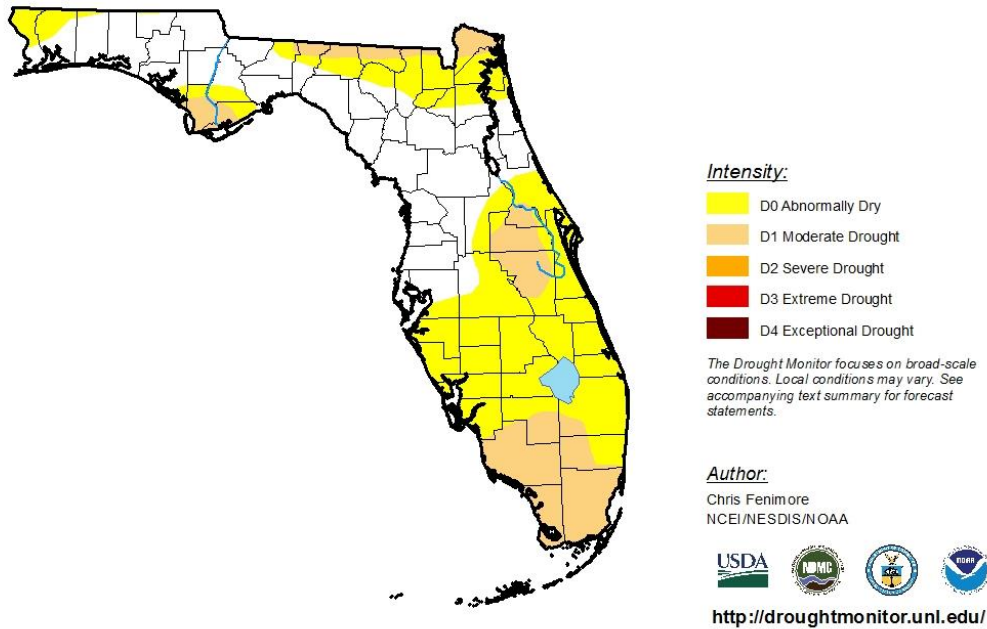


Figure 2: March rainfall departure from normal in inches

**U.S. Drought Monitor  
Florida**

**March 27, 2018**  
(Released Thursday, Mar. 29, 2018)  
Valid 8 a.m. EDT



**Figure 3:** U.S. Drought Monitor for Florida Valid March 27th

## Temperatures

The series of cold fronts which moved through South Florida in March brought enough cool air for monthly average temperatures to be anywhere from 1 to 3 degrees below normal area-wide. The coldest temperatures occurred between March 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> when low temperatures dropped to as low as 36 degrees in Ortona, with 40s over most of the rest of South Florida. On March 23<sup>rd</sup>, low temperatures again dropped into the upper 30s over portions of Hendry, Glades and Collier counties. As is typical for March, a period of very warm temperatures affected the area in between the cool snaps of mid and late March, with 90-degree readings registered across much of South Florida on March 20<sup>th</sup>, including 91 degrees at Opa-Locka, Juno Beach and Homestead. Here are some noteworthy temperature statistics for each of the four main climate sites in south Florida:

**Miami International Airport** recorded an average March temperature of 70.8 degrees Fahrenheit. This is 1.8 degrees below the 30-year normal for March. The average high temperature was 80F. The average low temperature was 65F. The hottest reading of the month was 89 degrees on the 20<sup>th</sup>. The coolest reading was 51 degrees on the 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Fort Lauderdale/Hollywood International Airport** recorded an average March temperature of 70.2 degrees Fahrenheit. This is 2.7 degrees below the 30-year normal for March. The average high temperature was 79F. The average low temperature was 62F. The hottest reading of the month was 90 degrees on the 20<sup>th</sup>. The coolest reading was 49 degrees on the 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Palm Beach International Airport** recorded an average March temperature of 67.9 degrees Fahrenheit. This is 2.6 degrees below the 30-year normal for March and is [tied for the 17<sup>th</sup> coolest March on record](#) (going back to 1889). The average high temperature was 79F. The average low temperature was 62F. The hottest reading of the month was 90 degrees on the 20<sup>th</sup>. The coolest reading was 45 degrees on the 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Naples Municipal Airport** recorded an average March temperature of 68.6 degrees Fahrenheit. This is 1.4 degrees below the 30-year normal for March. The average high temperature was 79F. The average low temperature was 59F. The hottest reading of the month was 88 degrees on the 26<sup>th</sup>. The coolest reading was 48 degrees on the 16<sup>th</sup>.

### Other Significant March Weather Events

Large swells from a powerful winter storm off the Northeast U.S. coast pounded the Southeast Florida coast from March 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>. High and rough surf conditions damaged Juno Beach Pier and closed other piers along the Atlantic coast, as well as causing beach erosion.

### Outlook for April-June

[The outlook by the NOAA Climate Prediction Center](#) (Figures 4 and 5) calls for an increased likelihood of warmer than normal temperatures through June, as well as for an increased likelihood of below normal precipitation in April followed by equal chances of above, below or near normal precipitation for the rest of the period through June. The timing of the onset of the rainy season in May will play a large role in determining South Florida rainfall relative to normal, and the eventual alleviation of spring drought conditions.

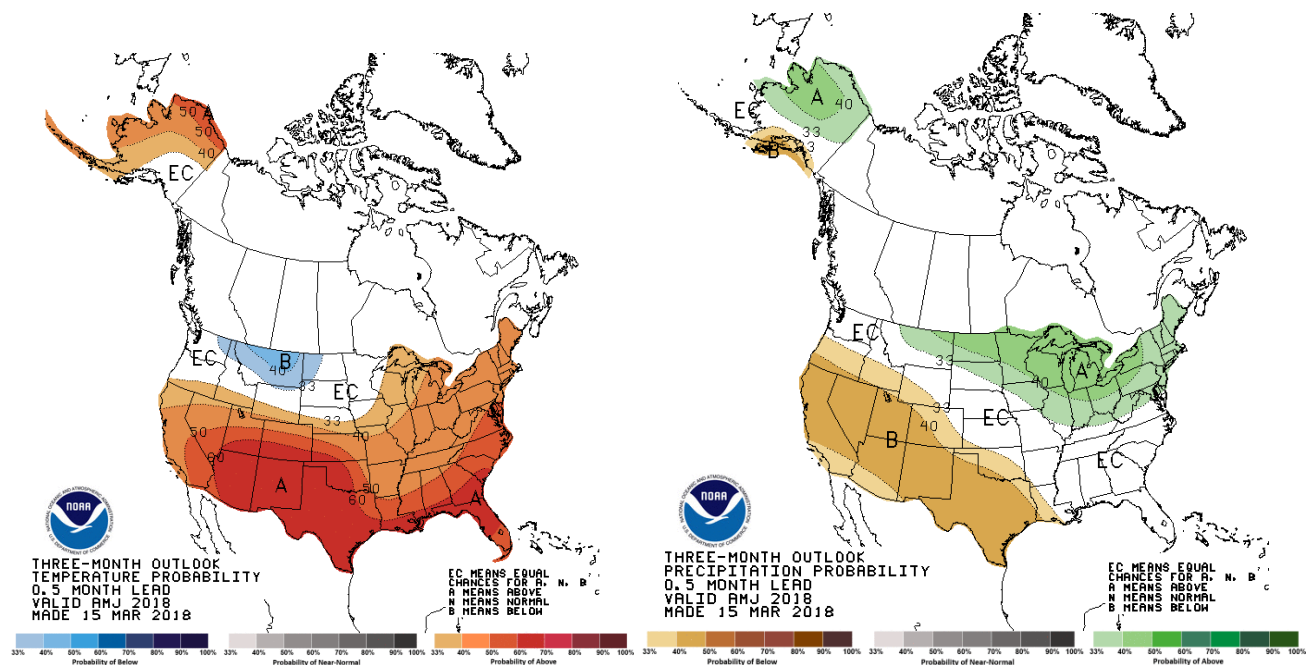
At this time it is likely that drought conditions will linger into May, therefore the wildfire risk will continue to be high. All persons are urged to take measures to reduce the chance of wildfires. Visit the [Florida Forest Service web site](#) for more information on how to help prevent wildfires.

Thunderstorms start becoming slightly more common in April and early May, before the onset of the rainy season in mid or late May brings nearly daily thunderstorms to South Florida which last through the summer months. Episodes of severe thunderstorms often occur during the transition period between the dry and wet seasons, with strong winds, hail and even tornadoes possible. Be sure to practice lightning safety by remembering this simple rule: **When Thunder Roars, Go Indoors!**

Rip currents also can be a problem during this time of year as the amount of beachgoers continues to increase as we head towards the end of the school year and summer vacation. All residents and visitors visiting area beaches are strongly urged to heed the advice of Ocean Rescue lifeguards and swim near a lifeguard. [Visit the National Weather Service Rip Current Awareness page](#) for more information.

Last but not least, hurricane season begins in June, which means there's no better time than now to begin getting ready. Websites such as [ready.gov](#) provide good preparedness tips.

For the latest South Florida weather information, including the latest watches, advisories and warnings, please visit the National Weather Service Miami Forecast Office's web site at [weather.gov/southflorida](#).



**Figures 4 and 5:** NOAA Climate Prediction Center Temperature (left) and Precipitation (right) outlooks for April-June.