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

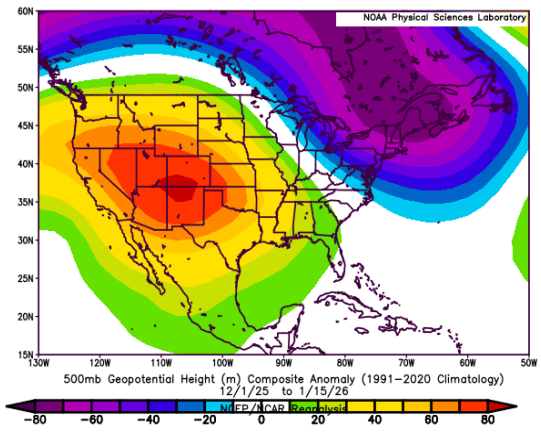
SOUTH FLORIDA WINTER 2025-2026 SUMMARY

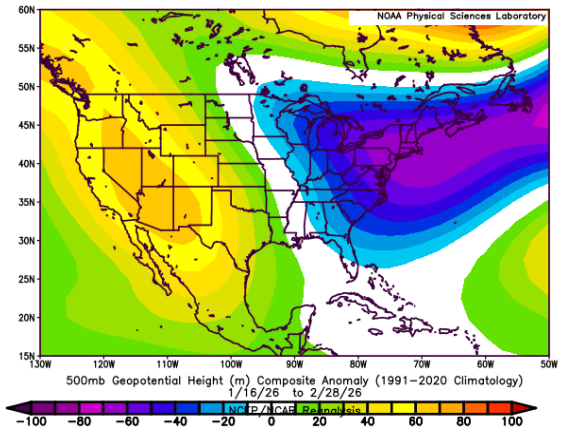
Much Drier than Normal with Worsening Drought Conditions

Near to Slightly Cooler than Normal

March 19, 2026: Much drier than normal conditions, typical of La Niña winters in North America, prevailed across South Florida during the meteorological winter (December through February) of 2025-2026. The upper-level subtropical branch of the jet stream was mainly positioned from the Ohio Valley to the mid-Atlantic states and western North Atlantic Ocean (Figure 3), reflecting a general storm track well to the north and east of South Florida. Under this pattern, cold fronts moving across Florida typically had less atmospheric support and moisture since the parent low pressure systems tracked along the aforementioned storm track well to our north and east. This led to less rainfall in association with the cold fronts, with the only notable precipitation coming from three slow-moving fronts in early-mid December and mid-January. As a result, abnormally dry to moderate drought at the beginning of the season worsened and expanding, with almost all of South Florida in severe to extreme drought conditions by the end of February.

In general, the first half of the winter was warmer than normal temperatures driven by a pattern characterized by strong mid-level high pressure system extending across the western and southern U.S. (Figure 1) which shunted most of the cold air masses away from Florida. However, a shift in the pattern during the second half of the winter led by a southward shift in the mid-level low pressure over the eastern U.S. (Figure 2) opened the door for several outbreaks of arctic air to move south across the eastern U.S. and Florida. This resulted in below normal temperatures for the latter half of the season.





Figures 1 and 2: 500 mb (mid-tropospheric) height anomalies for December 1-January 15 (left) and January 16-February 28 (right). Yellow colors reflect stronger high pressure at the 500 mb level, and blue colors reflect stronger low pressure

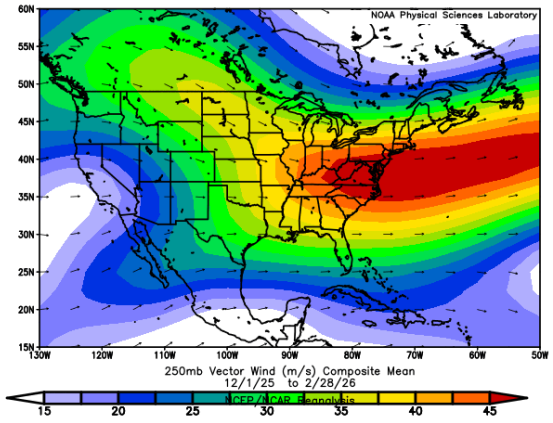


Figure 3: 250 mb mean wind for December 2025-February 2026. Red colors reflect the mean position of the upper-level jet stream and general winter storm track

Following is a summary of Winter 2025-2026 temperature and precipitation, as well as significant weather events.

Temperature

Average winter temperatures were mainly within 1 degree F of the seasonal normal. At the main climate sites, Miami was 1 degree F below normal while West Palm Beach was 0.3F above normal. Miami and West Palm Beach recorded the coolest average winter temperature since 2010-2011, Fort Lauderdale the coolest since 2014-2015, and Naples equaled the average winter temperature recorded in 2023-2024 (Figure 4).

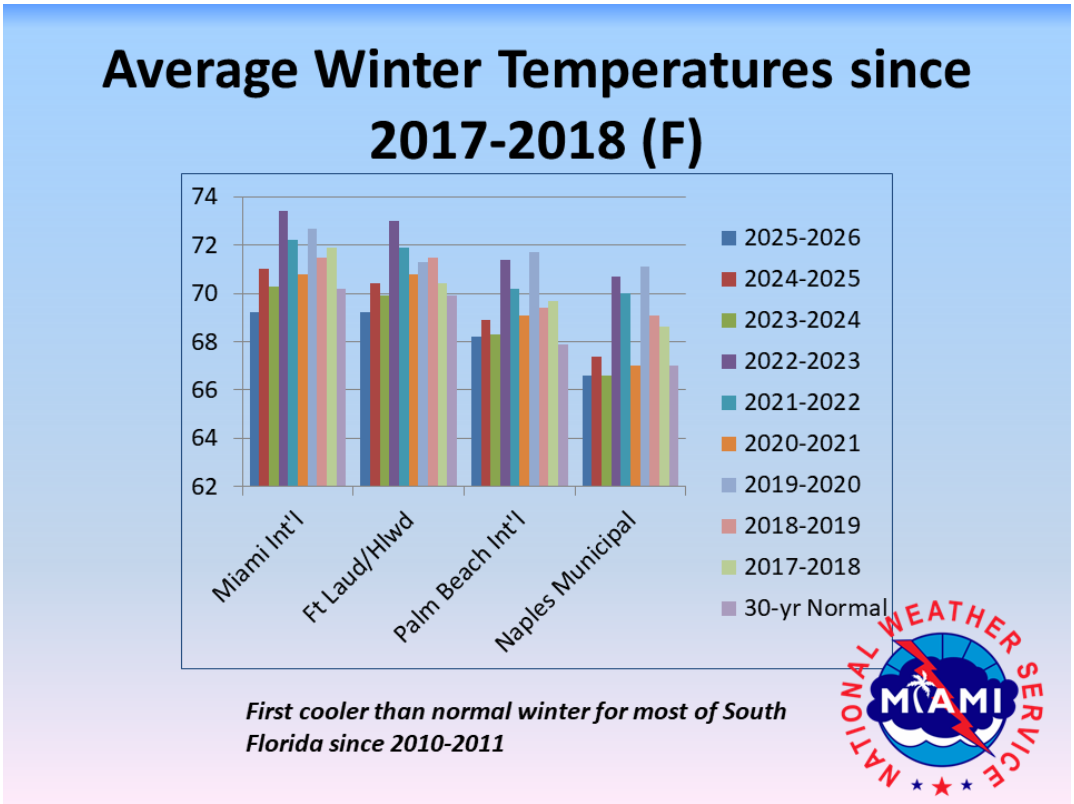


Figure 4: Average winter temperatures 2018-2026 for main South Florida climate sites

After a warm December which ranked among the top-15 warmest on record at the 4 main climate sites, January ended up near to slightly cooler than normal due to the pattern change around mid-month which allowed for stronger cold fronts and arctic air intrusions into Florida. The cold pattern continued through much of February, resulting in temperatures **3 to 4 degrees F below normal** for the month.

The most significant cold outbreaks occurred during a two-week period from January 27th to February 9th when all 4 climate sites recorded an average temperature in the upper 50s. This was the coldest average 2-week temperature since 2010, **about 10 to 11 degrees F below normal**. Miami International Airport recorded three times as many days of below normal temperatures between January 15 and February 25th (24 days) as from December 1 to January 14 (8 days), and similar trends were noted at other sites across South Florida.

The lowest temperatures occurred from February 1-3 following the passage of a strong cold front which ushered in an arctic airmass. The lowest temperature of the winter of 22F was recorded by the FAWN station in Palmdale on February 2nd. A hard freeze (temperatures below 28F for at least 2 hours) occurred on each morning across Glades and Hendry counties, with hard freeze down to Collier County on February 2nd. Freezing

temperatures extended into Palm Beach County, with Palm Beach International Airport registering a low temperature of 30F on two consecutive mornings (February 1-2), the first such occurrence since 1989. Freezing temperatures were also noted as far south as inland sections of Miami-Dade and Broward counties (Figure 5). Some videos posted on social media of a few snow flurries mixed with rain were received from Naples and LaBelle during the pre-dawn of February 1st.

Impacts to the agricultural community were significant, and the extent of the crop damage and associated impacts will be provided in the coming weeks as assessments continue and information is gathered.

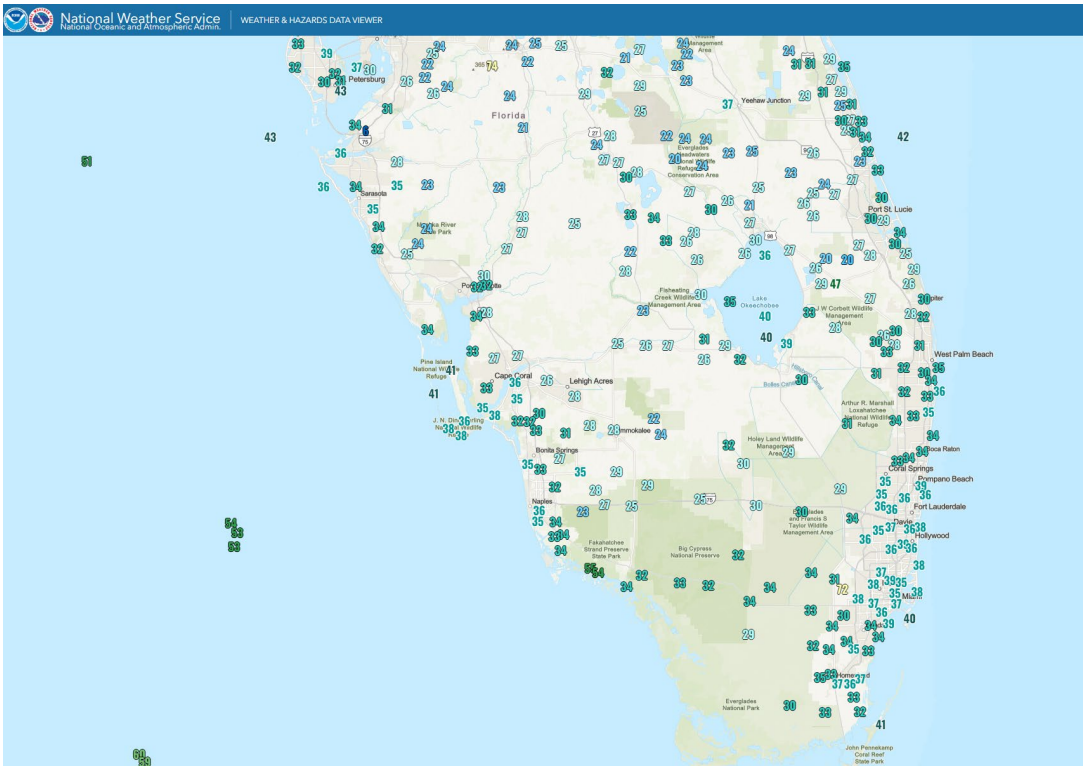


Figure 5: Low temperatures observed on February 2, 2026

In total this winter, daily minimum temperatures of 32F or below occurred on 11 days, the most in one winter since 2010-2011. All of these were in Glades and Hendry counties, with 6 days of freezing temperatures in Collier County and 3 days in western Palm Beach County. The number of winter “cool” days (days with sub-70F maximum temperature and/or sub-50F minimum) was the highest since at least 2017-2018, and probably since 2010-2011. These ranged from 17 at Fort Lauderdale to 22 at Naples (Figure 6).

In contrast to the chilly temperatures of late January and February, the number of 80+ degree days (defined arbitrarily as “warm”) were above the 30-year normal at each of the 4 climate sites, ranging from 49 at West Palm Beach to 42 at Fort Lauderdale (Figure 7).

Below are graphics with additional temperature data for the four main climate sites in South Florida:

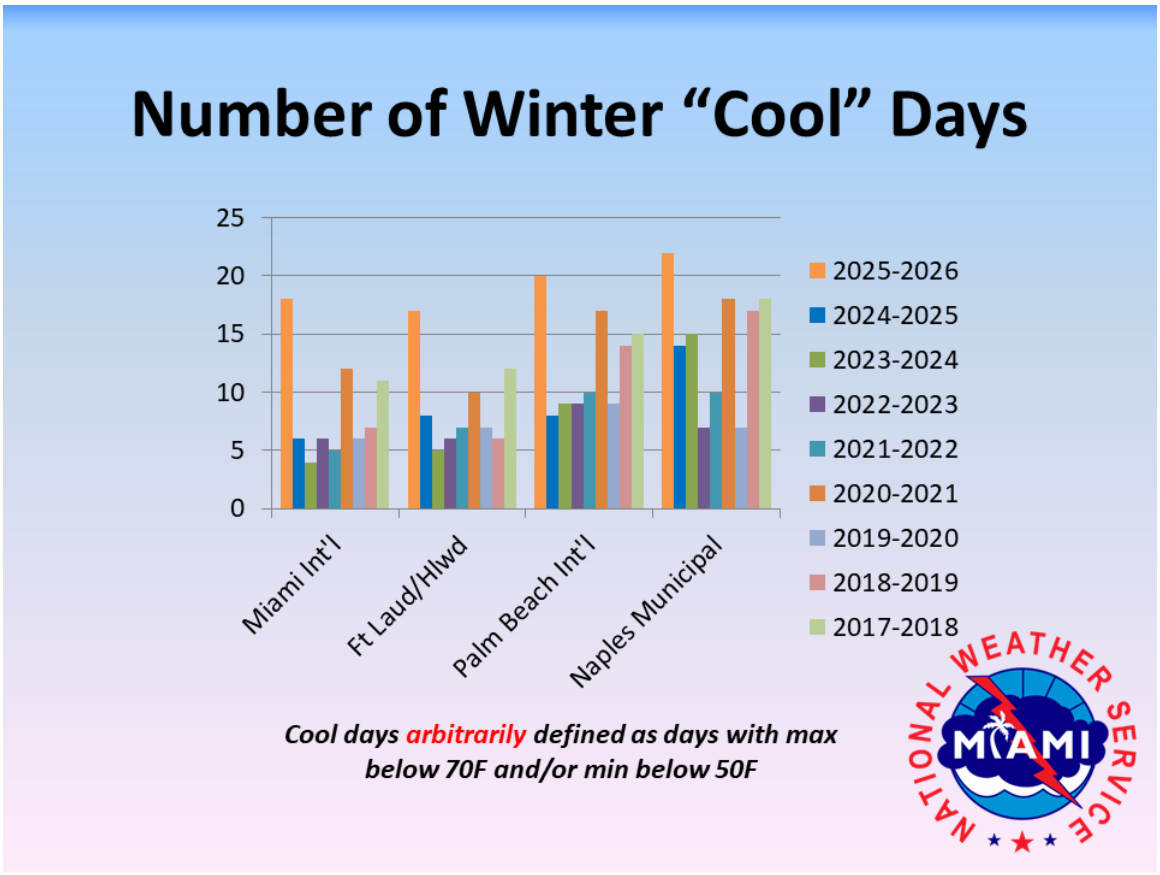


Figure 6: Number of days of sub-70F degree highs and/or sub-50F degree lows.

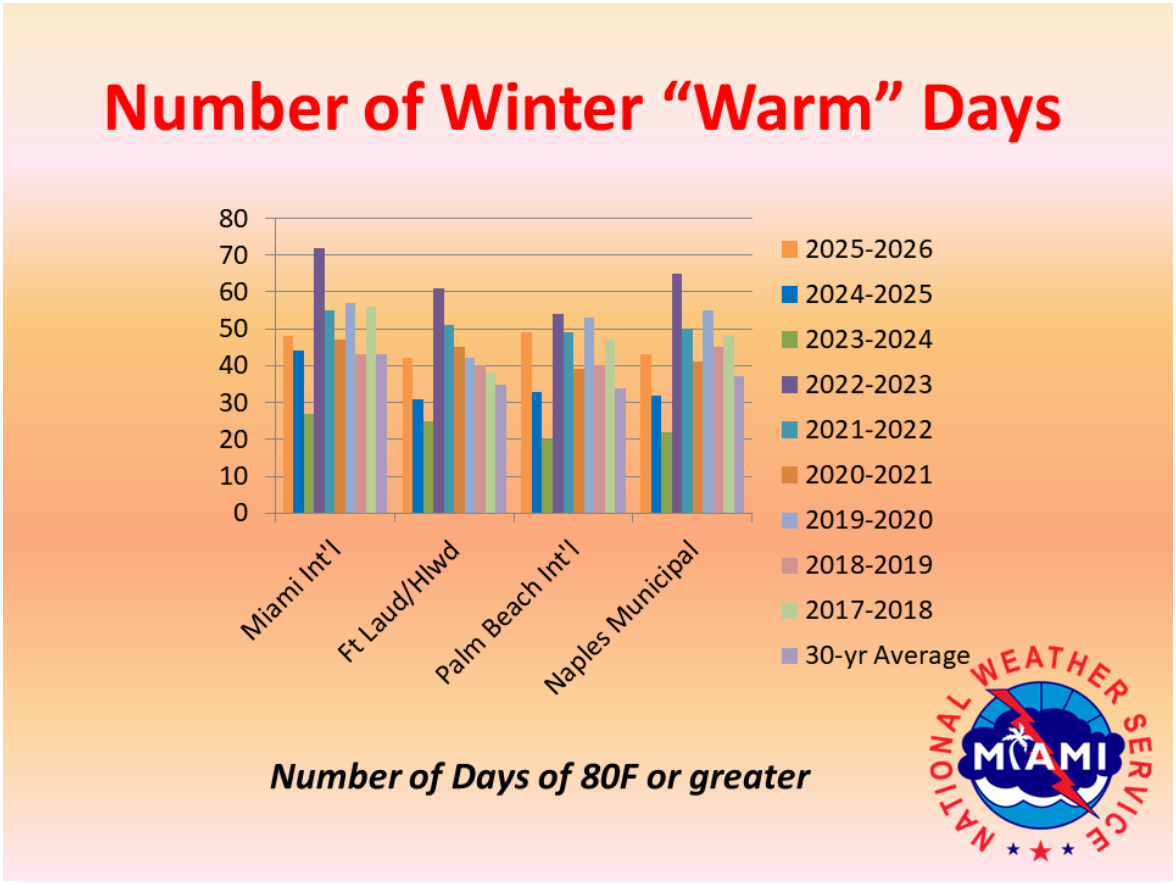


Figure 7: Number of days greater than or equal to 80 degrees

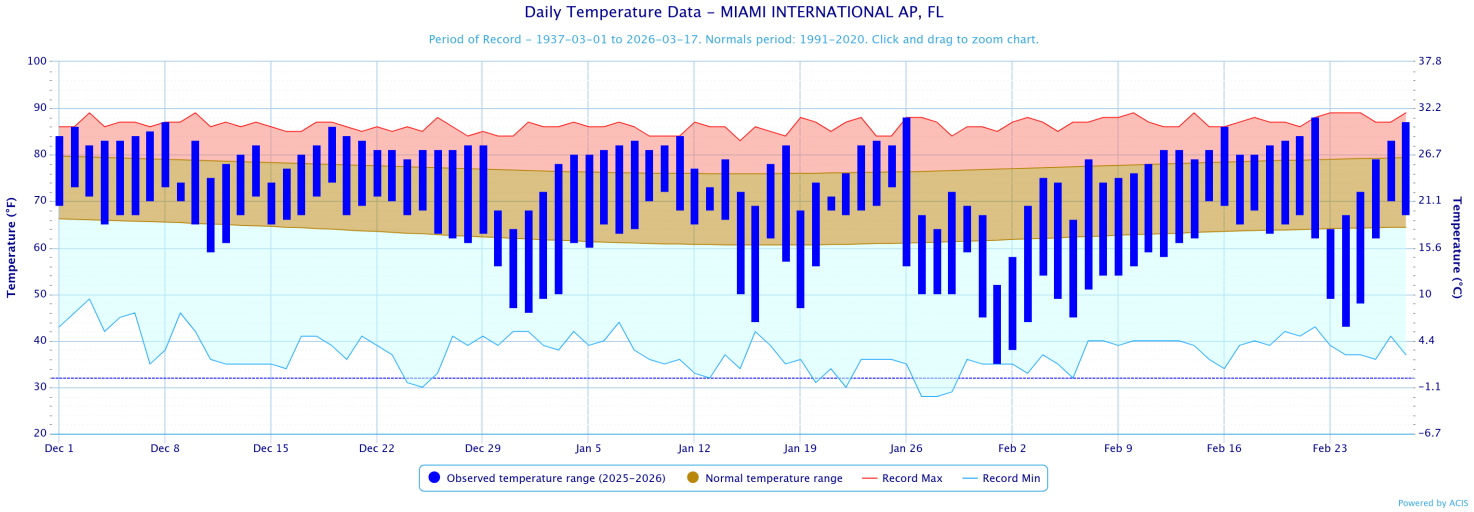


Figure 8: Daily temperature data for Miami International Airport for December 2025- February 2026. This is generally representative of winter temperature trends at all South Florida locations

Here are average December 2025-February 2026 temperature and departure from normal in degrees F for the four main South Florida climate sites:

Location (beginning of period of historical record)	**Dec 2025-Feb 2026 Avg Temp**	**Departure from Normal (F)**
Miami (1895)	69.2	-1.0
Fort Lauderdale (1912)	69.2	-0.7
West Palm Beach (1888)	68.2	+0.3
Naples (1942)	66.6	-0.4

Other noteworthy statistics and data:

- **Miami International Airport**: The highest temperature recorded was 88 degrees set on January 26th and February 22nd, and the lowest temperature recorded was 35 degrees on February 1st. The temperature reached or exceeded 80 degrees on **48 days**, above the 30-year average of 43 days. There were **14 days** below 50 degrees, more than double the 30-year average of 6 days. Five (5) additional days had minimum temperatures of 50F.

- **Palm Beach International Airport**: The highest temperature recorded was 90 degrees on January 26th and February 22nd, and the lowest temperature recorded was 30 degrees on February 1st and 2nd. The temperature reached or exceeded 80 degrees on **49 days**, above the 30-year average of 34 days. The number of days below 50 degrees was **20** which is above the 30-year average of 14 days.

- **Fort Lauderdale/Hollywood International Airport**: The highest temperature recorded was 89 degrees on February 22nd, and the lowest temperature recorded was 35 degrees on February 1st. The temperature reached or exceeded 80 degrees on **42 days**, above the 30-year average of 35 days. There were **15 days** below 50 degrees, almost double the 30-year average of 8 days. Three (3) additional days had minimum temperatures of 50F.

- **Naples Municipal Airport**: The highest temperature recorded was 86 degrees on December 1st, December 7th, and February 27th, and the lowest temperature recorded was 35 degrees on February 2nd. The temperature reached or exceeded 80 degrees on

43 days, above the 30-year average of 37 days. The number of days below 50 degrees was **21** which is above the 30-year average of 17.

Precipitation

As indicated in Figure 3, the more northerly mean position of the upper-level jet stream favored storm systems to track farther north across the central and eastern U.S. This meant that most of the moisture and atmospheric dynamics remaining north of our region in association with cold fronts moving through Florida, leading to relatively few instances of rainfall this winter.

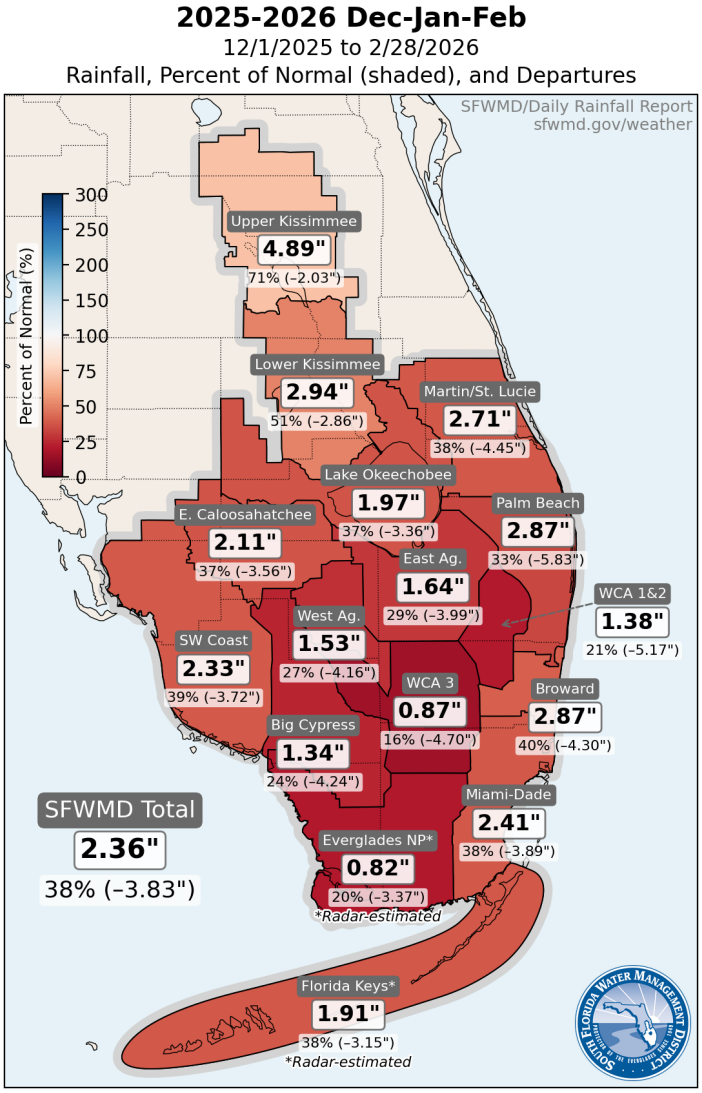


Figure 9: Observed Precipitation and Departure from Normal for Winter 2024-2025, courtesy of South Florida Water Management District

Rainfall amounts across South Florida averaged in the 1–3-inch range (Figure 9), which is in the 25th to 50th percentile of normal, or about 3-5 inches below normal. This placed most sites among the top 10 driest winters on record. There were some exceptions to the very dry conditions; parts of eastern Broward County received between 5 and 6 inches of rain, and at Cape Florida on the southern tip of Key Biscayne which observed an anomalous rainfall of 12.32 inches (over 75% of which fell in 5 days in January).

As a result of the low rainfall, moderate drought (D1) conditions in December deteriorated to severe drought (D2) by the end of January, then to extreme drought (D3) by the end of February. At least 5 wildfires of 1000 acres or greater were reported in the month of February alone, the largest being the First Point Fire in northeastern Glades County which reached at least 8600 acres.

Following are December 2025-February 2026 rainfall totals, departure from normal in inches and ranking for selected locations:

Location (Beginning of Period of Record)	Dec 2025-Feb 2026 Rainfall (inches)	Departure from Normal	Top 20 Rank
Cape Florida (1998)	12.32	+5.64	3rd Wettest
Devils Garden (1956)	1.12	-4.78	Driest on Record
Fort Lauderdale/Hollywood Int'l (1912)	5.08	-2.98	
Flamingo Ranger Station (1951)	1.45	-3.55	7th Driest
Hialeah (1942)	2.21	-4.91	5th Driest
Hollywood Water Plant (2000)	5.75	-2.28	8th Driest
Homestead General Airport (1990)	1.28	-3.27	7th Driest
Marco Island (2002)	1.22	-4.90	2nd Driest
Miami International Airport (1895)	2.44	-3.98	17th Driest
Muse (2009)	1.63	-4.77	Driest on Record
Naples Municipal Airport (1942)	2.15	-2.25	14th Driest
North Miami Beach (2001)	3.64	-4.04	6th Driest
NWS Miami (1999)	2.54	-4.08	3rd Driest
Okeelanta (Palm Beach County)	2.25	-4.66	n/a
Opa-Locka Airport (1998)	2.46	-3.88	4th Driest
Palm Beach International Airport (1888)	2.01	-8.20	3rd Driest

Severe Thunderstorms/Tornadoes/Flooding

The only severe weather event of the winter occurred on the last day, February 28th when a stationary front over Central Florida triggered strong thunderstorms across SE Florida. Hail of dime to quarter-size was reported in Palm Beach County, with pea size hail in southern Miami-Dade County. Thunderstorm wind gusts of 40-55 mph were reported across parts of SE Florida with these storms.

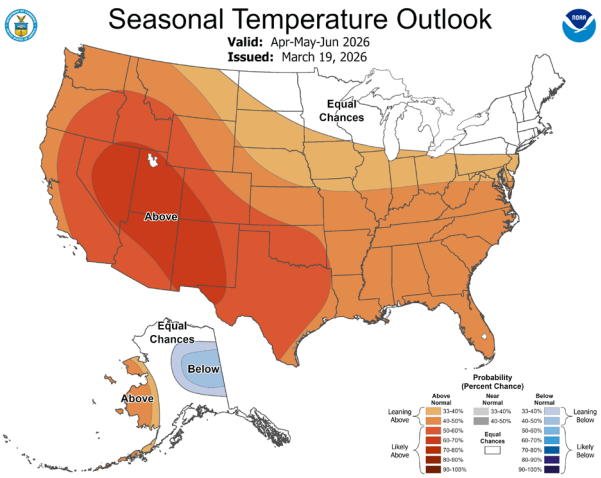
Spring Outlook for South Florida (April – June)

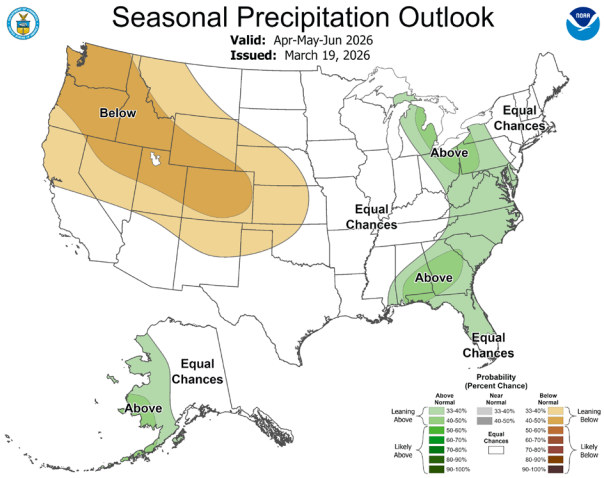
The outlook by the NOAA Climate Prediction Center for the period from April through June (Figures 10 and 11) leans towards above normal temperatures (40-50% chance). The precipitation outlook for April leans slightly towards below normal precipitation (33-40%), with equal chances of above, near, or below normal precipitation in May and June which marks the beginning of the rainy season

The ongoing drought conditions combined with the likelihood of dry weather lingering through at least April means an above normal potential for significant wildland fires through May across South Florida. Spring is the peak of wildfire season in South Florida, and 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.

Spring also brings periods of strong and gusty winds to the area along with an increase in beach-goers. This significantly increases the risk of rip currents at all South Florida beaches. A sharp increase in rip current-related drowning deaths and rescues occurs during the spring months due in part to this shift in the wind patterns and more people in the water. 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.

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 10 and 11: NOAA Climate Prediction Center outlook for April-June.