

PUBLISH DATE: FEBRUARY 28, 2026

**EASTERN NORTH CAROLINA
MONTHLY CLIMATE REPORT**

JANUARY 2026

**WEATHER FORECAST OFFICE
NEWPORT/MOREHEAD CITY, NC**

National Weather Service
NEWPORT/MOREHEAD CITY, NC

MONTHLY SUMMARY

January 2026 will be long remembered across eastern North Carolina as a prolific period for winter weather as the region was slapped with multiple storms – a freezing rain event on the 24th and 25th that dropped as much as a half inch of ice across portions of the coastal plain, and then the historic Jan 31st and Feb 1st snowstorm that dumped over a foot of snow in all but one county of the Morehead City forecast area. The heavy snow may give the impression January was a wet month, but in fact it was quite dry. For many counties, it was among their top 10 driest Januarys on record. The first half of the month was very dry with many spots struggling to record a half inch of precipitation.

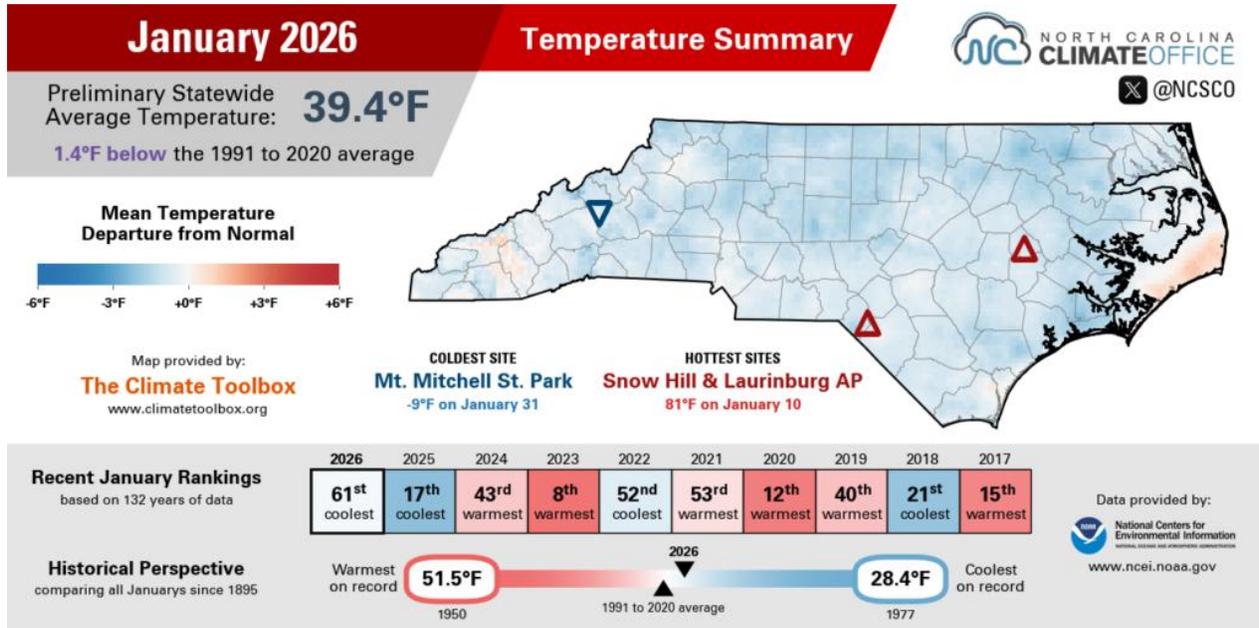
Temperatures remained below average in January, with eastern NC experiencing modestly lower anomalies than the rest of the state. Average temperatures across the Morehead City forecast area were 1.8°F below normal and roughly half a degree cooler than the statewide average. This was largely driven by the exceptionally cold airmass that would play a role in our winter weather at month's end, and masks an unusually warm period in the first two weeks. Cape Hatteras set or tied three consecutive record highs, and Snow Hill was among one of the warmest spots in North Carolina, hitting 81°F on January 10th.

Public Information Statement on Jan 24-25th Freezing Rain Event: [Click Here](#)

Public Information Statement on Jan 31st-Feb 1st Storm: [Click Here](#)

TEMPERATURES

Statewide temperatures across North Carolina were primarily below average to start 2026, according to the North Carolina State Climate Office. The average temperature statewide for the month was 39.4°F or 1.4°F below the 1991-2020 average. This was the 61st coolest December statewide since records began in 1895, with 132 years of data.



January 2026 Temperature Summary | Source: NC State Climate Office

Eastern North Carolina temperature anomalies were similar to the rest of the state, with temperatures across our 15 counties 1.8°F below the 1991-2020 average. Since their respective records began, January 2026 was the 56th warmest for Cape Hatteras and 29th coolest for New Bern. Despite the average, there were warm periods – Snow Hill hit 81° on the 10th, the warmest observation in the state.

MHX Select Site Temperature Statistics: January 2026

Site	Avg. High (°F)	Avg. Low (°F)	Avg. Temp (°F)	Normal (°F)	Departure (°F)
Beaufort (KMRH)	53.6	35.3	44.5	46.2	-1.8
Hatteras (KHSE)	54.5	38.7	46.6	48.0	-1.4
New Bern (KEWN)	53.9	30.9	42.4	44.5	-2.1

Normals are based on a period from 1990-2020.

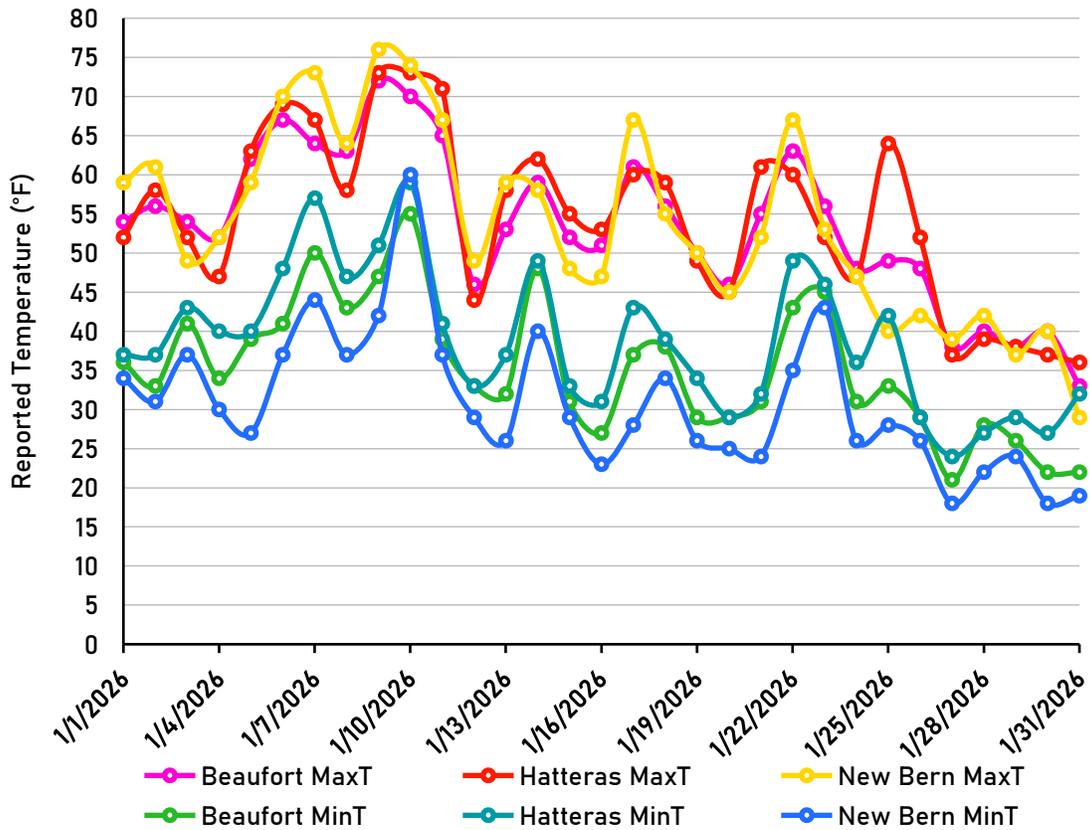
County-averaged statistics are presented in the following table. **Mean and departure calculations are based on the 1991-2020 climate normals.** Data courtesy of the National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI).

County	Avg. Temperature (°F)	Mean (°F)	Departure (°F)	Rank
Beaufort	42.1	44.0	-1.9	56 C
Carteret	44.4	46.1	-1.7	51 C
Craven	42.3	44.5	-2.2	47 C
Dare	43.6	44.0	-0.4	59 W
Duplin	41.6	43.6	-2.0	46 C
Greene	40.7	42.8	-2.1	53 C
Hyde	43.9	44.8	-0.9	62 W
Jones	41.7	44.1	-2.4	43 C
Lenoir	40.9	43.4	-2.5	45 C
Martin	40.4	42.2	-1.8	57 C
Onslow	42.6	44.8	-2.2	41 C
Pamlico	43.5	45.8	-2.3	53 C
Pitt	40.8	42.8	-2.0	54 C
Tyrrell	42.5	43.5	-1.0	65 W
Washington	41.5	42.9	-1.4	64 C
Area Average	42.2	44.0	-1.8	

Means are based on a period from 1991-2020. For rankings, “C” designates coldest and “W” designates warmest.

The upper air pattern across the United States in January averaged to rather pronounced troughing over the eastern part of the country, especially in the second half of the month. Heights over North Carolina were well below normal in the second half of January, and the coldest air of the season took hold in the final week, falling to 9-12 degrees below average. The entire month was not frigid, however – temperatures were about 3-6 degrees above average in the month’s first half as highs reached near or above 70 for several days.

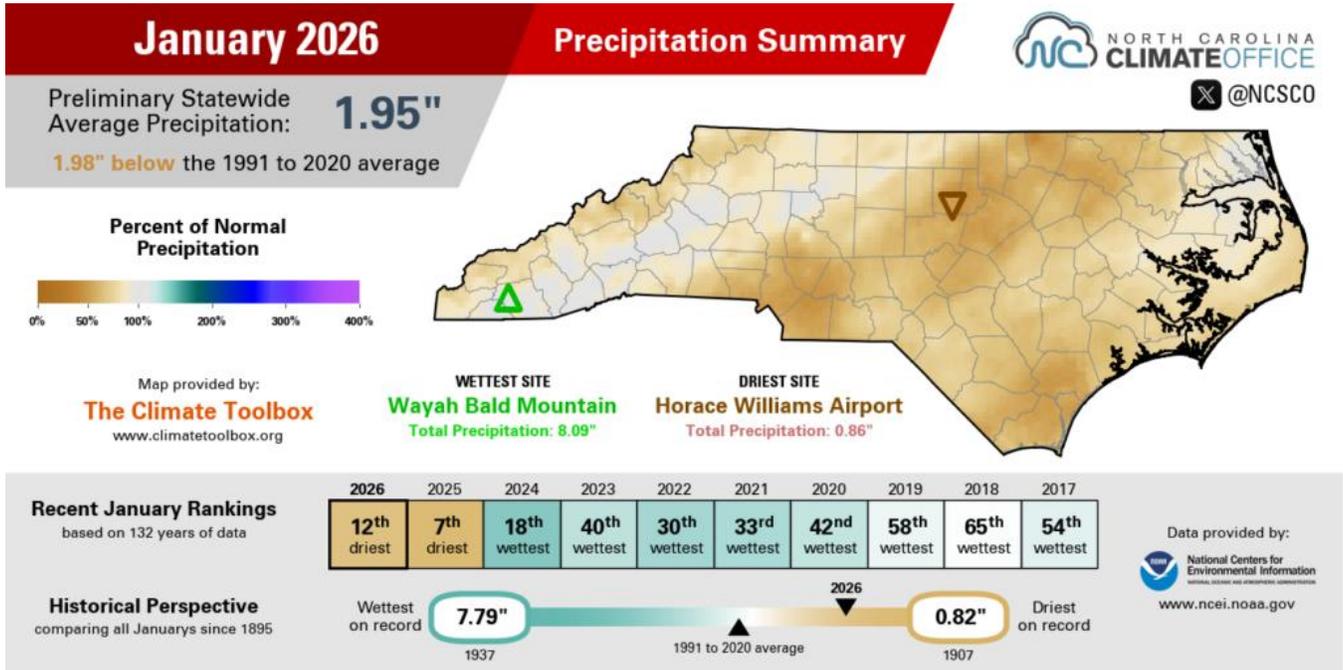
Daily Maximum and Minimum Temperatures



Three temperature records were set in January at **Cape Hatteras**, all record highs in the first half of the month. The site tied a record high of 73°F on Jan. 9th (OR: 73°F / 1937), set a new record high of 73°F on Jan. 10th (OR: 70°F / 2008), and then tied the record high of 71°F on Jan. 11th (OR: 71° / 2020).

PRECIPITATION

Analysis conducted by the North Carolina State Climate Office indicated average statewide precipitation was 1.95" for January, or 1.98" inches below average. This was the 12th driest January since records began in 1895.



January 2026 Precipitation Summary | Source: NC State Climate Office

Eastern North Carolina was modestly drier than the rest of the state, with the average liquid accumulation across the MHX forecast area sitting at 1.79" (roughly 45% of the 1991-2020 normal). This is despite the record-breaking snow to close out the month, which by some measurements accounted for nearly an inch of liquid equivalent precipitation. Cape Hatteras had its 33rd driest January on record. New Bern instrumentation did not record an accurate liquid equivalent on the 31st, and no backup CO-OP measurement was available.

MHX Select Site Precipitation Statistics: January 2026

Site	Total Precipitation (in.)	Normal (in.)	Departure (in.)
Beaufort (KMRH)	2.25	4.17	-1.92
Hatteras (KHSE)	2.62	4.91	-2.29
New Bern (KEWN)	1.44	3.89	-2.45

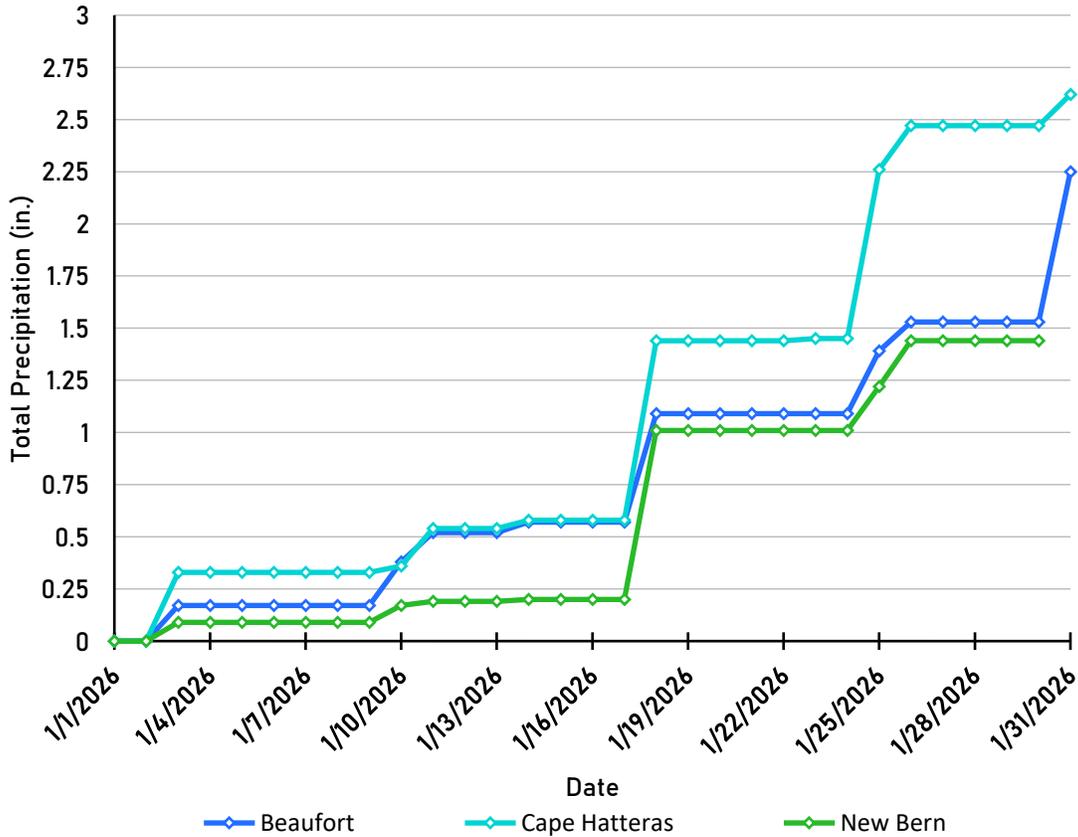
County-averaged statistics are presented in the following table. Mean and departure calculations are based on the 1991-2020 climate normals. Data courtesy of the National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI).

County	Avg. Accum. (in.)	Mean (in.)	Departure (in.)	Rank
Beaufort	1.72	3.88	-2.16	8 D
Carteret	1.82	4.29	-2.47	11 D
Craven	1.59	3.89	-2.30	8 D
Dare	2.41	4.08	-1.67	27 D
Duplin	1.66	3.71	-2.05	16 D
Greene	1.56	3.67	-2.11	13 D
Hyde	2.18	4.29	-2.11	17 D
Jones	1.60	3.86	-2.26	9 D
Lenoir	1.64	3.71	-2.07	13 D
Martin	1.69	3.76	-2.07	11 D
Onslow	1.58	3.96	-2.38	9 D
Pamlico	1.74	4.09	-2.35	10 D
Pitt	1.45	3.73	-2.28	7 D
Tyrrell	2.26	4.08	-1.82	17 D
Washington	1.94	3.94	-2.00	13 D
Area Average	1.79	3.93	-2.14	

Means are based on a period from 1991-2020. For rankings, “W” designates wettest and “D” designates driest.

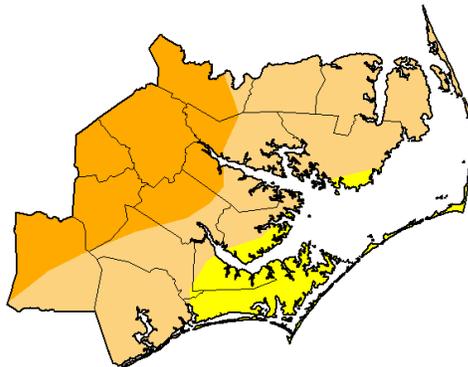
January across eastern NC started on a very dry note with ridging in place across much of the southern United States, and many places struggled to get more than a half inch of rainfall through the 15th. The bulk of our precipitation fell in the second half of the month, starting with accumulations of between a half inch to an inch with a strong cold front crossing the region on Jan 18-19th. Following that were two winter systems, the first dropping a few tenths of freezing rain across the coastal plain on the 25th. The second, of course, was the snowstorm dropping over a foot of snow in nearly every county and liquid equivalents of up to an inch in some spots.

Monthly Accumulated Precipitation



Drought conditions expanded considerably with the rainfall deficit, with much of the coastal plain entering D2 (Severe) drought by the turn of the month. Over a third of our forecast area ended the month in D2 drought, with 89% of the area in at least D1 (Moderate) drought.

U.S. Drought Monitor Newport/Morehead City, NC WFO



February 3, 2026
(Released Thursday, Feb. 5, 2026)
Valid 7 a.m. EST

	Drought Conditions (Percent Area)					
	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	0.00	100.00	89.05	35.43	0.00	0.00
Last Week 01-27-2026	0.00	100.00	89.05	35.43	0.00	0.00
3 Months Ago 11-04-2025	6.51	93.49	54.54	1.00	0.00	0.00
Start of Calendar Year 01-01-2026	0.00	100.00	44.85	0.00	0.00	0.00
Start of Water Year 09-30-2025	0.09	99.91	44.72	0.00	0.00	0.00
One Year Ago 02-04-2025	0.00	100.00	100.00	45.80	0.00	0.00

Intensity

None	D2 Severe Drought
D0 Abnormally Dry	D3 Extreme Drought
D1 Moderate Drought	D4 Exceptional Drought

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/About.aspx>

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National Drought Mitigation Center



droughtmonitor.unl.edu

ADDITIONAL CLIMATE RESOURCES

For a look at climate on the national scale, as well as statistics from a CONUS-wide to county and city level, please visit the **National Centers for Environmental Information** at <https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/>. Additional maps and data, as well as teaching materials and a climate resiliency toolkit, can be found at **NOAA's** <https://www.climate.gov>.

For additional drought information, including a wealth of maps of data focused on topics such as agriculture, fire, and water supply, please visit **NOAA's National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS)** at <https://www.drought.gov>.

For climate statistics and real time observations across the state of North Carolina, please visit the **North Carolina State Climate Office** at <https://climate.ncsu.edu/>.

For climate forecasts and outlooks, visit the **Climate Prediction Center** at <https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/>.

For community-based precipitation observations from across the United States, visit **CoCoRaHS** at <https://www.cocorahs.org/>.

For climate statistics relevant to various regions of North Carolina, please visit the following climate pages:

Eastern (WFO Morehead City): <https://www.weather.gov/wrh/climate?wfo=mhx>

Southeastern (WFO Wilmington): <https://www.weather.gov/wrh/climate?wfo=ilm>

Northeastern (WFO Wakefield, VA): <https://www.weather.gov/wrh/climate?wfo=akq>

Central (WFO Raleigh): <https://www.weather.gov/wrh/climate?wfo=rah>

Northwestern (WFO Blacksburg, VA): <https://www.weather.gov/wrh/climate?wfo=rnk>

Southwestern (WFO Greer, SC): <https://www.weather.gov/wrh/climate?wfo=gsp>

Cherokee and Clay Co. (WFO Knoxville, TN): <https://www.weather.gov/wrh/climate?wfo=mrx>

APPENDIX A: ADDITIONAL TEMPERATURE DATA

Cooperative Observation Site Temperature Statistics: January 2026

Site	Avg. High (°F)	Avg. Low (°F)	Avg. Temp (°F)	Normal (°F)	Departure (°F)
Greenville	53.0	30.2	41.6	43.1	-1.5
Kinston	53.2	30.0	41.6	45.7	-4.1
Williamston	51.9	28.0	40.0	42.5	-2.6
Plymouth	52.8	31.0	41.9	43.8	-1.9
Bayboro	56.8	34.6	45.7	44.6	1.1
Manteo	49.8	36.1	43.0	43.1	-0.1

Normals are based on a period from 1991-2020. Red sites have missing data.

Maximum and Minimum Monthly Temperatures: January 2026

Site	Max High (°F)	Date Observed	Min Low (°F)	Date Observed
Beaufort (KMRH)	72	Jan 9	21	Jan 27
Hatteras (KHSE)	73	Jan 9-10	24	Jan 27
New Bern (KEWN)	76	Jan 9	18	Jan 27, 30
Greenville	78	Jan 10	17	Jan 31
Kinston	77	Jan 11	18	Jan 27
Williamston	77	Jan 11	17	Jan 27-28
Plymouth	74	Jan 9, 11	16	Jan 30
Bayboro	76	Jan 10	26	Jan 27-28, 30-31
Manteo	69	Jan 9	22	Jan 30

APPENDIX B: ADDITIONAL PRECIPITATION DATA

Cooperative Observation Site Precipitation Statistics: January 2026

Site	Total Precipitation (in.)	Normal (in.)	Departure (in.)
Greenville	2.90	3.91	-1.01
Kinston	1.77	3.74	-1.97
Williamston	2.04	3.69	-1.65
Plymouth	2.16	3.95	-1.79
Bayboro	1.95	4.01	-2.06

Sites in red have missing data in their record.

CoCoRaHS Monthly Accumulated Precipitation: January 2026

Site	County	Amount (in.)
Pantego 0.4 WSW	Beaufort	1.79
Morehead City 6.0 WNW	Carteret	2.15
Morehead City 2.9 WNW	Carteret	2.07
Pine Knoll Shores 0.3 NE	Carteret	2.04
Newport 1.0 N	Carteret	1.91
Beaufort 5.3 N	Carteret	1.90
Morehead City 0.6 NW	Carteret	1.86
Newport 1.7 SSE	Carteret	1.86
Beaufort 12.1 N	Carteret	1.84
Newport 2.3 SE	Carteret	1.77
Swansboro 3.7 NNE	Carteret	1.70

CoCoRaHS Monthly Accumulated Precipitation: January 2026

Site	County	Amount (in.)
Newport 0.2 SW	Carteret	1.69
Newport 2.5 W	Carteret	1.66
Cedar Point 0.9 WSW	Carteret	1.53
Cape Carteret 0.8 NE	Carteret	1.51
Emerald Isle 2.1 E	Carteret	1.45
Trent Woods 1.2 ENE	Craven	1.95
New Bern 3.8 S	Craven	1.87
Trent Woods 1.0 NNE	Craven	1.87
Brice Creek 0.9 WNW	Craven	1.85
New Bern 7.3 ESE	Craven	1.79
New Bern 1.3 NNE	Craven	1.76
Trent Woods 1.2 E	Craven	1.75
Bridgeton 0.3 SSE	Craven	1.71
New Bern 2.9 SSE	Craven	1.68
New Bern 5.3 SW	Craven	1.48
Havelock 1.9 SSE	Craven	1.12
Manteo 2.8 NW	Dare	2.91
Southern Shores 0.5 NNE	Dare	2.56
Kill Devil Hills 1.6 W	Dare	2.51
Duck 0.3 ENE	Dare	2.43
Rodanthe 1.0 SSE	Dare	2.10

CoCoRaHS Monthly Accumulated Precipitation: January 2026

Site	County	Amount (in.)
Mount Olive 2.4 SW	Duplin	1.91
Rose Hill 0.1 NNW	Duplin	1.71
Wallace 14.8 E	Duplin	1.44
Ayden 6.5 WNW	Greene	1.77
SQ Tower	Hyde	2.12
Ocracoke 0.2 ESE	Hyde	2.10
Ocracoke 0.6 SW	Hyde	2.00
Kinston 4.4 WNW	Lenoir	1.74
Kinston 5.1 WNW	Lenoir	1.68
Kinston 7.0 SW	Lenoir	1.67
Kinston 4.6 ESE	Lenoir	1.65
Jamesville 6.1 SW	Martin	1.71
Williamston 8.9 SSE	Martin	1.63
Jacksonville 4.2 WSW	Onslow	2.43
Sneads Ferry 1.2 SSW	Onslow	1.70
Swansboro 2.8 WSW	Onslow	1.63
Jacksonville 2.4 NNE	Onslow	1.59
Hubert 4.9 SE	Onslow	1.50
Lowland 0.2 SE	Pamlico	1.96
Merritt 1.5 WSW	Pamlico	1.83
Oriental 4.3 NNW	Pamlico	1.73

CoCoRaHS Monthly Accumulated Precipitation: January 2026

Site	County	Amount (in.)
Greenville 4.8 ESE	Pitt	2.05
Greenville 2.8 S	Pitt	1.95
Greenville 5.7 NW	Pitt	1.90
Greenville 2.8 ESE	Pitt	1.86
Winterville 3.5 W	Pitt	1.84
Fountain 0.1 NE	Pitt	1.83
Greenville 7.1 SSE	Pitt	1.74
Columbia 4.9 W	Tyrrell	2.32

CoCoRaHS inclusion in this table is based on a complete 30-day liquid precipitation record. Thank you to all observers!