

**PUBLISH DATE: MAY 18, 2026**

**EASTERN NORTH CAROLINA  
MONTHLY CLIMATE REPORT**

# **MARCH 2026**

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

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**National Weather Service**  
NEWPORT/MOREHEAD CITY, NC

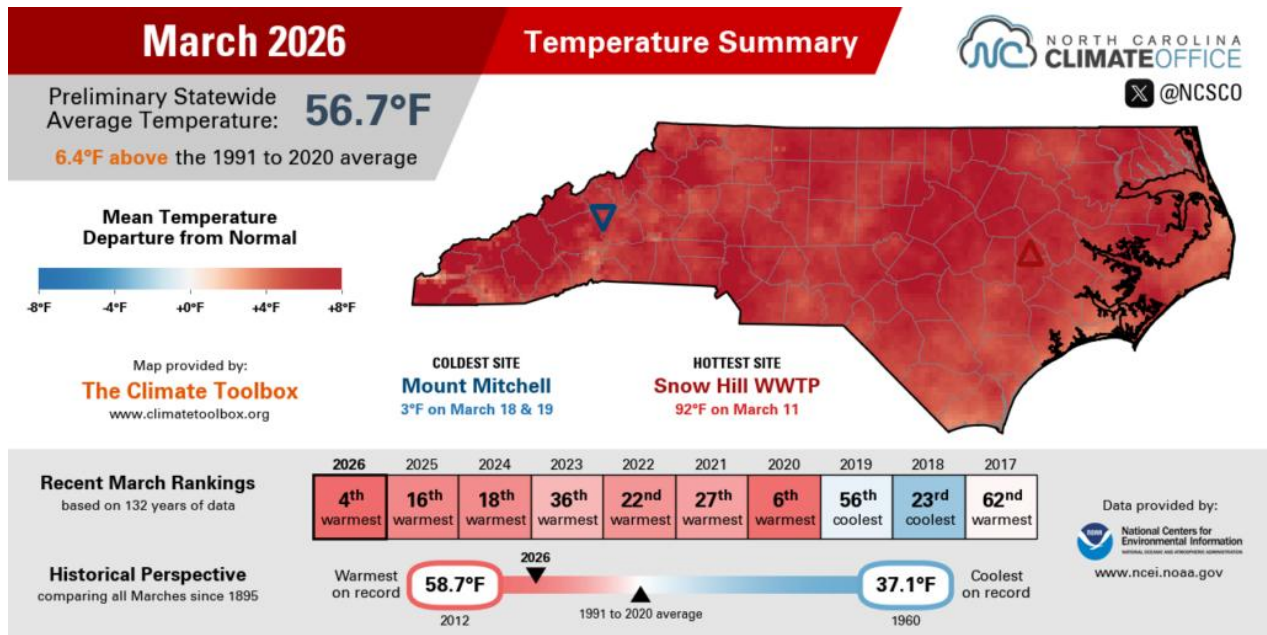
# MONTHLY SUMMARY

**M**arch further extended a streak of well below average precipitation across eastern NC. The first of the week of the month saw almost no precipitation as a persistent ridge sat over the southern United States. Beyond the first week, the pattern became more favorable for multiple fronts to pass across the region. Most of these fronts struggled to produce meaningful rainfall, the exception being a front on March 15-16 which brought up to 2+ inches of rainfall across portions of the inner coastal plain. More persistent dry weather returned for the back half of the month, and overall precipitation across our forecast area was 45-50% of normal. Drought conditions expanded in March, with all of eastern NC in Severe (D2) drought by the start of April.

Temperatures soared well above average in March across the state, with eastern NC following suite. Average temperatures across our 15 counties were 6.1°F above the 1991-2020 normal, most pronounced in the first week as the aforementioned ridge held strong. New Bern recorded a record high on March 11<sup>th</sup> and then tied a second on March 27<sup>th</sup>. Snow Hill would end up being the warmest location statewide, hitting a high of 92°F on March 11<sup>th</sup>.

# TEMPERATURES

Statewide temperatures across North Carolina soared well above average in March, according to the North Carolina State Climate Office. The average temperature statewide for the month was 56.7°F or a whopping 6.4°F above the 1991-2020 average. This was the 4<sup>th</sup> warmest March statewide since records began in 1895, with 132 years of data.



March 2026 Temperature Summary | Source: NC State Climate Office

Eastern North Carolina temperature anomalies were very close to the statewide average. Temperatures across our 15 counties were 6.1°F above the 1991-2020 average. Since their respective records began, March 2026 was the 10<sup>th</sup> warmest for Cape Hatteras and 5<sup>th</sup> warmest for New Bern. Snow Hill was the warmest location statewide, hitting a high of 92°F on March 11<sup>th</sup>.

## MHX Select Site Temperature Statistics: March 2026

Site	Avg. High (°F)	Avg. Low (°F)	Avg. Temp (°F)	Normal (°F)	Departure (°F)
Beaufort (KMRH)	67.0	48.5	57.8	54.0	3.8
Hatteras (KHSE)	64.9	49.9	57.4	53.8	3.6
New Bern (KEWN)	73.0	46.1	59.6	53.2	6.3

Normals are based on a period from 1990-2020.

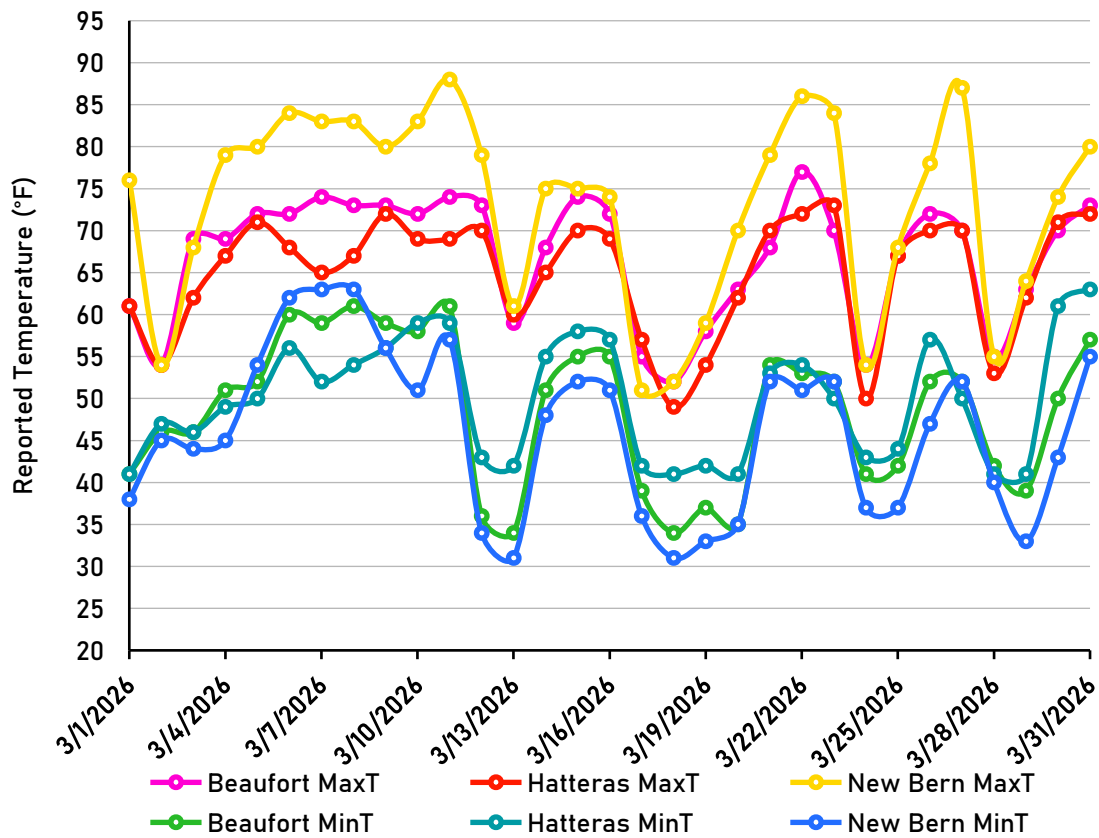
County-averaged statistics are presented in the following table. **Mean and departure calculations are based on the 1991-2020 climate normals.** Data courtesy of the National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI).

County	Avg. Temperature (°F)	Mean (°F)	Departure (°F)	Rank
Beaufort	59.0	52.6	6.4	4 W
Carteret	59.1	53.8	5.3	4 W
Craven	59.0	53.0	6.0	4 W
Dare	57.2	51.2	6.0	5 W
Duplin	58.7	52.7	6.0	5 W
Greene	57.9	52.0	5.9	5 W
Hyde	58.3	52.7	5.6	6 W
Jones	58.6	52.8	5.8	4 W
Lenoir	57.9	52.4	5.5	7 W
Martin	58.2	51.3	6.9	4 W
Onslow	59.1	53.3	5.8	5 W
Pamlico	59.2	53.5	5.7	4 W
Pitt	58.6	51.9	6.7	4 W
Tyrrell	58.1	51.7	6.4	4 W
Washington	58.5	51.7	6.8	4 W
<b>Area Average</b>	<b>58.5</b>	<b>52.4</b>	<b>6.1</b>	

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

The warmest period in March fell within the first 10 days of the month as persistent ridging sat over the the southeastern United States, promoting well above average temperatures across the Deep South, Gulf states, Carolinas, and the mid-Atlantic region. In New Bern alone there were 3 consecutive days where daily anomalies exceeded 20 degrees (Mar 6-8). A more unsettled pattern took hold for the remainder of March with multiple strong cold fronts passing through the region.

### Daily Maximum and Minimum Temperatures



The following records were set or tied at New Bern and Cape Hatteras in February:

**New Bern, NC**

Record High: Mar. 11<sup>th</sup> – 88°F (OR: 86°F / 2015)

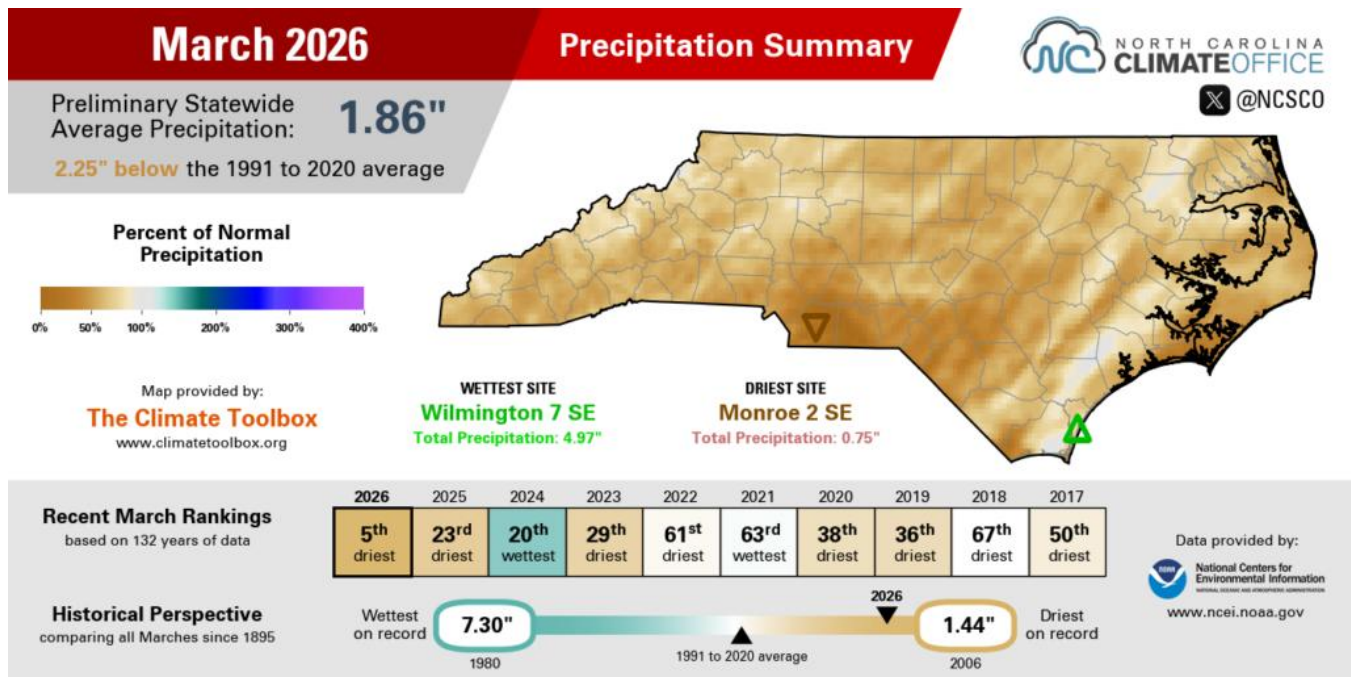
Tied Record High: Mar. 27<sup>th</sup> – 87°F (OR: 87°F / 1944)

**Cape Hatteras, NC**

None.

# PRECIPITATION

Analysis conducted by the North Carolina State Climate Office indicated average statewide precipitation was 1.86” for February, or 2.25” inches below average. This was the 5<sup>th</sup> driest March since records began in 1895.



March 2026 Precipitation Summary | Source: NC State Climate Office

Eastern North Carolina was close to the statewide average, with the average liquid accumulation across the MHX forecast area sitting at 1.83” (roughly 45% of the 1991-2020 normal). Based on preliminary data, New Bern had its 26<sup>th</sup> driest March on record, while Cape Hatteras had its 13<sup>th</sup> driest. New Bern experienced an 11-day streak of no precipitation (Mar 17-27), while Hatteras experienced a 7-day streak (Mar 1-7). Neither site saw any more than 2 consecutive days of precipitation.

### MHX Select Site Precipitation Statistics: March 2026

Site	Total Precipitation (in.)	Normal (in.)	Departure (in.)
Beaufort (KMRH)	0.80	3.31	-2.51
Hatteras (KHSE)	1.88	4.43	-2.55
New Bern (KEWN)	2.80	3.85	-1.05

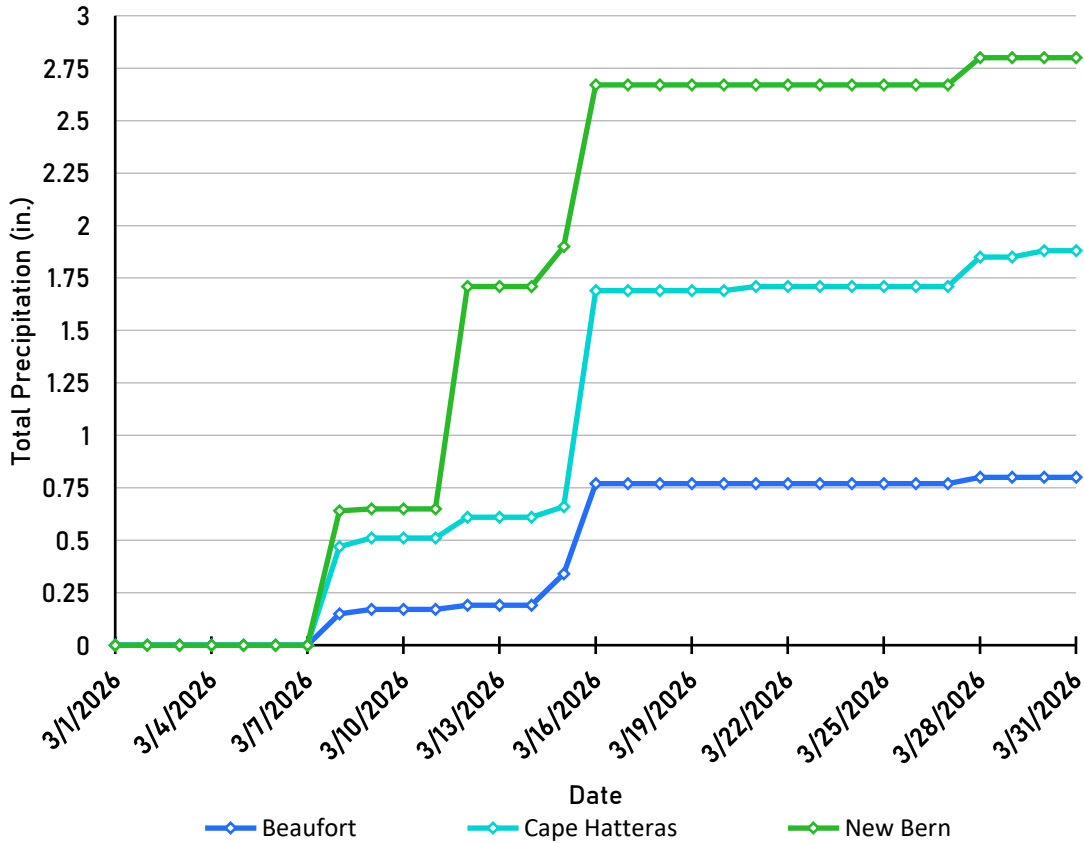
County-averaged statistics are presented in the following table. Mean and departure calculations are based on the 1991-2020 climate normals. Data courtesy of the National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI).

County	Avg. Accum. (in.)	Mean (in.)	Departure (in.)	Rank
Beaufort	1.95	3.90	-1.95	10 D
Carteret	1.73	3.74	-2.01	6 D
Craven	1.94	3.79	-1.85	8 D
Dare	1.80	3.89	-2.09	10 D
Duplin	1.46	3.87	-2.41	6 D
Greene	1.61	4.02	-2.41	9 D
Hyde	1.76	3.89	-2.13	5 D
Jones	1.94	3.86	-1.92	10 D
Lenoir	1.65	3.93	-2.28	8 D
Martin	2.06	4.05	-1.99	14 D
Onslow	1.92	3.89	-1.97	9 D
Pamlico	1.93	3.75	-1.82	9 D
Pitt	1.62	4.05	-2.43	6 D
Tyrrell	1.97	3.93	-1.96	9 D
Washington	2.15	3.99	-1.84	11 D
<b>Area Average</b>	<b>1.83</b>	<b>3.90</b>	<b>-2.07</b>	

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

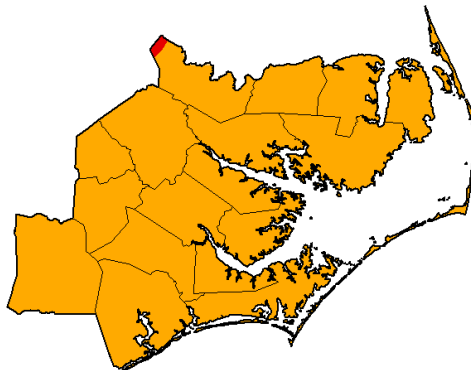
The first week of March across eastern NC, coinciding with the static ridge over the southern United States, saw no measurable precipitation at our primary climate sites. Beyond this first week, multiple cold fronts began to make their way across the region. Most of them were moisture starved, however – the most potent boundary passed through on Mar 15-16 which brought as much as 2 inches of rain across portions of the coastal plain. Overall precipitation across the region was 25-50% of normal, except across the Albemarle Peninsula which was 50-75% of normal.

### Monthly Accumulated Precipitation



With dry weather continuing, drought conditions further expanded across eastern NC in March. By April, all of our region was in Severe (D2) drought with a sliver of Extreme (D3) drought continuing to linger across far western Martin County.

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



**March 31, 2026**  
(Released Thursday, Apr. 2, 2026)  
Valid 8 a.m. EDT

	Drought Conditions (Percent Area)					
	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
<b>Current</b>	0.00	100.00	100.00	99.94	0.26	0.00
<b>Last Week</b> 03-24-2026	0.00	100.00	100.00	9.15	0.26	0.00
<b>3 Months Ago</b> 12-30-2025	6.51	93.49	21.82	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Start of Calendar Year</b> 01-01-2026	0.00	100.00	44.85	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Start of Water Year</b> 09-30-2025	0.09	99.91	44.72	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>One Year Ago</b> 04-01-2025	0.00	100.00	74.15	6.14	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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Western Regional Climate Center



[droughtmonitor.unl.edu](http://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: March 2026

Site	Avg. High (°F)	Avg. Low (°F)	Avg. Temp (°F)	Normal (°F)	Departure (°F)
Greenville	73.5	46.5	60.0	52.6	7.4
Kinston	72.2	44.7	58.5	54.5	4.0
Williamston	71.5	44.1	57.8	51.8	6.0
Plymouth	73.0	45.7	59.4	52.5	6.9
Bayboro	72.6	46.8	59.7	52.2	7.5
Manteo	63.6	46.5	55.1	50.6	4.5

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

Maximum and Minimum Monthly Temperatures: March 2026

Site	Max High (°F)	Date Observed	Min Low (°F)	Date Observed
Beaufort (KMRH)	77	Mar 22	34	Mar 13, 18
Hatteras (KHSE)	73	Mar 23	41	Mar 18, 20, 28-29
New Bern (KEWN)	88	Mar 11	31	Mar 13, 18
Greenville	90	Mar 11	28	Mar 18
Kinston	89	Mar 12	30	Mar 13, 18, 29
Williamston	88	Mar 12	30	Mar 13, 18, 29
Plymouth	86	Mar 11	29	Mar 19, 29
Bayboro	86	Mar 28	35	Mar 18-19, 29-30
Manteo	80	Mar 28	35	Mar 29-30

## APPENDIX B: ADDITIONAL PRECIPITATION DATA

Cooperative Observation Site Precipitation Statistics: March 2026

Site	Total Precipitation (in.)	Normal (in.)	Departure (in.)
Greenville	3.63	4.22	-0.59
Kinston	1.59	3.84	-2.25
Williamston	2.66	4.13	-1.47
Plymouth	2.40	4.16	-1.76
Bayboro	2.12	3.70	-1.58

Sites in red have missing data in their record.

CoCoRaHS Monthly Accumulated Precipitation: March 2026

Site	County	Amount (in.)
Swansboro 3.7 NNE	Carteret	1.37
Swansboro 2.7 NE	Carteret	1.10
Cedar Point 0.7 NNE	Carteret	0.58
Cape Carteret 1.5 NE	Carteret	0.89
Cedar Point 0.9 WSW	Carteret	0.81
Emerald Isle 2.3 WSW	Carteret	0.76
Emerald Isle 2.1 E	Carteret	0.80
Newport 2.5 W	Carteret	0.87
Newport 1.0 N	Carteret	1.00
Newport 0.2 SW	Carteret	0.87
Newport 1.7 SSE	Carteret	0.92

## CoCoRaHS Monthly Accumulated Precipitation: March 2026

Site	County	Amount (in.)
Newport 2.3 SE	Carteret	0.95
Morehead City 6.0 WNW	Carteret	1.23
Morehead City 4.7 W	Carteret	0.94
Pine Knoll Shores 0.3 NE	Carteret	0.90
Pine Knoll Shores 1.4 E	Carteret	0.71
Morehead City 0.6 NW	Carteret	0.77
Beaufort 5.3 N	Carteret	1.00
Beaufort 3.8 N	Carteret	1.19
Beaufort 0.5 W	Carteret	0.94
Trent Woods 1.3 WNW	Craven	2.78
Trent Woods 1.0 NNE	Craven	2.92
Trent Woods 1.2 ENE	Craven	2.72
Trent Woods 1.2 E	Craven	2.72
New Bern 3.8 S	Craven	3.27
New Bern 2.9 SSE	Craven	2.78
New Bern 1.3 NNE	Craven	2.65
New Bern 7.3 ESE	Craven	2.62
Duck 0.3 ENE	Dare	1.35
Duck 0.7 SSE	Dare	1.39
Southern Shores 0.5 NNE	Dare	1.68
Kill Devil Hills 2.6 NNW	Dare	2.36

## CoCoRaHS Monthly Accumulated Precipitation: March 2026

Site	County	Amount (in.)
Manteo 2.8 NW	Dare	2.84
Wanchese 1.0 ENE	Dare	1.44
Rodanthe 1.0 SSE	Dare	1.46
Waves 0.3 E	Dare	1.51
Buxton 0.3 ENE	Dare	1.98
Wallace 14.8 E	Duplin	3.91
Ayden 6.5 WNW	Greene	3.59
SQ Tower	Hyde	2.32
Ocracoke 0.6 SW	Hyde	1.15
Ocracoke 0.2 ESE	Hyde	1.24
La Grange 5.5 NE	Lenoir	3.10
Kinston 5.1 WNW	Lenoir	2.35
Kinston 1.2 NW	Lenoir	1.83
Kinston 4.6 ESE	Lenoir	1.04
Kinston 7.0 SW	Lenoir	1.18
Pink Hill 2.5 NE	Lenoir	1.21
Williamston 8.9 SSE	Martin	1.70
Jacksonville 3.3 W	Onslow	2.81
Jacksonville 1.0 NW	Onslow	2.93
Jacksonville 2.4 NNE	Onslow	2.96
Holly Ridge 3.7 E	Onslow	1.90

CoCoRaHS Monthly Accumulated Precipitation: March 2026

Site	County	Amount (in.)
<b>Sneads Ferry 1.2 SSW</b>	Onslow	1.65
<b>Swansboro 2.8 WSW</b>	Onslow	1.57
<b>Hubert 4.9 SE</b>	Onslow	1.57
<b>Lowland 0.2 SE</b>	Pamlico	2.60
<b>Oriental 4.3 NNW</b>	Pamlico	1.17
<b>Oriental 2.1 WSW</b>	Pamlico	1.04
<b>Fountain 0.1 NE</b>	Pitt	1.72
<b>Greenville 5.7 NW</b>	Pitt	3.06
<b>Winterville 3.5 W</b>	Pitt	2.30
<b>Greenville 2.8 S</b>	Pitt	1.58
<b>Greenville 5.0 SE</b>	Pitt	1.22
<b>Columbia 4.9 W</b>	Tyrrell	3.01

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