



Drought Information Statement for Eastern Nebraska and Western Iowa

Valid March 31st, 2026

Issued By: NWS Omaha/Valley

Contact Information: nws.omaha@noaa.gov or 1-800-452-9074

- This product will be updated only when drought conditions change significantly.
- Please see all currently available products at drought.gov/drought-information-statements
- Please visit weather.gov/Omaha/DroughtInformationStatement for previous statements.
- Please visit drought.gov/drought-status-updates?dews_region=41 for regional drought status updates

- **DROUGHT CONDITIONS CONTINUE TO EXPAND**

- **EXTREME DROUGHT (D3) WAS REINTRODUCED TO NORTHEAST NEBRASKA EARLY MARCH 2026**



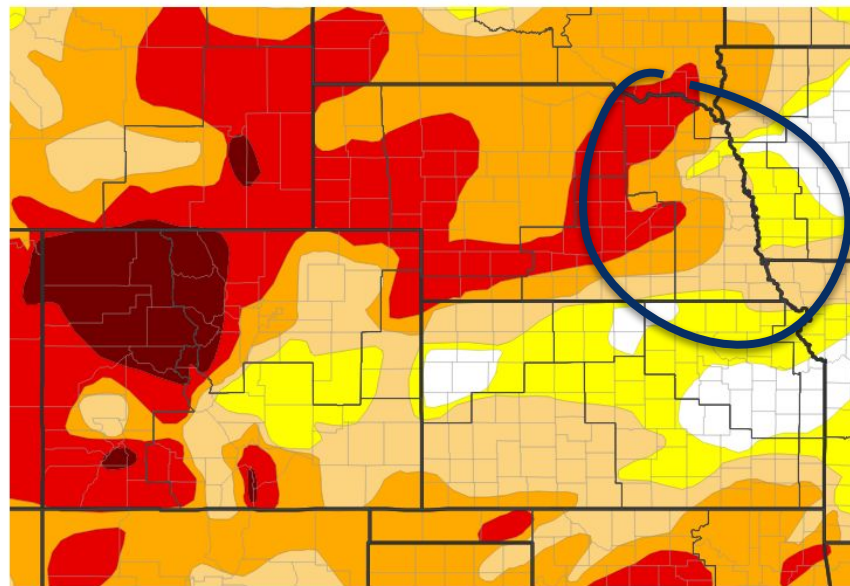


U.S. Drought Monitor

Link to the [latest U.S. Drought Monitor](#)

- The area was **drought free** in early September 2025 with only 2% of the area considered “abnormally dry”.
- Drought intensity and Extent
 - **D4 (Exceptional Drought)**: None
 - **D3 (Extreme Drought)**: D3 was reintroduced to the forecast area in early March and now accounts for 15% of the forecast area.
 - **D2 (Severe Drought)**: After seven months of hiatus, severe drought was reintroduced to northeast Nebraska in February.
 - **D1 (Moderate Drought)**: Most of the remainder of eastern Nebraska
 - **D0 (Abnormally Dry)**: The majority of western Nebraska is now labeled as D0 (abnormally dry).

U.S. Drought Monitor



U.S. Drought Monitor



Source(s): NDMC, NOAA, USDA, NASA; image courtesy of Drought.gov

Data Valid: 03/31/26



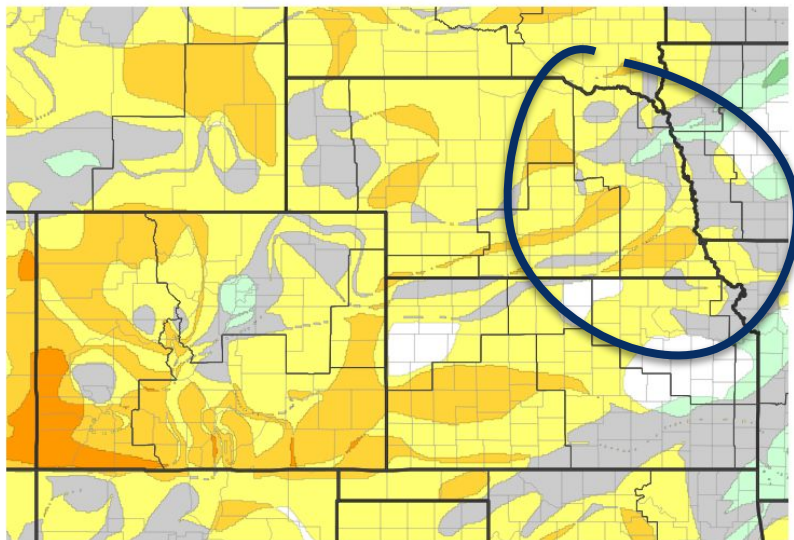


Recent Change in Drought Intensity

Link to the latest [1-week change map](#)

- Four Week Drought Monitor Class Change:
 - **Drought Worsened:** Much of eastern Nebraska with parts of southeastern Nebraska deteriorating by two categories over the course of four weeks.
 - **No Change:** Much of western Iowa
 - **Drought Improved:** A sliver of the northern forecast area
- Changes are more pronounced on longer timelines: View the [Change Maps](#)

U.S. Drought Monitor 4-Week Change Map



Drought Degradation



Drought Improvement



Source(s): NDMC, NOAA, USDA, NASA; image courtesy of Drought.gov

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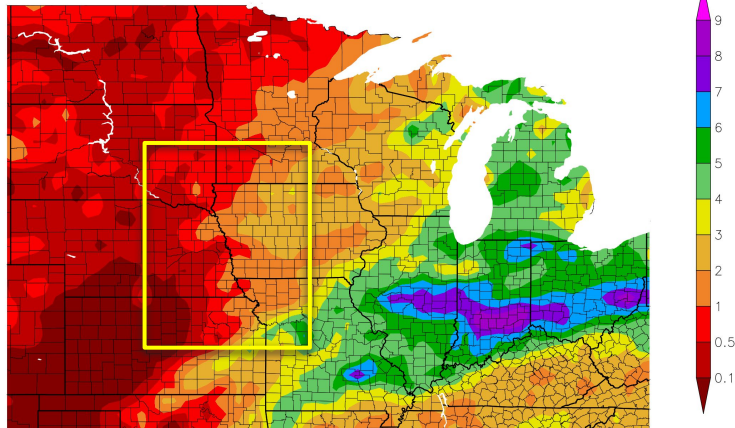




Precipitation

Over the Past 30 Days

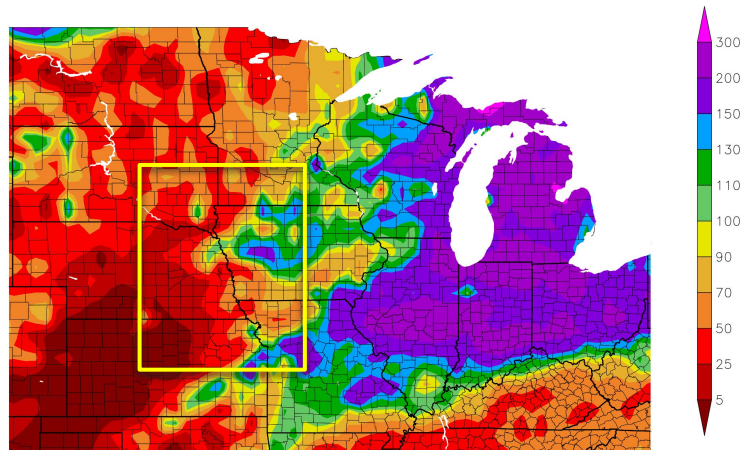
Precipitation (in)
3/3/2026 – 4/1/2026



Generated 4/2/2026 using provisional data.

ACIS Web Services

Percent of Normal Precipitation (%)
3/3/2026 – 4/1/2026



Generated 4/2/2026 using provisional data.

ACIS Web Services

- Despite being the dry season, drought has worsened across the area. With little to no snowpack, soils and fuels have dried out quickly. Significant rainfall on April 2nd is not shown here.
- 2026 precipitation through 3/31: Norfolk: 1.06" / Departure of -1.79"
Omaha: 2.00" / Departure of -1.49"
Lincoln: 1.61" / Departure of -1.56"



National Oceanic and
Atmospheric Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce

National Weather Service
Omaha/Valley, NE



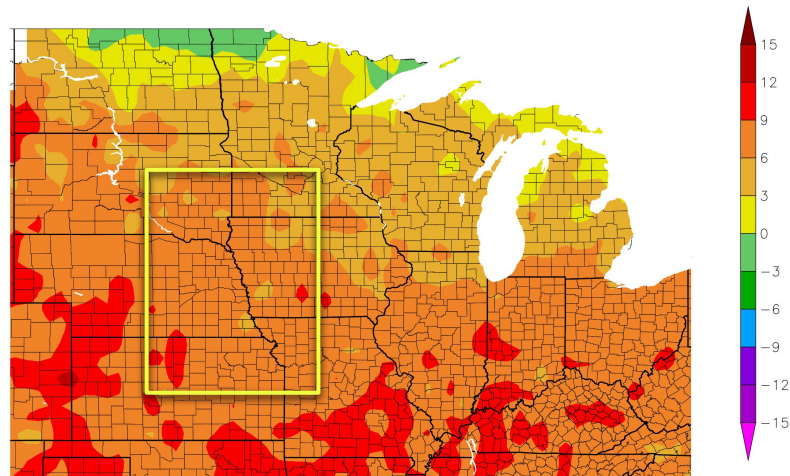
Temperature

Over the Past 30 Days

- Warmer than normal conditions had prevailed over the first quarter of 2026 with most locations running 4-5 degrees warmer than normal.
- Five of six official climate sites of the forecast area are on pace to record their second warmest year on record as of 3/31/26.

	Norfolk	Omaha	Lincoln
Average Temperature (1/1 to 3/31) vs 30 Year Average (1991-2020)	+5.1°	+4.7°	+4.5°

Departure from Normal Temperature (F)
3/3/2026 – 4/1/2026



Generated 4/2/2026 using provisional data.

ACIS Web Services





Summary of Impacts

Links: See/submit [Condition Monitoring Observer Reports \(CMOR\)](#) and view the [Drought Impacts Reporter](#)

Hydrologic Impacts

- The US Army Corps of Engineers says it expects runoff entering the Missouri River will be about 80 percent of normal. The Corps will be implementing some conservation measures, including reducing the "service level" for downstream navigation. ([prairierepublic.org](#))

Agricultural Impacts

- According to the USDA, the total U.S. cattle herd fell to 86.2 million head—the smallest since 1951. Years of persistent drought and soaring input costs had already forced many producers to liquidate their herds; the 2026 wildfires have now decimated the remaining capacity for those who stayed in the business. ([financialcontent.com](#))
- Local officials estimated that between 35,000 and 45,000 cattle in Nebraska alone had been displaced or lost. ([financialcontent.com](#))
- A lot of the cover crops that we seeded last fall didn't even come up." according to central Nebraska producer Clay Govier. ([brownfieldagnews.com](#))

Fire Hazard Impacts

- The state fire marshal issued a fire ban for the Farragut and Shenandoah fire districts of Fremont County, IA on March 22nd.
- Mills County, IA lifted its fire ban on April 2nd after the significant rainfall.

Other Impacts

- After one of the warmest Nebraska winters since the Dust Bowl and a drought across much of Nebraska, state forestry officials are urging homeowners to pay close attention to their trees. The Nebraska Forest Service, said trees that have been recently planted are at the greatest risk of drought stress. ([nebraskapublicmedia.org](#))

Mitigation Actions

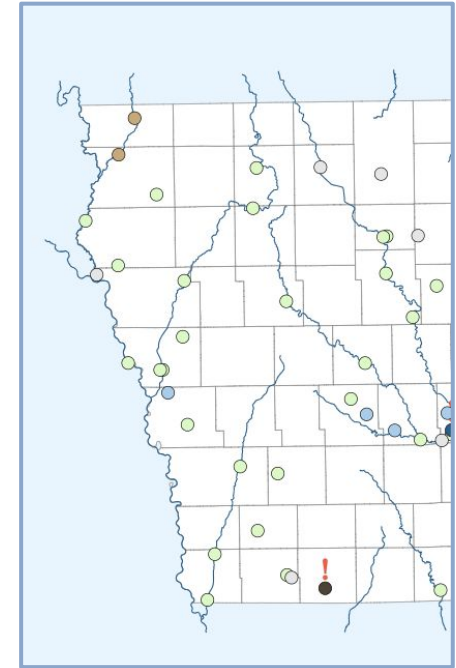
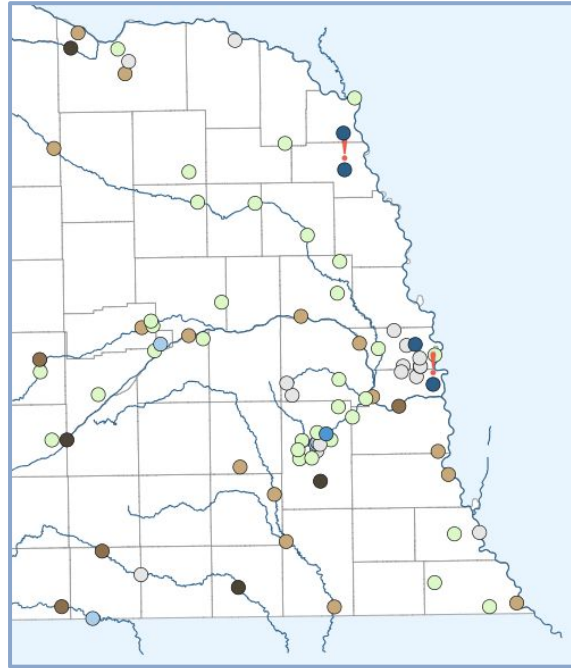
- None





Hydrologic Conditions and Impacts

- Generally speaking, Nebraska rivers and streams in the area are running below normal. Iowa's gauges are reading closer to normal.
- The April 1 and 2nd rainmaker will help hydrologic conditions... at least in the short-term.



0-5

Extremely below

5-10

Much below

10-25

Below

25-75

Normal

75-90

Above

90-95

Much above

95-100

Extremely above





Drought Outlook

The latest monthly and seasonal outlooks can be found on the [CPC homepage](#)

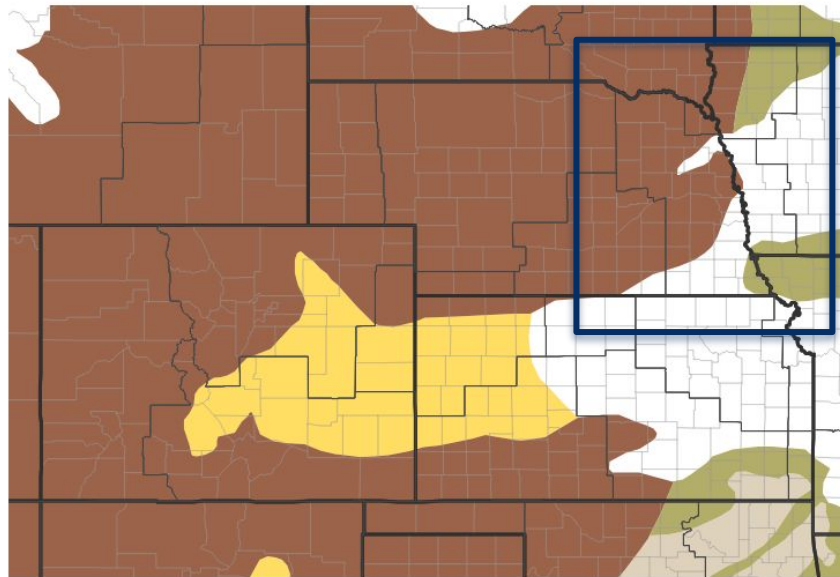
- The spring outlook for eastern Nebraska and western Iowa suggests no strong lean toward wetter/drier conditions or warmer/cooler conditions.
- For that reason, drought conditions are not forecast to improve or deteriorate in this part of the country beyond some forecast improvement along the Missouri state line.

Link to the latest:

[Climate Prediction Center Monthly Drought Outlook](#)

[Climate Prediction Center Seasonal Drought Outlook](#)

1-Month Drought Outlook for April 1, 2026–April 30, 2026



Drought Is Predicted To...



Source(s): Climate Prediction Center; image courtesy of Drought.gov

Last Updated: 03/31/26



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