



Drought Information Statement for Eastern Nebraska and Western Iowa

Valid May 19, 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

- **IMPROVEMENTS COMMON OVER THE PAST TWO MONTHS**

- **EXTREME DROUGHT (D3) WAS REINTRODUCED TO NORTHEAST NEBRASKA EARLY MARCH 2026 AND REMAINS THROUGH MID-MAY**



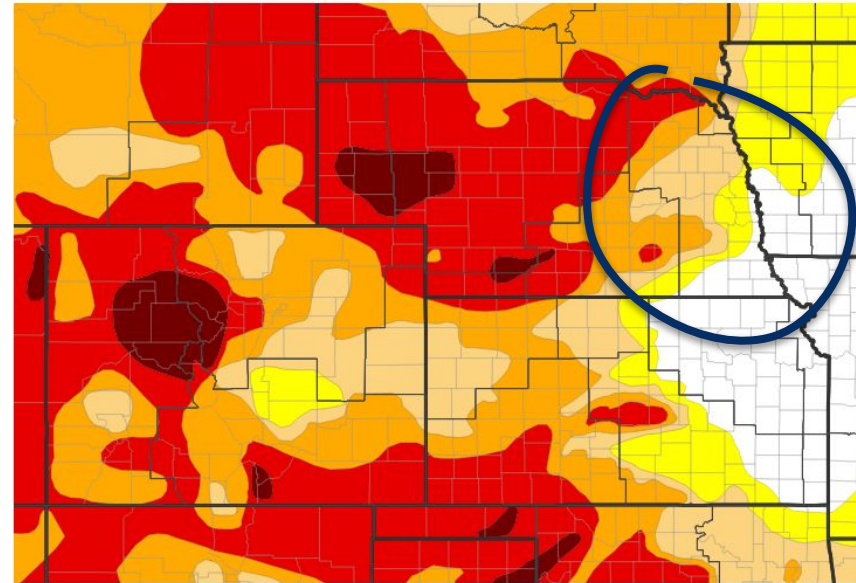


U.S. Drought Monitor

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’s footprint was reduced across the area, slipping from 15% on April 1st to 9% across the CWA today.
 - **D2 (Severe Drought)**: D2 in northeast Nebraska remains unchanged, but much of Lancaster and Seward counties were removed from the designation
 - **D1 (Moderate Drought)**: Most of the remainder of east-central and northeastern Nebraska
 - **D0 (Abnormally Dry)**: Much of western Iowa and far southeastern Nebraska were removed from the D0 (abnormally dry) category this week.

U.S. Drought Monitor



U.S. Drought Monitor



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

Data Valid: 05/19/26



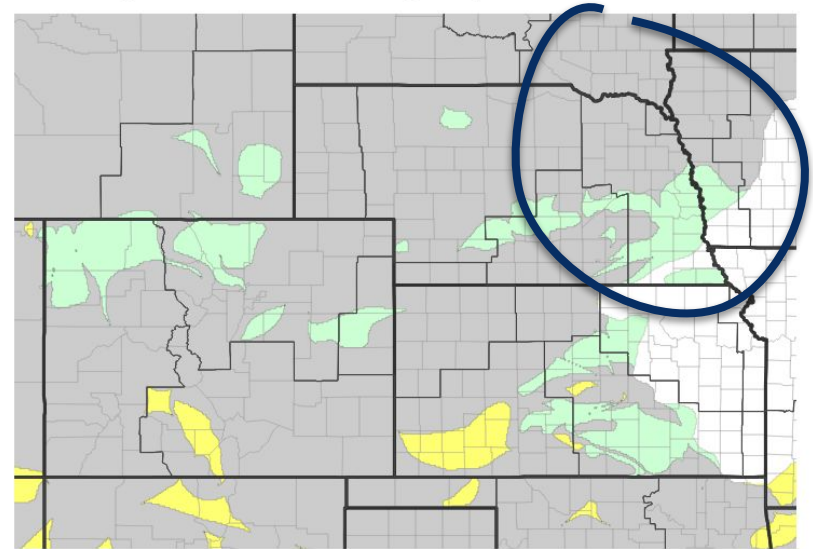


Recent Change in Drought Intensity

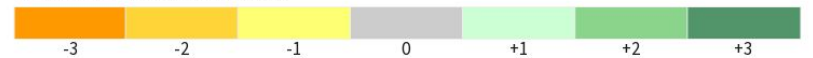
Link to the latest [1-week change map](#)

- One Week Drought Monitor Class Change:
 - **Drought Worsened:** None
 - **No Change:** Slivers of the southeastern portions of the forecast area
 - **Drought Improved:** A majority of the southern half of the area where precipitation has been accumulating at a higher than normal rate over the past six months and especially this week where there were reports of flash flooding.
- Changes are more pronounced on longer timelines: View the [Change Maps](#)

U.S. Drought Monitor 1-Week Change Map



Drought Change Since Last Week



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

Data Valid: 05/19/26

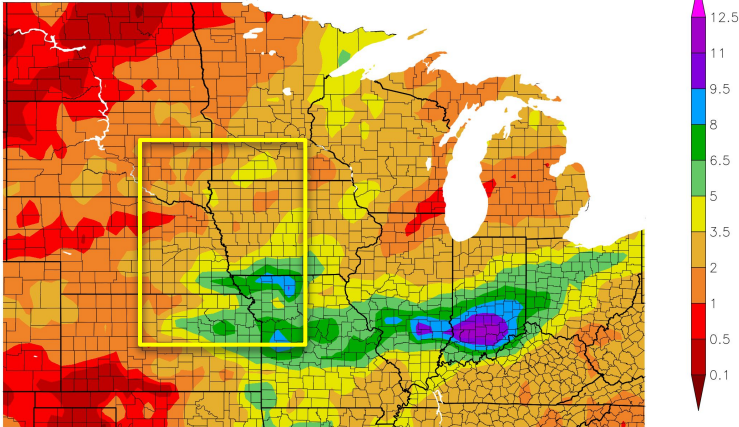




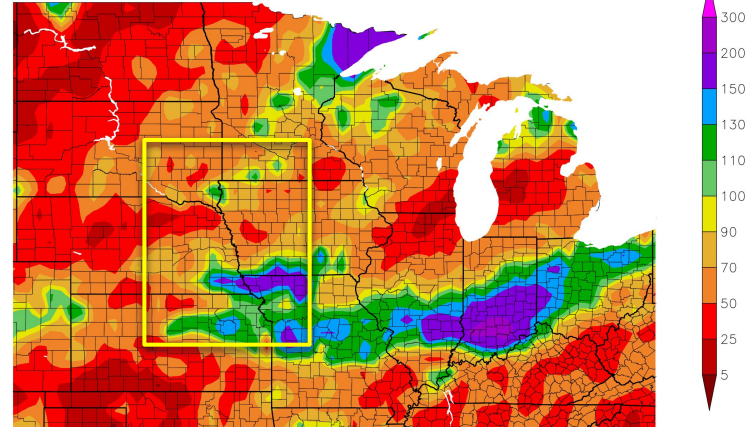
Precipitation

Over the Past 30 Days

Precipitation (in)
4/21/2026 - 5/20/2026



Percent of Normal Precipitation (%)
4/21/2026 - 5/20/2026



- Far southeastern Nebraska and much of Iowa have recorded a surplus of moisture over the past 30/60/90/120 days leading to significant improvements there.
- Northeast Nebraska continues to fall short.

	2026 Precip	Departure	30 Day Precip
Norfolk	4.77"	-3.24"	1.68"
Omaha	7.59"	-2.02"	2.86"
Lincoln	7.43"	-1.57"	4.47"





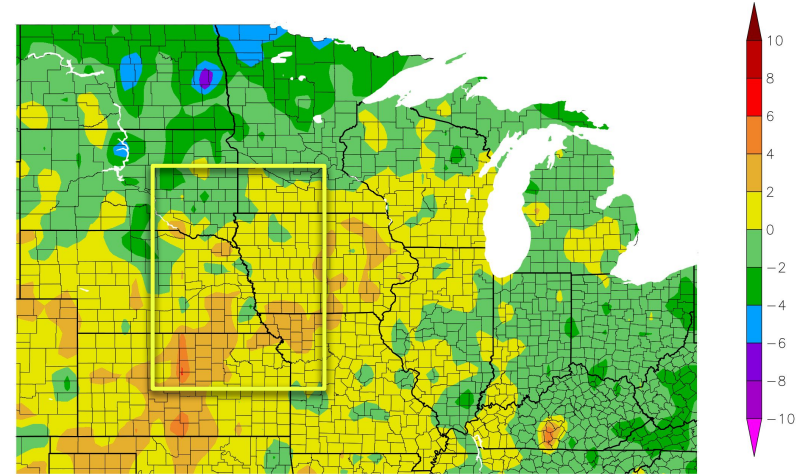
Temperature

Over the Past 30 Days

- Temperatures for May 2026 have been relatively close to normal overall with warmer conditions generally over the southern half of the area.
- For 2026 as a whole, all three major climate sites are running over three degrees warmer than normal. This puts each city on pace for a top ten warmest year.

	Norfolk	Omaha	Lincoln
Average Temperature (5/1 to 5/20) vs 30 Year Average (1991-2020)	-1.3°	-1.0°	+0.2°

Departure from Normal Temperature (F)
4/21/2026 – 5/20/2026



Generated 5/21/2026 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 reports that April runoff entering the Missouri River above Sioux City is 51 percent of average. The Corps will be implementing conservation measures, including reducing the "service level" for downstream navigation. ([usace.army.mil](https://www.usace.army.mil))

Agricultural Impacts

- Pasture and range conditions in Nebraska continue to be the worst across the country with only 4% of pastures in good-to-excellent condition. Widespread wildfires have left much of the Nebraska Sandhills without grass for several thousand cows. ([dtnpf.com](https://www.dtnpf.com))
- U.S. farmers this year will harvest their smallest wheat crop since 1972, as a severe drought in the U.S. Plains has curbed production of hard red winter wheat, the largest variety grown in the U.S., according to the Department of Agriculture. ([agweb.com](https://www.agweb.com))

Fire Hazard Impacts

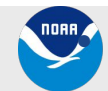
- Over 800,000 acres burned in Nebraska, a record for the state, with one blaze in mid-March, the Morrill Fire, accounting for over 600,000 acres. ([nebraskapublicmedia.org](https://www.nebraskapublicmedia.org))
- Burn bans across most of Nebraska and portions of Iowa were lifted on April 2nd after significant 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](https://www.nebraskapublicmedia.org))

Mitigation Actions

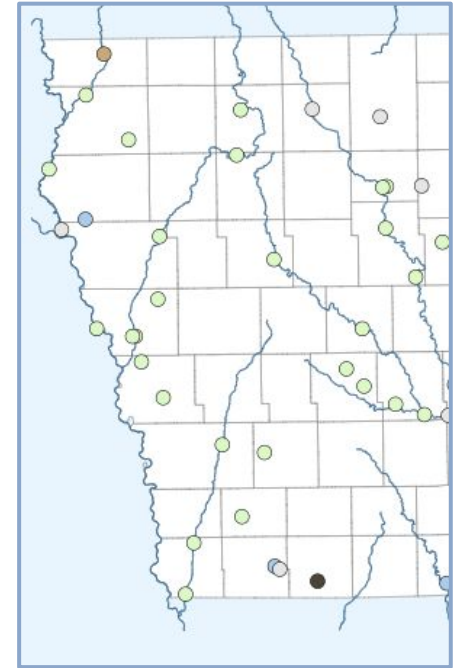
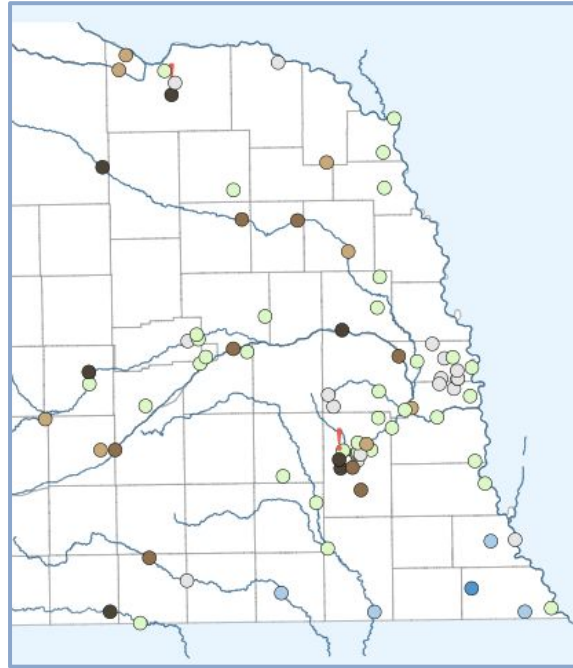
- The Platte Basin Coalition, the Lower Platte River Drought Consortium, the Republican River Natural Resources Districts (NRDs), and the Nebraska Department of Water, Energy and Environment (DWEE) are urging the public to utilize water conservation best practices due to ongoing drought conditions across Nebraska. ([centralnebraskatoday.com](https://www.centralnebraskatoday.com))





Hydrologic Conditions and Impacts

- Most gauges are reporting normal streamflow, but central and northeastern Nebraska show dry areas.
- As reflected in the current drought monitor, hydrologic conditions have improved across the state of Iowa.





Drought Outlook

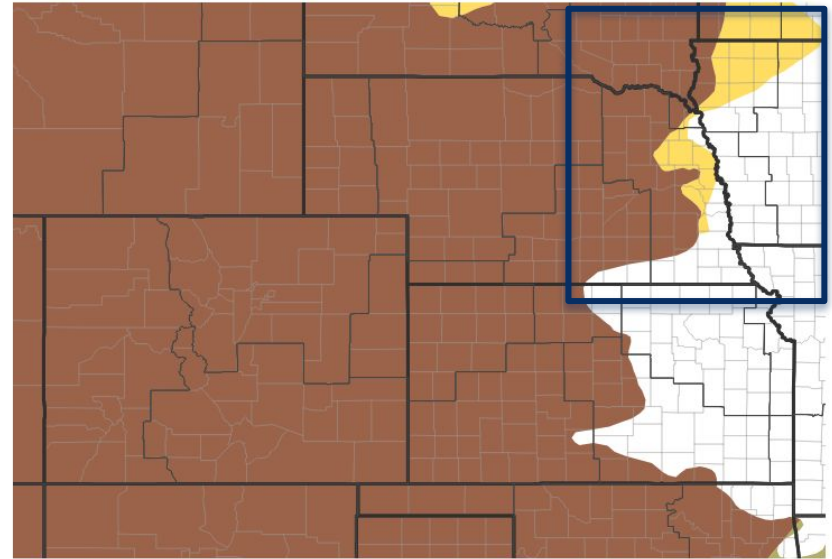
The latest monthly and seasonal outlooks can be found on the [CPC homepage](#)

- While the bulk of the Central and Northern Plains are expected to see drought conditions persist, the outlook for May through July suggests drought expansion across our area.
- The Climate Prediction Center's (cpc.ncep.noaa.gov) precipitation outlook for June-July-August 2026 leans dry across the area.

Link to the latest:

[Climate Prediction Center Monthly Drought Outlook](#)
[Climate Prediction Center Seasonal Drought Outlook](#)

Seasonal (3-Month) Drought Outlook for April 30, 2026–July 31, 2026



Drought Is Predicted To...



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

Last Updated: 04/30/26

