



U.S. HAS COOLER SEPTEMBER AFTER NEAR RECORD WARM SUMMER, GLOBAL SEPTEMBER TEMPERATURE FOURTH WARMEST ON RECORD

September 2006 was cooler than average for the continental U.S., providing relief from the second-warmest summer on record, according to scientists at NOAA's National Climatic Data Center in Asheville, N.C. September was the first cooler-than-average month for the continental U.S. since May 2005. Drought conditions also improved in some areas of the nation, with nationally averaged precipitation above average during September. The global temperature remained well above average.

U.S. Temperature Highlights

- The September 2006 temperature for the contiguous United States (based on preliminary data) was 0.7°F (0.4°C) below the 20th century average of 65.4°F (18.6°C). This was the first cooler-than-average month since May 2005, based on the century-scale average. The rarity of below-average national temperatures is reflective of the overall long-term warming trend for the nation.
- The January-September 2006 combined temperature is warmest on record. The previous record warm January-September happened in 2000.
- The September temperature was below average in 25 states of the continental U.S., while above-average temperatures occurred in only five (Vermont, Montana, Idaho, Washington, and Oregon).
- September temperatures for Alaska averaged at 48.6° F and were warmer than average, 2.7° F (1.5°C) above the 1971-2000 mean (45.9°), the 11th warmest September since statewide records began in 1918.

U.S. Precipitation Highlights

- Wetter-than-average conditions in September occurred from the northern High Plains to the Southwest and from New York to the mid-Mississippi Valley. Overall, precipitation was above average for the nation.
- Kentucky tied its September precipitation record with 8.02 inches of rain.
- A wetter-than-average summer monsoon season for much of the Southwest ended in September. Precipitation during the past few months ended drought in New Mexico and helped reduce drought severity in other parts of the region. However, below-average reservoirs and other longer term hydrological effects remained widespread.
- According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, 33 percent of the continental U.S. was in moderate to exceptional drought at the end of September, a decrease of 11 percent since the end of August.

- Severe-to-exceptional drought remained across large parts of Arizona, southern Oklahoma to south Texas, areas of the northern high Plains, the northern Rockies and northern Minnesota.
- Drier-than-average conditions across the Far West contributed to the continuation of a very active wildfire season for the nation. By early October, more than 9 million acres, mostly in the continental U.S., had burned since the beginning of the year, according to the National Interagency Fire Center. This exceeded the previous record for an entire year, set in 2005 when 8.7 million acres burned, much of it in Alaska.

Global Highlights

- It was the fourth warmest September and fifth warmest year-to-date period since records began in 1880 for global land- and ocean-surface temperatures (1.01°F/0.56°C, 092°F/0.51°C above the 20th century mean). September land surface temperatures were second warmest, while ocean surface temperatures were third warmest in the 127-year record. An El Nino episode began in September as ocean temperatures in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific continued a recent warming trend.

In 2007, NOAA, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, celebrates 200 years of science and service to the nation. From the establishment of the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey in 1807 by Thomas Jefferson to the formation of the Weather Bureau and the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries in the 1870s, much of America's scientific heritage is rooted in NOAA.

The agency is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and information service delivery for transportation, and by providing environmental stewardship of the nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners and more than 60 countries to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes.

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