

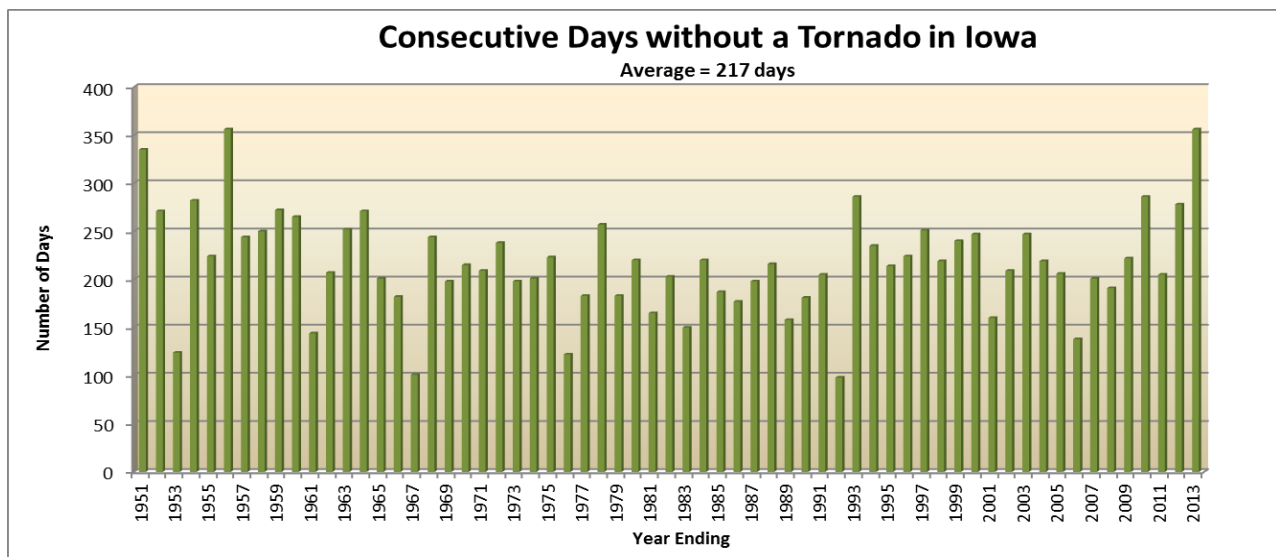
Record Set for Most Consecutive Days without a Tornado in Iowa

By: Craig Cogil

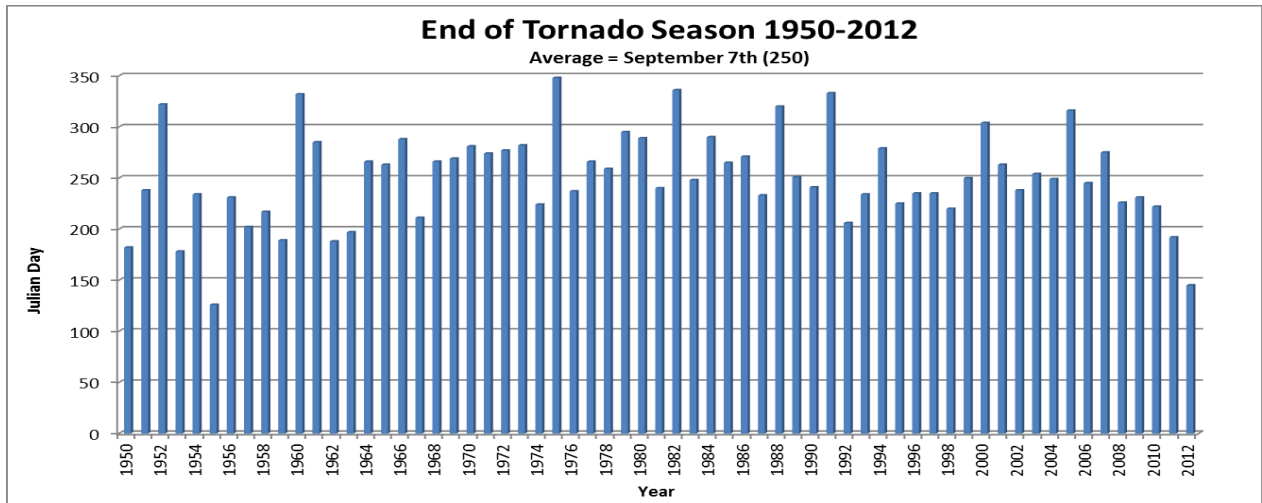
The last time a tornado occurred in Iowa was on May 24th, 2012 in Fayette County about 2 miles north of the town of Hawkeye. At the end of Wednesday, May 15th, it had been 356 days since this tornado occurred. This sets a new record for the most consecutive number of days since the last tornado in the state of Iowa. The previous record occurred between the dates of May 5, 1955 and April 26, 1956. Every day beyond Wednesday will continue to extend the streak with the next possible milestone being reached at days end May 23rd when an entire year would pass with no tornado.

This streak is rather impressive in its own right. However, reporting standards in the 1950s were not nearly as robust and comprehensive as the present. Digital technology and nearly ubiquitous use of cell phones and other communication devices along with education, storm chasing, and widespread spotter networks among other things have facilitated the observing and reporting of tornadoes. Therefore, the likelihood of having a tornado occur and not being observed or even observed but not reported was much greater in the 1950s than what would be expected today which makes the current streak even more impressive.

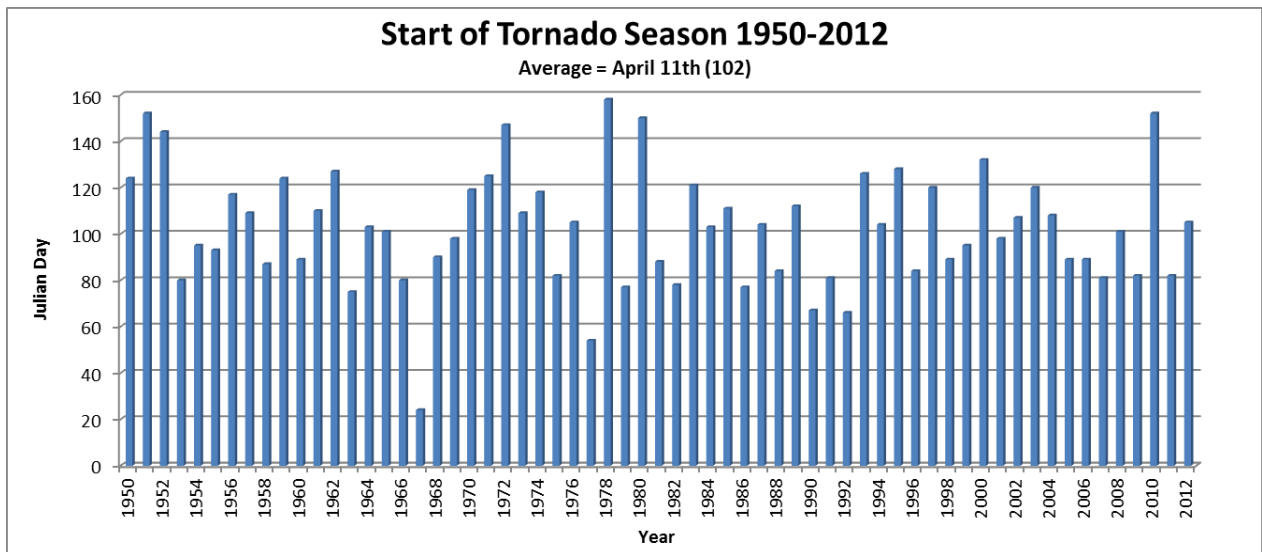
The following graph shows the number of consecutive days without a tornado in Iowa extending from the 1950-1951 cessation period to the 2012-2013 cessation period. The cessation period is considered the time from when the last tornado occurred in first year to the time when the first tornado occurred in the next year. Therefore, in the 1950-1951 (labeled just 1951 in the chart), there were 335 days between the last tornado of 1950 and the first tornado of 1951.



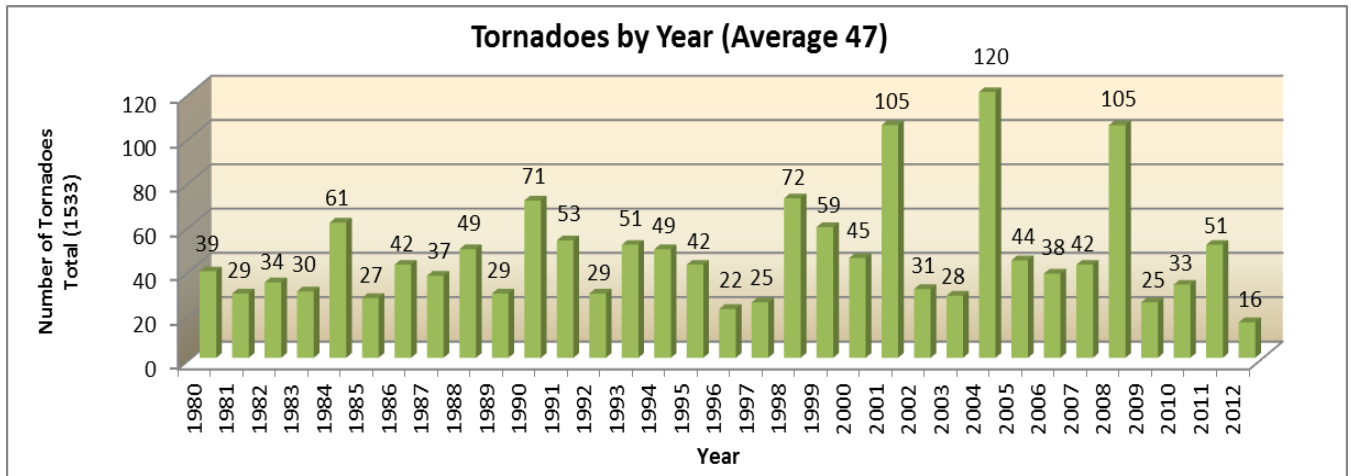
This record is partly due to the fact that the end of the tornado season in 2012 was so early. In fact, it was the 2nd earliest ending to any tornado (May 24th, 2012) season behind only 1955 (May 6th, 1955). Please see the chart below to see how the ending of the tornado seasons have varied over the years. The average date for the last tornado in any given year from 1950-2012 was September 7th (Julian Day 250).



Also included below is a graph of the start of the tornado season from 1950-2012. 2013 is not included since the season has yet to begin. The earliest start to a year stands out very distinctly in 1967 when 13 tornadoes occurred on January 24th. The latest start on record was June 7th, 1978. 2013 is now the 7th latest start on record as of May 15th. The average start for the period of 1950-2012 is April 11th (Julian Day 102)



2012 also had the fewest tornadoes since 1963 when only 15 occurred. However, tornado numbers early in the period of record may suffer given some of the technological and reporting deficiencies as discussed above. The fewest tornadoes during the period of record was 4 which occurred in 1950 which was the first year records were published nationally for tornadoes. The chart below shows the number of tornadoes in Iowa since 1980.



Average number of tornadoes (1980-2012) year-to-date through May 15th is 14

Average number of tornadoes (1980-2012) for the entire year is 47

Earliest beginning of a tornado season (1950-2012) is January 24, 1967

Earliest beginning of a tornado season (1980-2012) is March 6, 1992

Earliest ending of a tornado season (1950-2012) is May 6, 1955

Earliest ending of a tornado season (1980 - 2012) is May 24, 2012

Latest beginning of a tornado season (1950-2012) is June 7, 1978

Latest beginning of a tornado season (1980 - 2012) is June 1, 2010

Latest ending of a tornado season (1950-2012) is December 14, 1975

Latest ending of a tornado season (1980-2012) is December 2, 1982

Entire period of record for published National Climate Data Center tornado is 1950-present.