

September 2016 Climate Summary – Georgia

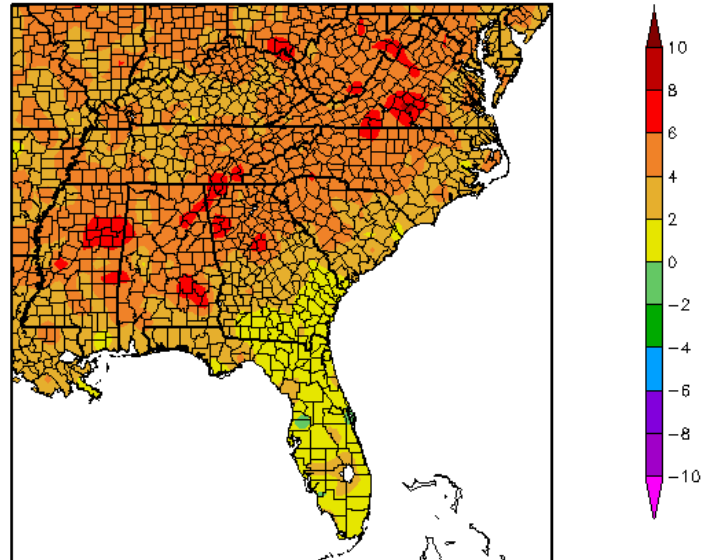
Lauren Lindsey, *Service Climatologist*
 State of Georgia Climate Office

The month of September in Georgia was once again characterized by above normal average monthly temperatures statewide, a streak that has been ongoing since as far back as June. Many major climate sites recorded average September temperatures more than 3°F above normal. The first month of meteorological fall also consisted of generally below normal precipitation totals in the northern half of the state where drought conditions intensified, while Tropical Storms Hermine and Julia brought rainfall to parts of south and coastal Georgia.

Atlanta’s September average temperature was 78.8° (+5.3°) and tied for 3rd warmest on record. Athens recorded a monthly average temperature of 77.7° (+4.4°) and had its 8th warmest September on record. Macon, Columbus, Augusta, and Savannah also saw quite warm temperatures this month with 78.6° (+3.6°), 80.3° (+3.7°), 77.5° (+2.9°), and 79.6° (+2.7°), respectively. St. Simons Island had a monthly average temperature of 79.4° (+1.3°) and tied a daily maximum temperature record on September 19th when the temperature reached 91°.

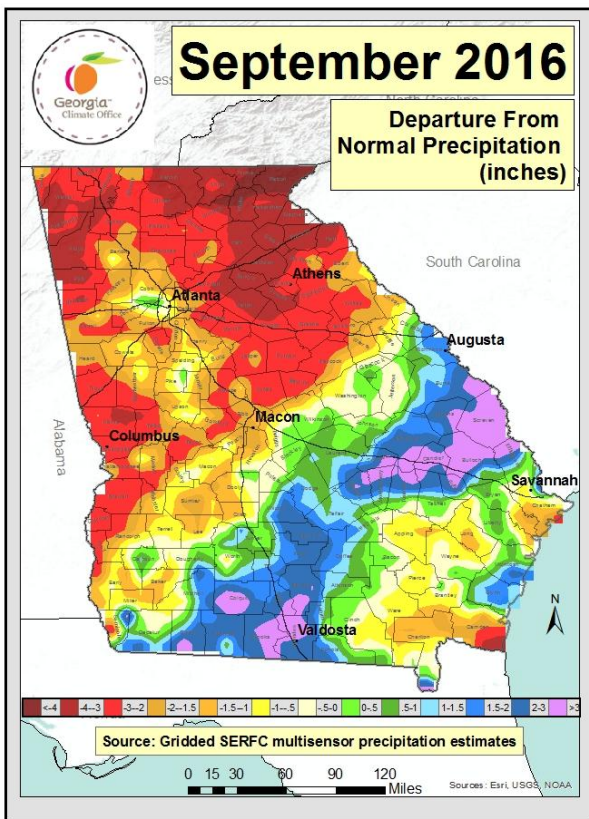
There were noteworthy precipitation deficits for September across much of north Georgia, but since fall is climatologically a drier time of year, most sites did not rank highly for least amounts of

Departure from Normal Temperature (F)
 9/1/2016 – 9/30/2016



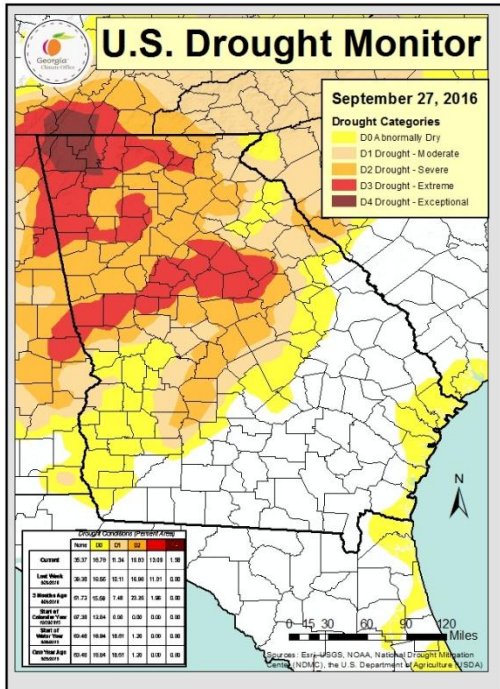
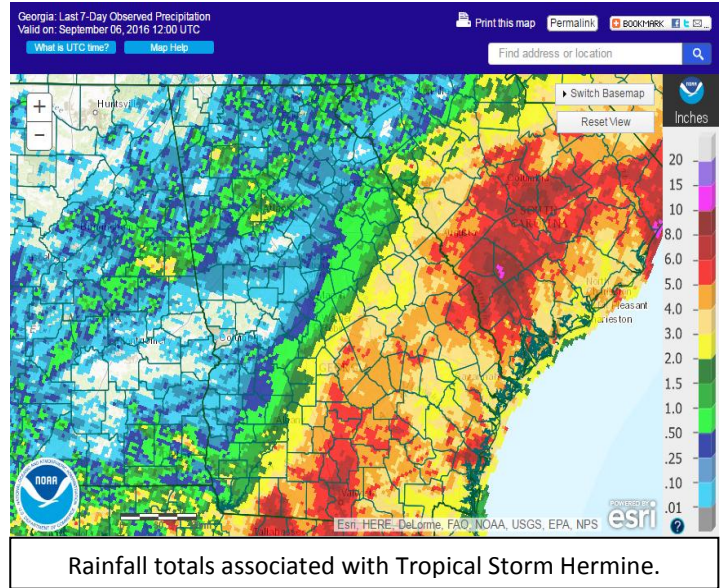
precipitation this month. Atlanta recorded 3.43” (-1.04”), Athens saw 1.22” (-2.72”) total precipitation, Macon recorded 2.18” (-1.41”), and Columbus saw 0.75” (-2.31”) this month. Climate sites that recorded above normal September precipitation included Augusta (4.58” (+1.36”)), Savannah (4.99” (+0.41”)), and St. Simons Island (8.21” (+2.45”). On September 2nd 4.20” of rain fell in Augusta due to Tropical Storm Hermine, setting a new daily rainfall record and breaking the old record of 1.12” in 2014. In St. Simons Island, another daily maximum rainfall record was set when 4.43” fell on September 13th as a result of heavy rain from Tropical Storm Julia, breaking the old record of 2.03” set in 2002.

Hurricane activity in the Atlantic basin ramped up in September causing impacts in south and coastal Georgia. Hurricane Hermine made landfall on Florida’s Gulf Coast as a category one storm in the early morning hours of September 2nd. Hermine tracked northeastward and weakened significantly as it crossed through South Georgia, although copious rainfall fell in



much of southeast Georgia. In addition to abundant rainfall totals during its course, Hermine also caused several injuries and downed trees related to two EF-1 tornadoes reported in Liberty County and Skidaway Island on September 1st. Interestingly, Tropical Storm Julia formed on September 13th while over northeast Florida, making it the first tropical cyclone on record to be named while over land in Florida. This storm brought isolated high rainfall amounts to portions of South Georgia and several reports of damaging winds. There were little to no other storm reports in September than the ones associated with these tropical systems.

Throughout the month, the United States Drought Monitor showed that all levels of drought increased in Georgia except coastal Georgia where D0 (abnormally dry) conditions were eliminated. D4



(exceptional drought) conditions were introduced in northwest Georgia while D3 (extreme drought) conditions expanded south and east of the metro Atlanta area, where dry conditions degraded rapidly in September. D2 (severe drought) and D1 (moderate drought) conditions expanded into south central Georgia and along the Alabama border.

According to the Climate Prediction Center, the ENSO Alert System Status is not active at this time, and ENSO-neutral conditions are present. Equatorial sea surface temperatures are near or below average in the east-central and eastern Pacific Ocean. ENSO-neutral conditions are slightly favored (between 55-60%) during the upcoming Northern Hemisphere fall and winter 2016-17. The three-month seasonal outlooks show that there is an equal chance for above, near, or below normal temperatures in Georgia during October, November, and December.

