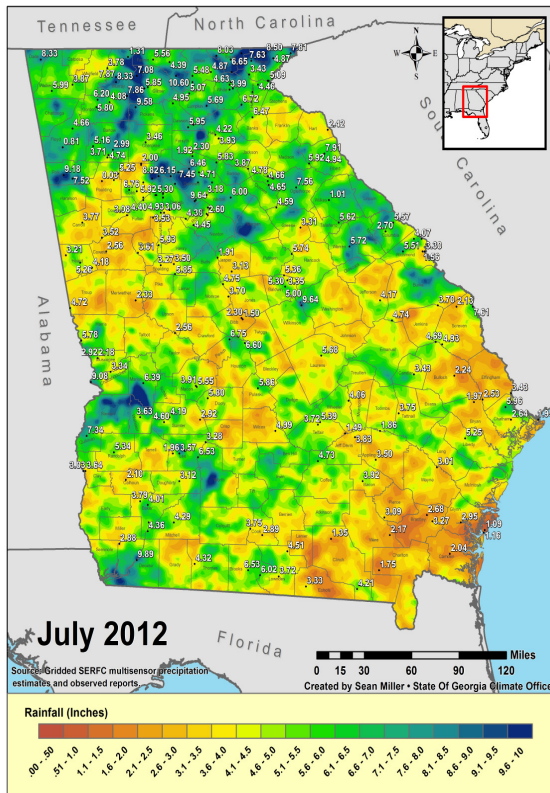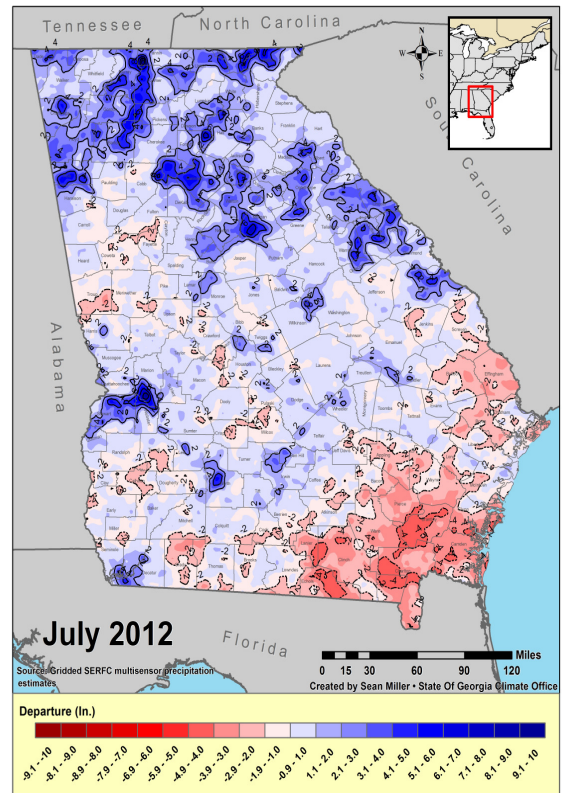# July 2012 Climate Summary - Georgia

Prepared by Nyasha Dunkley, *Deputy State Climatologist*
State of Georgia Climate Office

The month of July was characterized by a typical summertime pattern of scattered afternoon and evening thunderstorms due to daytime heating. A Bermuda High Pressure system in the Atlantic Ocean extended across the region, slightly suppressing convection and allowing rainfall totals to remain below normal for the month. This negative departure was a slight relief for the far southern and southeastern areas of the state that received record rainfall from tropical activity in June. St. Simons Island and Alma, GA both observed below normal precipitation (-2.81 and –1.41 inches, respectively), while Augusta, GA continued its dry streak, falling 2.79 inches below the July average. Although the Atlanta airport recorded 18 days of light rain during the month, it still fell 1.74 inches below the average of 5.27. Athens, GA actually recorded above normal precipitation for the month, setting a record daily maximum rainfall of 2.49 inches on the 11th.
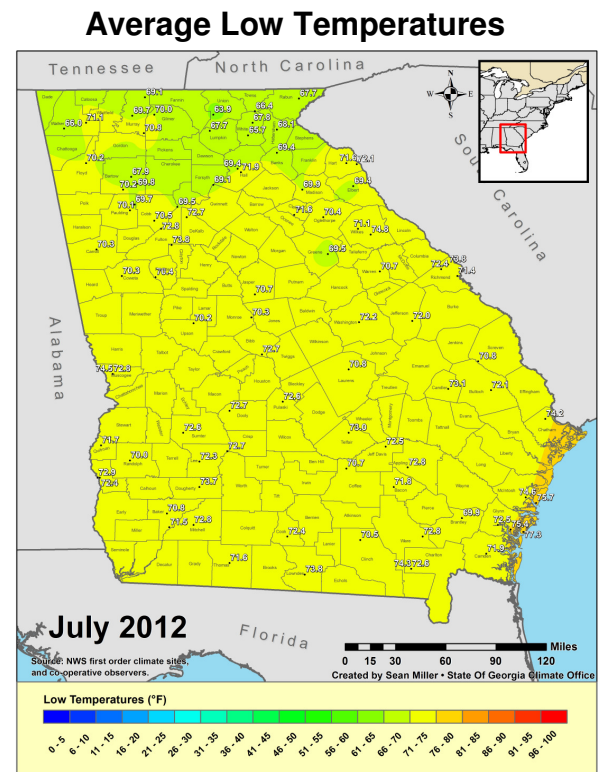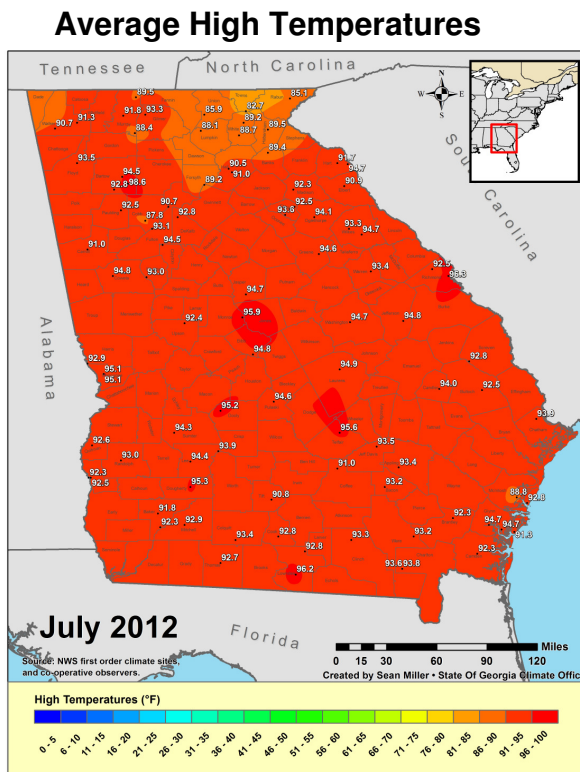
Observed Rainfall

Rainfall Departures

July temperatures were above normal for much of the state, with periods of strong warm air advection and increase in evaporation pushing temperatures above the century mark in many locations. Several cities set temperature records on July 1st, in conjunction with the intense heat wave that hit the U.S. at the end of June. Athens and Macon both set new record highs of 108°F degrees on the 1st, breaking the old records set in 1927 and 1954, respectively. Augusta, Columbus, and Atlanta also all set daily records topping the century mark on the 1st. Another period of hot temperatures toward the end of the month allowed Alma, GA to set a daily record high of 102°F on the 25th and 101°F on the 26th. Columbus, GA tied a record high of 99°F on the 26th as well. The Southeast was not the only region to experience hot July temperatures. NOAA noted the average temperature for the contiguous U.S. during July was 77.6°F, making it the hottest July and hottest month of record for the nation. The previous warmest July was in 1936, when the U.S. average temperature was 77.4°.

Average High Temperatures

Average Low Temperatures

A strong dome of High pressure, light winds and dry, stable, subsident conditions also caused several poor air quality days to occur. Metro Atlanta experienced six days of Code Orange ozone during the month of July, which is considered Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups under EPA's Air Quality Standards.