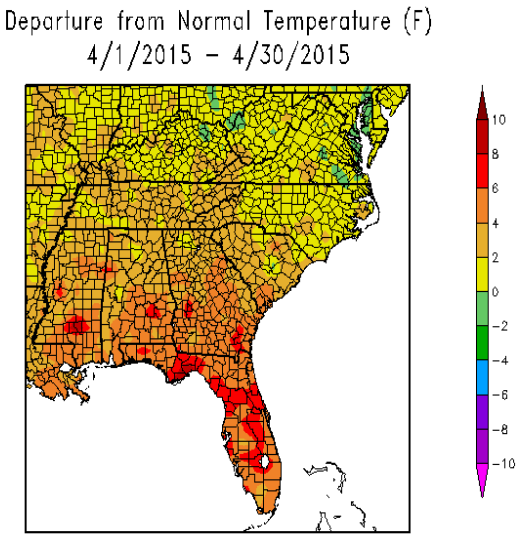
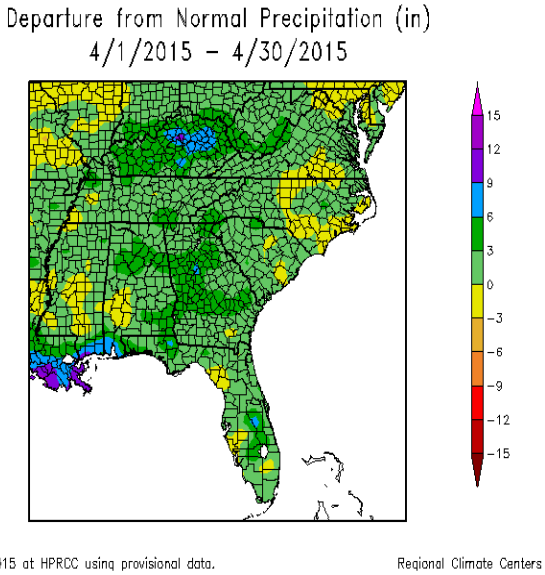
April 2015 Climate Summary – Georgia

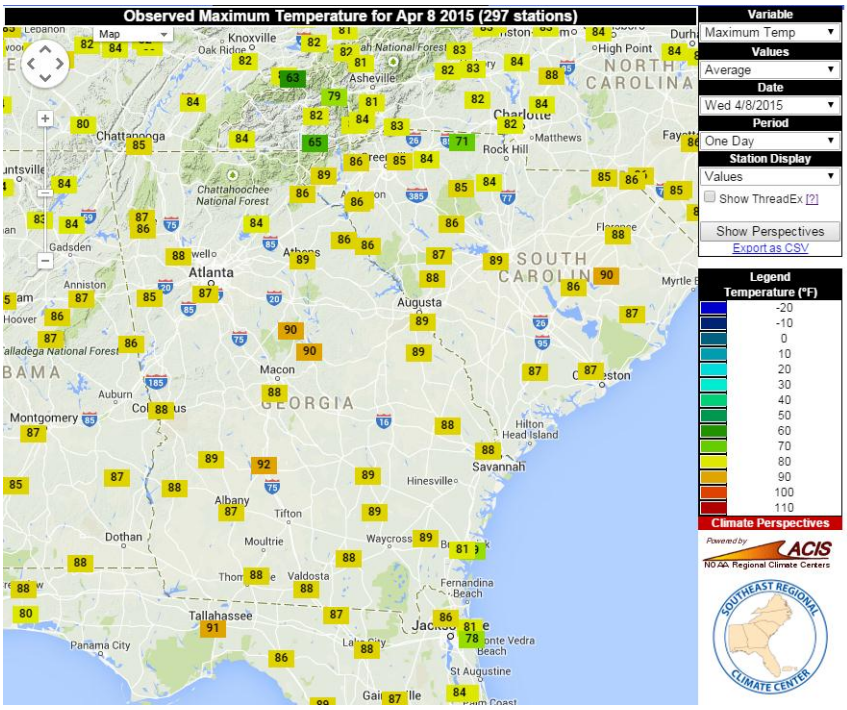
Lauren Lindsey, *Service Climatologist*
State of Georgia Climate Office

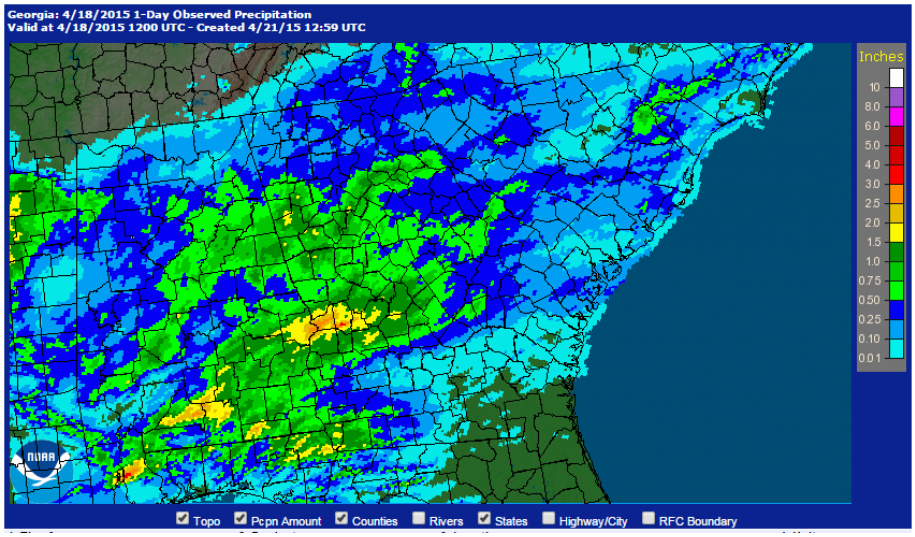
April was characterized by warmer than normal temperatures and wetter than normal conditions at all locations throughout Georgia. This month was more active than last month in terms of severe weather, with two different significant events causing damaging wind, hail, and a few tornadoes.



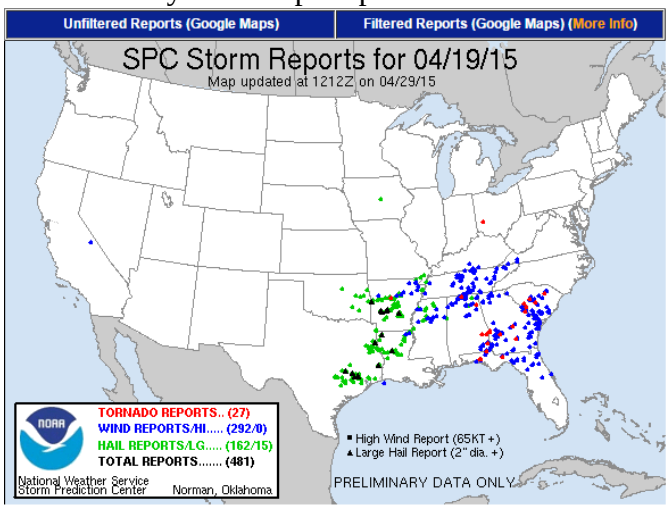


Atlanta, Athens, Macon, and Columbus all recorded well above normal temperatures for the month. Atlanta's average temperature was 65.7°F (+3.7°), Athens recorded 65.1° (+3.4°), Macon's average temperature was 66.9° (+3.5°), and Columbus recorded 67.9° (+3.3°). On April 8th, many locations set record high temperatures as a ridge of high pressure settled across the state. Atlanta and Athens set record high temperatures of 87° and 89°, breaking their old records of 85° set in 1978 and 88° set in 1919, respectively. The cities both also recorded their 6th warmest April on record. Some other noteworthy temperature records included Savannah, where a record high minimum temperature of 70° was set on April 15th, breaking the old record of 68° set in 1947. St. Simons Island broke a record high minimum temperature on April 12th (69° broke old record of 68° set in 2013).

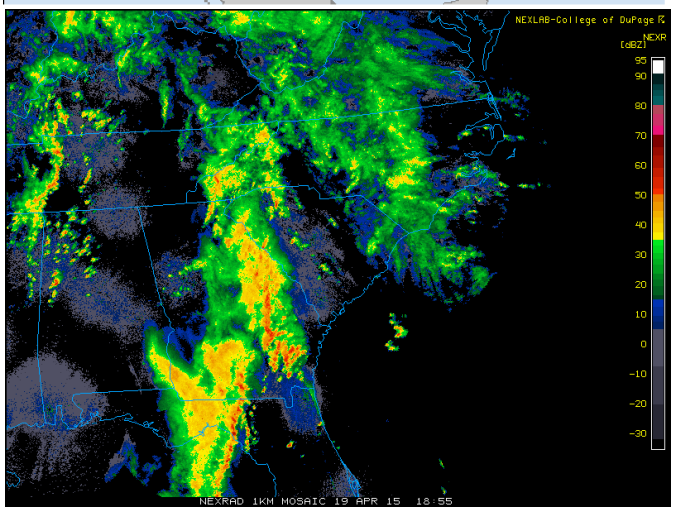




The vast majority of the state experienced above average precipitation for the month, due to a fairly progressive upper level pattern. West-central and central Georgia received the greatest precipitation amounts compared to normal. Atlanta recorded 7.79” (+4.43”), Athens recorded 8.01” (+4.86”), and Macon recorded 6.27” (+3.31”). Columbus recorded 6.47” (+2.92”) for the month and had two record rainfall days. A surge of abundant Gulf of Mexico moisture caused widespread precipitation on the 17th. Columbus set a record daily maximum rainfall with 1.24”, which broke the old record of 0.28” set in 1982. On April 20th, Columbus set another record when a heavy band of precipitation moved through the area and 1.16” of rain fell, breaking the old record of 1.02” set in 2009.

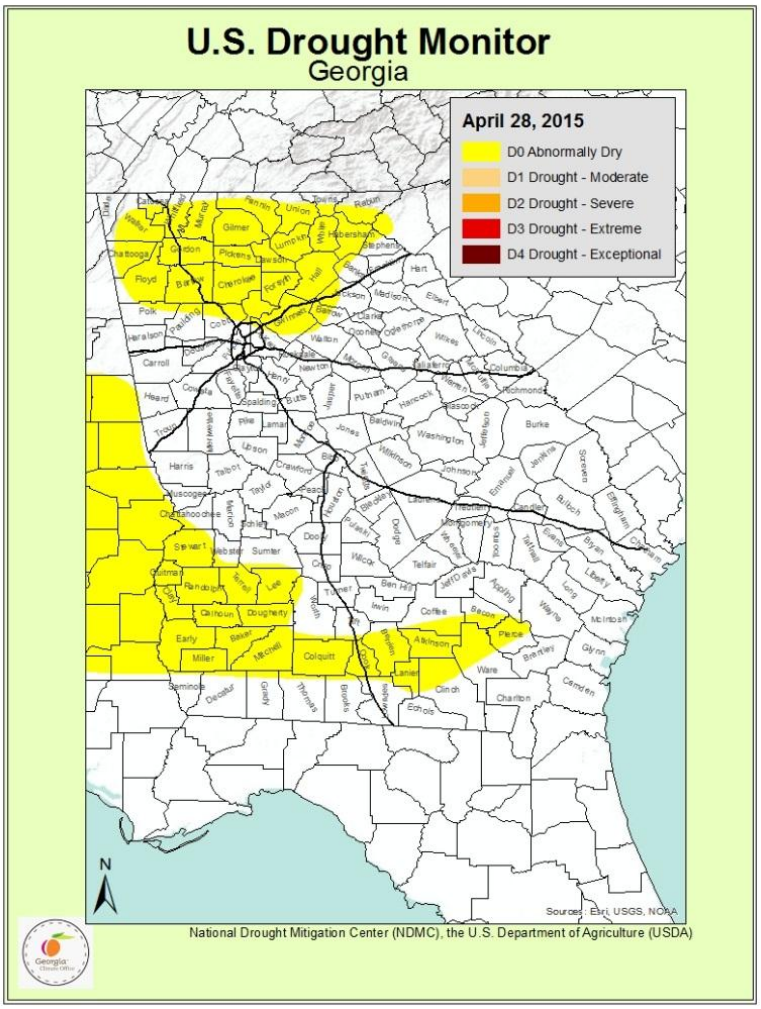


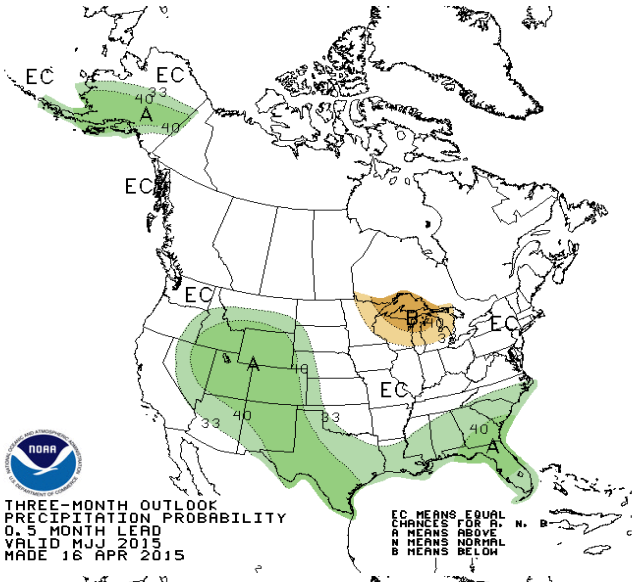
On April 3rd, an EF-1 tornado associated with strong convection ahead of a fast-moving cold front was reported in Dade County, causing limbs and trees to fall. April 19th and 20th were both active severe weather days across north and central Georgia. A weak shortwave moved through on the morning of the 19th and caused one EF-2 tornado (Burke county), three EF-1 tornadoes (Chattahoochee, Sumter, and Laurens counties), one EF-0 tornado (Coffee county), and widespread wind damage across northwest and central Georgia. On the 20th, a cold front pushed though the state. Wind damage and widespread hail were reported across the northern metro Atlanta area.

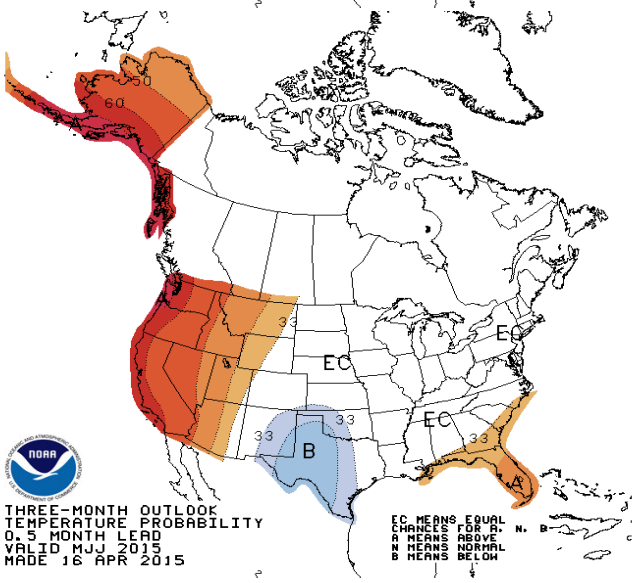


The current U.S. Drought Monitor shows counties in north Georgia and counties in southwest through south-central Georgia in D0 (abnormally dry) conditions as of April 28th. Although only short term dryness is expected in the coming week, seasonal outlooks forecast above normal rainfall in the coming months.

The Climate Prediction Center’s three-month seasonal outlook forecasts above average precipitation for the entire state for May, June, and July; the southern half has the greatest probabilities for above average precipitation, perhaps bringing relief to the abnormally dry areas, which is typical for weak or moderate El Nino conditions. The outlook forecasts above average temperatures across south and southeast Georgia, and equal chances for above or below average temperatures for the rest of the state. According to the CPC, El Niño conditions are present, and there is currently an El Niño advisory. There is approximately a 70% chance that El Niño conditions will continue through summer 2015, and a greater than 60% chance it will last through autumn.


U.S. Drought Monitor
Georgia
April 28, 2015
D0 Abnormally Dry
D1 Drought - Moderate
D2 Drought - Severe
D3 Drought - Extreme
D4 Drought - Exceptional
N
Sources: Esri, USGS, NOAA
National Drought Mitigation Center (NDMC), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)


THREE-MONTH OUTLOOK
PRECIPITATION PROBABILITY
0.5 MONTH LEAD
VALID MJJ 2015
MADE 16 APR 2015
EC MEANS EQUAL
CHANCES FOR A, N, B
A MEANS ABOVE
N MEANS NORMAL
B MEANS BELOW


THREE-MONTH OUTLOOK
TEMPERATURE PROBABILITY
0.5 MONTH LEAD
VALID MJJ 2015
MADE 16 APR 2015
EC MEANS EQUAL
CHANCES FOR A, N, B
A MEANS ABOVE
N MEANS NORMAL
B MEANS BELOW