

## February 2017 Climate Summary – Georgia

Lauren Lindsey, Service Climatologist

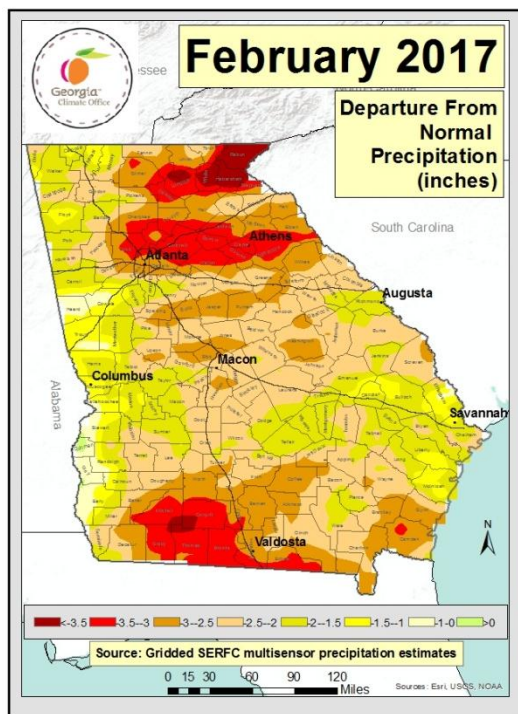
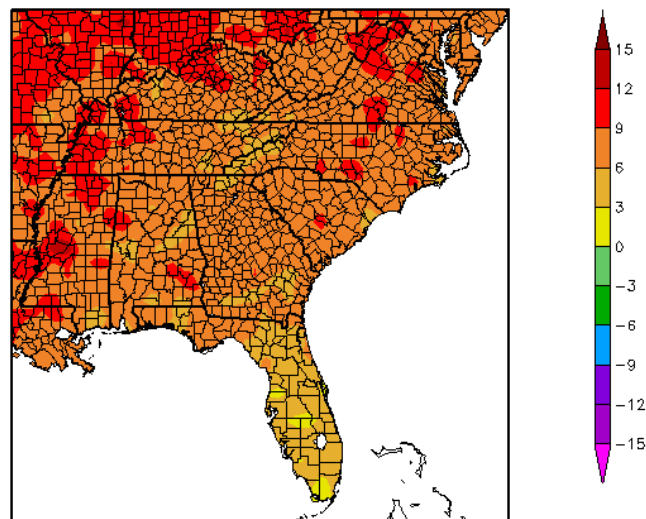
State of Georgia Climate Office

The warm trend continued as meteorological winter came to an end in Georgia. February was much warmer than normal throughout the state, with the vast majority of climate sites ranking in the top five for warmest Februarys on record. Many locations also saw record numbers of 70°F days from December through February (see table 1). The statewide average temperature ended up ranking 1° higher than the average March temperature in Georgia. Precipitation was generally below normal in Georgia, with the northeast experiencing the greatest deficits, causing worsening drought conditions there.

Atlanta's average temperature was 56.1° (+8.9°) making it the warmest February on record by more than 1°. Both Athens and Macon recorded their 3<sup>rd</sup> warmest February on record with 55.1° (+7.9°) and 57.5° (+7.5°), respectively. The average February temperature for Columbus was above normal at 57.7° (+6.6°), ranking it 5<sup>th</sup> warmest February on record. Augusta's average monthly temperature was 58.3° (+9.2°) and Savannah recorded 61.4° (+8.4°), making it both city's 3<sup>rd</sup> warmest February on record. Two very warm air masses settling over Georgia in the second and last weeks of the month caused many daily temperature records to be broken (see table 2).

As far as precipitation, Athens only recorded 1.19" (-3.29") and had its 5<sup>th</sup> driest February on record. Atlanta's monthly precipitation totaled 1.87" (-2.80"), Macon recorded 1.94" (-2.42"), Columbus saw 2.78" (-1.66"), and Augusta's precipitation totaled 2.11" (-1.81") in February. Savannah was slightly below normal with 2.22" (-0.57"), but on February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2.08" of rain fell and set a maximum daily rainfall record by beating out the old record of 1.45" from 1998.

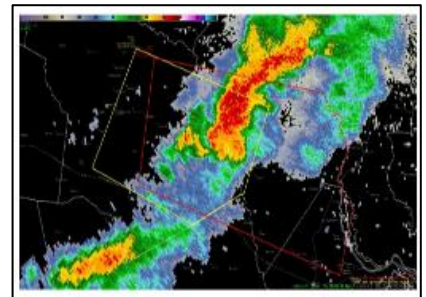
Departure from Normal Temperature (F)  
2/1/2017 – 2/28/2017



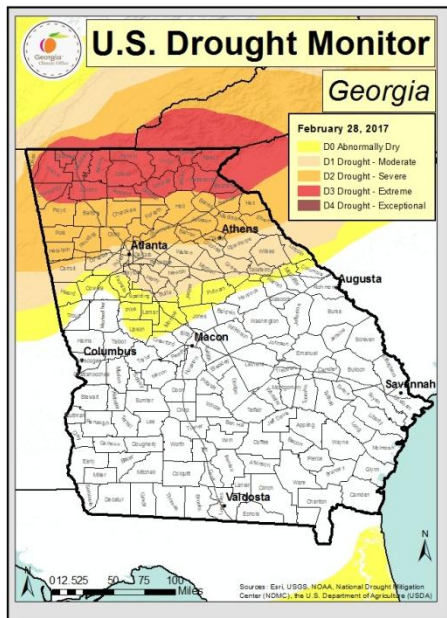
December through February proved to be one for the record books – all the major climate sites in Georgia ranked in the top five for warmest meteorological winters on record. Atlanta recorded an average winter temperature of 52.3° and had its 3<sup>rd</sup> warmest winter on record, Athens recorded 51.2° and had its 2<sup>nd</sup> warmest winter on record, Macon came in at 54.5° with its 5<sup>th</sup> warmest winter on record, Columbus recorded 54.6° and had its 4<sup>th</sup> warmest winter on record, Augusta recorded 55.4° and had its 4<sup>th</sup> warmest winter on record, and lastly, Savannah came in at 58.6° with its 5<sup>th</sup> warmest winter on record. Areas along and south of the fall line and locations around metro Atlanta generally recorded above normal to much above normal precipitation. Macon (19.15") and Columbus (18.63") saw the greatest rainfall amounts and had their 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> wettest winter on record, respectively. North Georgia saw slightly below normal precipitation from December through February.

The month of February was fairly quiet in terms of severe weather. There were reports of a brief tornado in Harris County and scattered wind damage associated with a frontal passage on February 7<sup>th</sup>. In the early morning hours of February 9<sup>th</sup>, thunderstorms that developed ahead of that same cold front caused an EF-2 tornado in Bulloch County and 7 reported injuries. Trees were snapped and uprooted, and several mobile homes were damaged or completely destroyed. Besides these active days, little to no severe weather was reported in February.

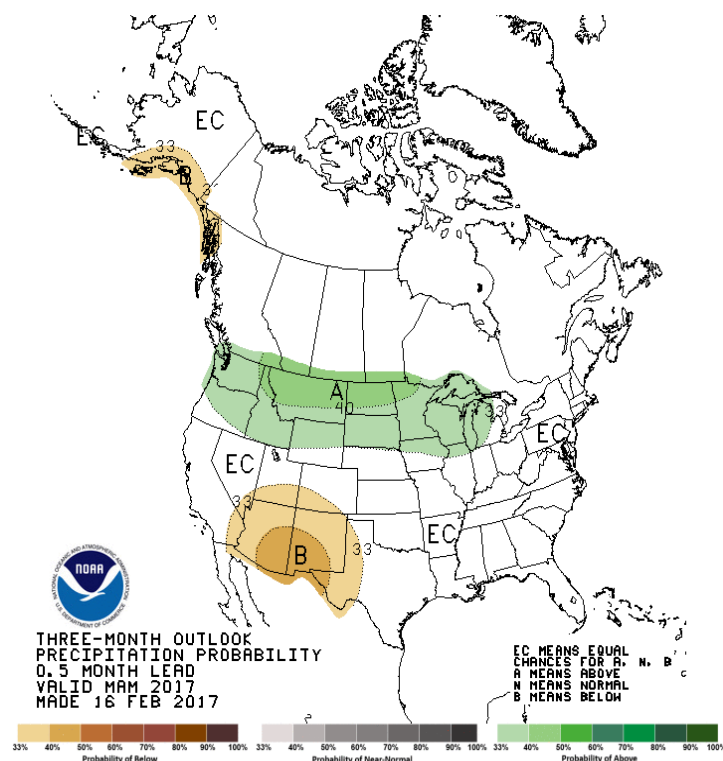
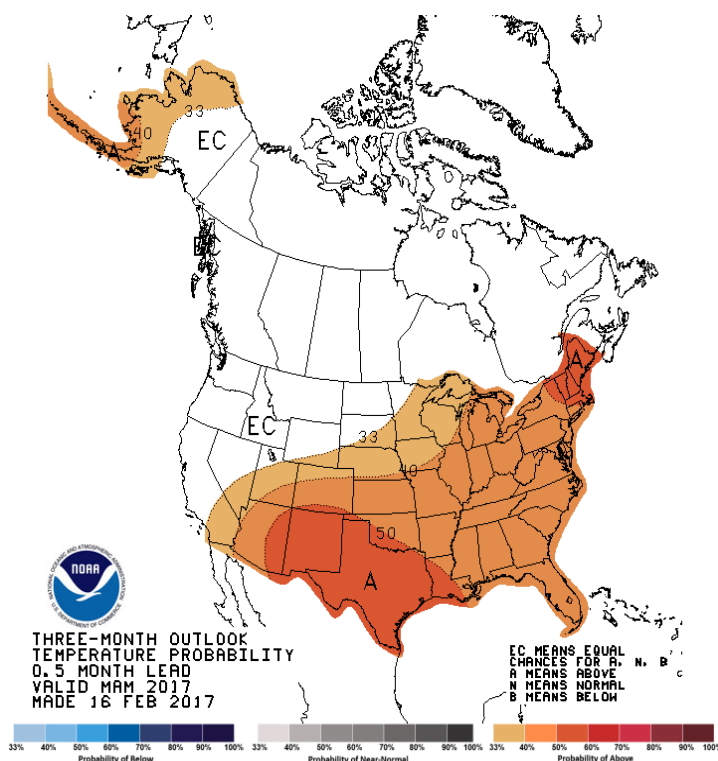
The United States Drought Monitor for Georgia showed that drought conditions improved in central Georgia where D0 (abnormally dry) and D1 (moderate drought) conditions were removed throughout the month. North Georgia saw worsening drought conditions with the below average rainfall, and D3 (extreme drought) increased by more than 5% in February.



Radar imagery showing reflectivity of the strong thunderstorm and couplet rotation associated with the EF-2 tornado.

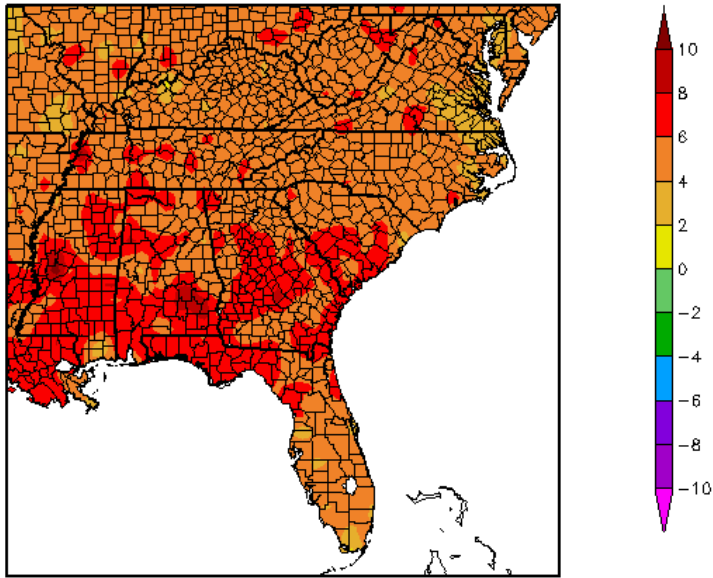


According to the Climate Prediction Center, ENSO-neutral conditions are present and the ENSO Alert System is not active. Equatorial sea surface temperatures are near average across the central and east-central Pacific. They are above average in the eastern Pacific Ocean. ENSO-neutral conditions are favored to continue through at least the Northern Hemisphere spring 2017, with increasing chances for El Niño development into the fall. The CPC's three-month seasonal outlook shows 40%-50% chances for above normal temperatures for the entire state, and equal chances for above, near, or below normal precipitation during March, April, and May.

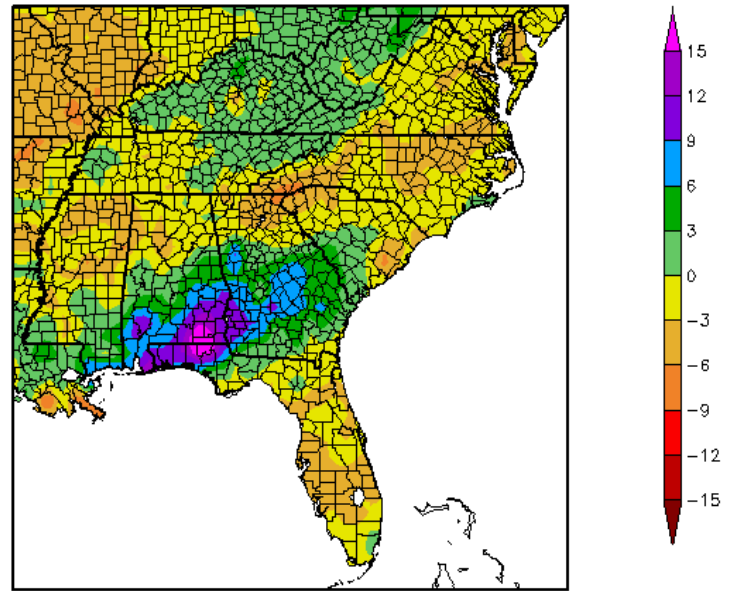


# Meteorological Winter

Departure from Normal Temperature (F)  
12/1/2016 – 2/28/2017



Departure from Normal Precipitation (in)  
12/1/2016 – 2/28/2017



**Table 1 – Days in February 2017 with Maximum Temperatures  $\geq 70^\circ$**

City	Number of Days	Ranking
Atlanta	27	#2
Athens	27	#2
Macon	41	#1
Columbus	35	#3
Augusta	43	#2
Savannah	53	#2

**Table 2 – February 2017 Daily Temperature Records**

City	Date	Record Broken	Temperature	Previous Record
Augusta	2/2	Daily Maximum	79°	Tie with 2016
Augusta	2/7	Daily Maximum	80°	Tie with 1999
Athens	2/12	Daily High Minimum	62°	58° set in 1932
Augusta	2/12	Daily Maximum	79°	78° set in 1922
Athens	2/22	Daily High Minimum	57°	56° set in 2016
Athens	2/23	Daily Maximum	79°	Tie with 2012
Atlanta	2/24	Daily Maximum	78°	77° set in 1982
Macon	2/24	Daily Maximum	81°	79° set in 1985
Augusta	2/24	Daily Maximum	84°	82° set in 1985