

February 2018 Climate Summary – Georgia

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The big story in February in Georgia was the much warmer than normal temperatures observed across the state. The vast majority of the state, as well as much of the southeast, saw temperature departures in excess of 10°F above normal. Precipitation was above normal across north Georgia where the main storm track set up, and southwest Georgia also saw above normal rainfall thanks to a few coastal low pressure systems. Southeast and east-central Georgia saw the largest precipitation departures from normal during February, causing drought conditions to worsen there. Severe weather was quiet except for one day when three tornadoes impacted west-central Georgia.

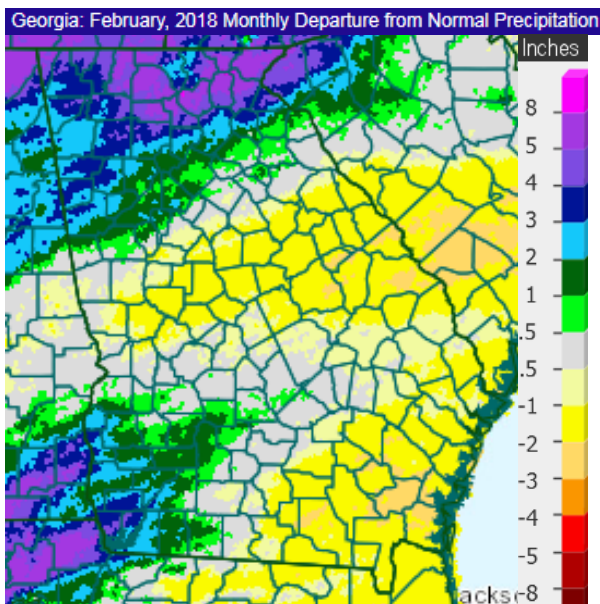
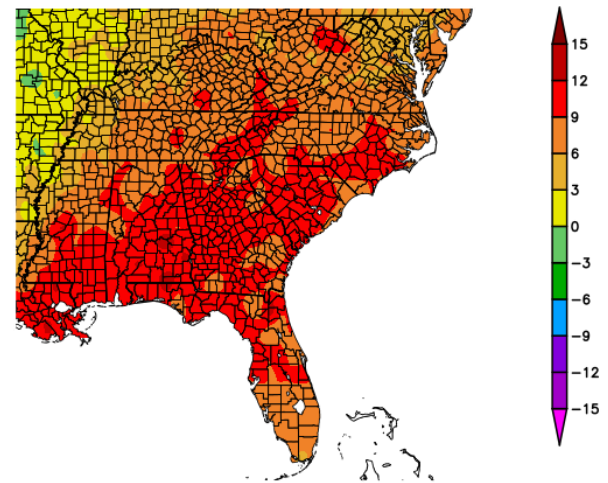
Atlanta's average February temperature was 57.3° (+10.1°), Athens recorded 57.4° (+10.2°), Macon's average temperature was 60.3° (+10.3°), Columbus averaged 62.3° (+11.2°), Augusta's average monthly temperature was 60.0° (+10.9°), and Savannah recorded 63.5° (+10.5°). All these climate sites had their warmest February on record. There were over 50 daily high minimum and maximum temperature records broken at these sites throughout February, and on February 21st, all sites broke both their daily high minimum and daily high maximum temperature records. In addition to a multitude of temperature records (see table 1), many sites also had at least one day where either the minimum or maximum temperature set a record for warmest minimum or maximum temperature for that site for the entire month of February.

Sites that recorded above normal February precipitation include Atlanta with 6.11" (+1.44") and Athens with 5.78" (+1.30"). Macon's February rainfall totaled 3.49" (-0.87"), Columbus recorded 3.56" (-0.88"), Augusta's monthly rainfall totaled 1.57" (-2.35"), and Savannah recorded 1.76" (-1.03"). There were no daily rainfall records set at any major climate sites during February.

Meteorological winter runs December through February and proved to be warmer than normal and mostly drier than normal except in areas around metro Atlanta and in northeast Georgia. Atlanta's average winter temperature was 48.2° and ranked as the 15th warmest winter on record, Athens recorded 48.3° and had its 14th warmest winter on record, Macon's average temperature was 51.3° and ranked as the 14th warmest winter on record, Columbus recorded 52.7° and had its 15th warmest winter on record, Augusta's average winter temperature was 50.9° and ranked as the 18th warmest winter on record, and Savannah recorded 54.4° and had its 23rd warmest winter on record. In terms of rainfall during winter, Atlanta was the only major climate site with a slight surplus, recording 13.75" (+0.98").

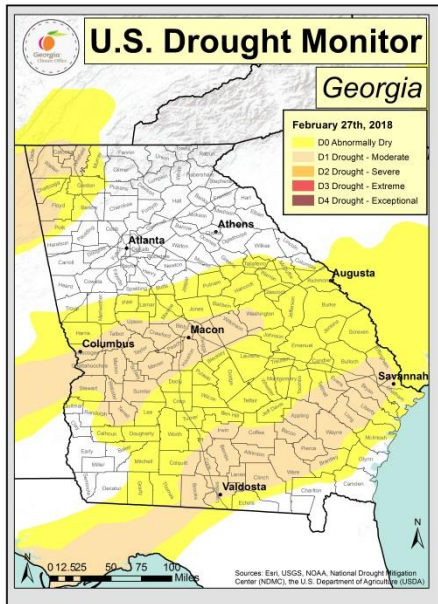
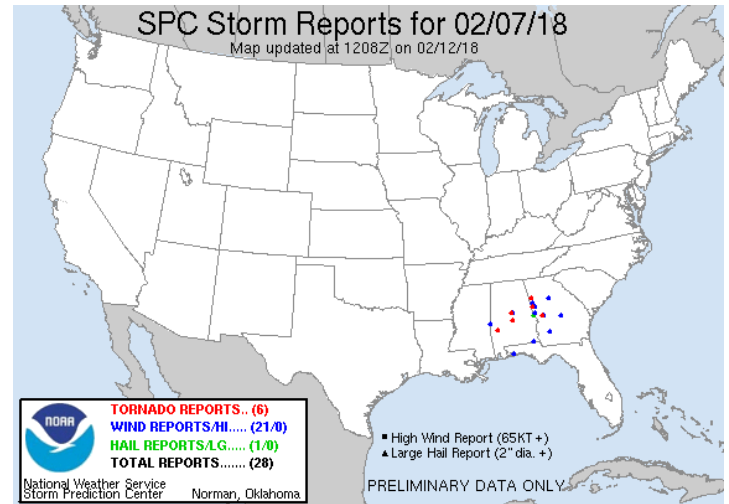
Athens totaled 13.16" (-0.26"), Macon's winter precipitation was 8.89" (-3.75"), Augusta recorded 7.77" (-

Departure from Normal Temperature (F)
2/1/2018 – 2/28/2018



3.45”), and Savannah saw 5.18” (-2.66”). Columbus had its 11th driest winter on record with only 7.71” (-4.85”).

Given the warm temperatures, there were no winter weather events during February in Georgia. However, there was a fairly significant severe weather outbreak on the morning of February 7th. A few severe thunderstorms caused two EF-0 tornadoes and one EF-1 tornado in west central Georgia. The two EF-0s occurred in Haralson county near Bremen and Talbot county, while the EF-1 touched down in Heard county and traveled 5 miles and uprooted trees along its path. Other than that outbreak, there were only a few days in February where isolated wind damage was reported.



The United States Drought Monitor showed that areas of D2 (severe drought) conditions were removed from northwest and southwest Georgia in early February thanks to plentiful rainfall in those areas. However, D1 (moderate drought) and D0 (abnormally dry) conditions expanded into much of central and southeast Georgia by the end of the month.

According to the Climate Prediction Center, La Niña conditions are present and there is currently a La Niña Advisory in effect. Equatorial sea surface temperatures are below average across the central and eastern Pacific Ocean. A transition from La Niña to ENSO-neutral is most likely during the Northern Hemisphere spring, with about a 55% chance of ENSO-neutral during the March through May season. The CPC’s three-month seasonal outlook shows chances for above normal temperatures and equal chances of above, near, or below normal precipitation during March, April, and May in Georgia.

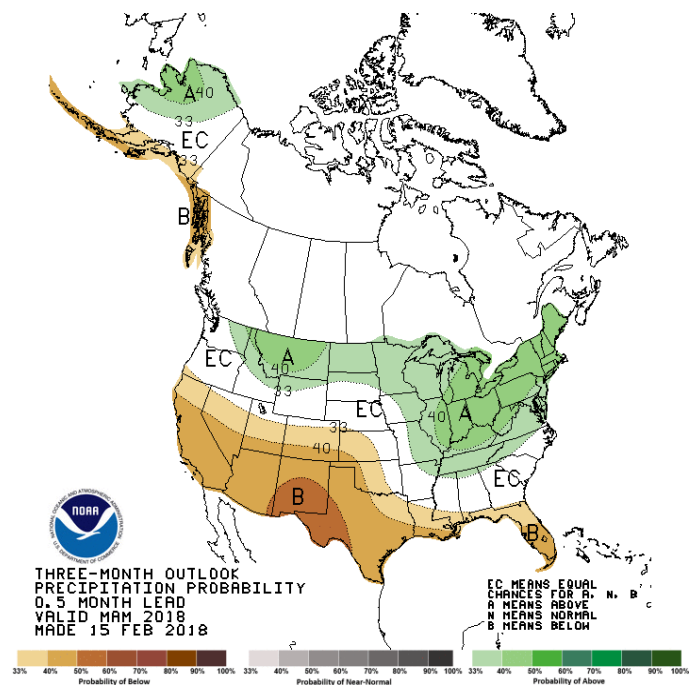
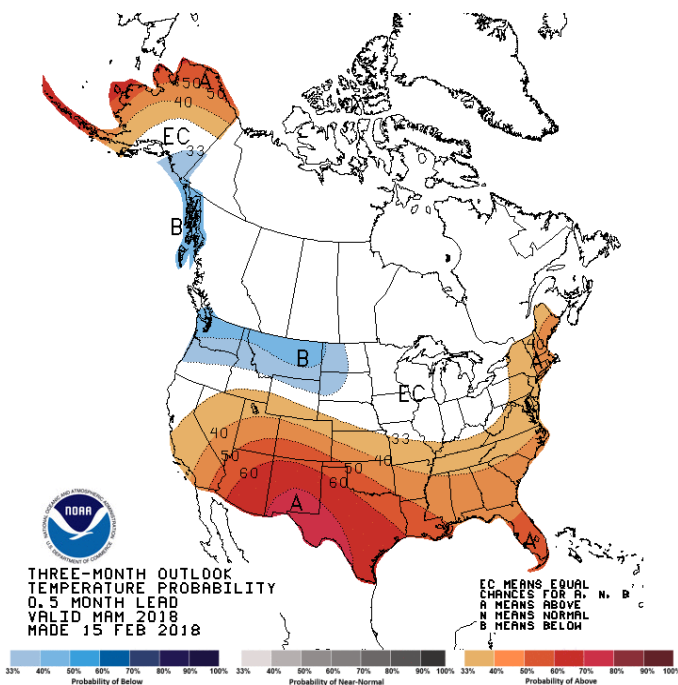


Table 1:

Daily Maximum Temperature Record *Daily Minimum Temperature Record*

Daily Temperature Records for Major Climate Sites in February 2018				
Date	City	Record Temperature	Temperature (°F)	Previous Record
2/7	Savannah	High Maximum	82°	81° set in 1904
2/11	Atlanta	High Minimum	61°	58° set in 1932
2/11	Athens	High Minimum	61°	56° set in 1999
2/11	Macon	High Minimum	61°	60° set in 1932
2/11	Columbus	High Minimum	63°	62° set in 1922
2/11	Savannah	High Minimum	63°	61° set in 1932
2/15	Athens	High Minimum	57°	57° set in 2001
2/15	Columbus	High Minimum	61°	60° set in 1949
2/16	Macon	High Minimum	61°	60° set in 1990
2/16	Athens	High Minimum	61°	58° set in 1990
2/16	Athens	High Maximum	81°	81° set in 1989
2/16	Columbus	High Minimum	65°	63° set in 2001
2/17	Atlanta	High Maximum	77°	76° set in 1927
2/17	Macon	High Maximum	81°	80° set in 1927
2/17	Columbus	High Minimum	62°	61° set in 1945
2/17	Columbus	High Maximum	82°	79° set in 1918
2/19	Athens	High Minimum	56°	54° set in 2014
2/19	Macon	High Minimum	61°	59° set in 1986
2/19	Columbus	High Minimum	62°	58° set in 1949
2/19	Columbus	High Maximum	81°	80° set in 2011
2/20	Athens	High Minimum	57°	57° set in 1991
2/20	Augusta	High Maximum	83°	82° set in 2014
2/21	Atlanta	High Minimum	65°	62° set in 1997
2/21	Atlanta	High Maximum	77°	75° set in 1976
2/21	Athens	High Minimum	65°	59° set in 1997
2/21	Athens	High Maximum	80°	76° set in 1981
2/21	Macon	High Minimum	66°	60° set in 1997
2/21	Macon	High Maximum	83°	81° set in 1976
2/21	Columbus	High Minimum	66°	62° set in 1997
2/21	Columbus	High Maximum	83°	81° set in 1922
2/21	Augusta	High Minimum	66°	59° set in 1991
2/21	Augusta	High Maximum	86°	80° set in 2011
2/21	Savannah	High Minimum	63°	62° set in 1939
2/21	Savannah	High Maximum	84°	83° set in 1991
2/22	Atlanta	High Minimum	63°	61° set in 1897
2/22	Atlanta	High Maximum	79°	74° set in 2003
2/22	Athens	High Minimum	62°	57° set in 2017
2/22	Athens	High Maximum	83°	78° set in 1922
2/22	Columbus	High Maximum	84°	80° set in 1917
2/22	Augusta	High Maximum	83°	83° set in 2011
2/22	Savannah	High Maximum	83°	83° set in 1991
2/23	Athens	High Maximum	79°	79° set in 2017
2/23	Columbus	High Maximum	83°	83° set in 1996
2/24	Atlanta	High Maximum	79°	78° set in 2017
2/24	Athens	High Minimum	60°	58° set in 1944
2/24	Athens	High Maximum	83°	81° set in 1930
2/24	Macon	High Maximum	83°	81° set in 2017
2/24	Columbus	High Minimum	61°	61° set in 1979
2/24	Columbus	High Maximum	84°	81° set in 1930
2/24	Augusta	High Maximum	84°	84° set in 2017
2/25	Athens	High Minimum	61°	59° set in 1992
2/25	Macon	High Minimum	63°	62° set in 1918
2/25	Savannah	High Minimum	63°	63° set in 1992
2/25	Savannah	High Maximum	87°	82° set in 1985