

Southeast Region: (Information provided by the Southeast Regional Climate Center)

- Temperatures were above average across the Southeast and Puerto Rico for the month of February. Monthly mean temperatures were over 5 degrees F (2.8 degrees C) above normal in approximately 20 percent of the 184 long-term (i.e., period of record equaling or exceeding 50 years) stations across the region. None of the stations reported below average mean temperatures for the month. Roosevelt Roads, PR (1931-2020) observed its warmest February on record, while San Juan, PR (1898-2020) observed the third warmest on record. While maximum temperatures were generally 3 to 6 degrees F (1.6 to 3.3 degrees C) warmer than average, minimum temperatures throughout the region ranged from around 6 to 9 degrees F (3.3 to 5 degrees C) above average. Daily temperature minimums were exceptionally high over parts of the region, as a persistent influx of subtropical moisture suppressed nighttime cooling during the month. San Juan, PR (1898-2020) also observed its warmest February for average monthly minimum temperature at 74.2 degrees F (23.6 degrees C), while Greenville, NC (1875-2020) observed the second warmest at 41.3 degrees F (5.4 degrees C). The warmest weather of the month occurred on the 11th-13th, as unusually warm and humid air surged northward ahead of an approaching cold front. Daytime maximum temperatures reached or exceeded 80 degrees F (26.7 degrees C) across portions of every state, except Virginia. Savannah, GA (1871-2020) reported a daytime maximum temperature of 86 degrees F (30 degrees C), which surpassed the previous daily record of 80 degrees F (26.7 degrees C) set in 2013. In contrast, the coldest weather of the month occurred on February 21st-22nd, as a continental high pressure system ushered in unseasonably cold air from the northwest. Daily minimum temperatures fell below 25 degrees F (-3.9 degrees C) across portions of every state, except Florida. Columbia, SC (1887-2020) and Wilmington, NC (1871-2020) both reported a daily minimum temperature of 23 degrees F (-5 degrees C). Charleston, SC (1938-2020) reported a daily minimum temperature of 24 degrees F (-4.4 degrees C), surpassing the previous daily record of 25 degrees F (-3.9 degrees C) set back in 1947.
- Precipitation was well above normal in most of the Southeast this February. A region of above normal precipitation stretched from southern Virginia, southward through North Carolina, South Carolina, northern Georgia, and northern Alabama. Precipitation in this region was generally 150 to 200 percent of normal. There were 37 long-term stations that observed more than 10 inches (254 mm) of precipitation for February, including Highlands, NC (1893-2020; 1st wettest February) at 17.44 inches (450 mm), Tuscaloosa, AL (1948-2020; 1st wettest February) at 15.49 inches (393 mm), and Birmingham, AL (1895-2020; 3rd wettest February) at 13.26 inches (337 mm). Puerto Rico also reported above normal precipitation, with San Juan, PR (1898-2020; 1st wettest February) observing 8.23 inches (209 mm) of rain. On February 6th, a slow-moving low pressure system produced over 5 inches (127 mm) of rainfall across portions of western North Carolina and South Carolina. As a result, Greenville/Spartanburg, SC (1884-2020) and Hickory, NC (1949-2020) observed their 1st wettest maximum daily precipitation for February at 5.36 inches (136 mm) and 5.31 inches (134 mm), respectively. In contrast, unusual dryness was found across most of Florida, where the precipitation values ranged from 90 to less than 50 percent of normal. Pensacola, FL (1879-2020) only reported 2.87 inches (73 mm) of precipitation for the month, which was about 2 inches (51 mm) below normal. A strengthening area of low pressure moving well offshore, combined with a cold high pressure to the northwest led to several hours of light to moderate snow across North Carolina and southern Virginia, on February 20th. As a result, parts of eastern North Carolina received snow, including Bath 1.6 SSE COCORAHNS station in Beaufort County, NC at 4.3 inches of snow. Raleigh, NC measured 2.5 inches of snowfall from this storm, and Danville, Virginia measured 1.6 inches. Mount Mitchell, NC recorded the highest snowfall total in the region for the month at 23.7 inches. In contrast, the Washington, DC

area has only reported a trace of snowfall this month, and only 0.6 inches for the entire winter season, which ranks it as the 4th lowest snowfall total for a winter season.

- There were 283 severe weather reports across the Southeast during February, which is over 300 percent of the median monthly frequency of 92 reports during 2000-2018. There were 19 confirmed tornadoes reported for the month (6 EF-0, 10 EF-1, and 3 EF-2), more than double the monthly average of 8. About 15 of these tornadoes were associated with a line of thunderstorms that developed ahead of a cold front, which moved across the region on February 6th. The most damaging tornado was rated an EF-2 with winds of 130 mph (58 m/s) and occurred in Cleveland County, SC. Numerous trees were uprooted and snapped along the path of the tornado, and a couple of high tension electrical transmission towers were blown down. No injuries were reported with this tornado. An EF-1 tornado with winds of 110 mph (49 m/s) was reported in Marengo County, AL the same day. This tornado heavily damaged four manufactured homes, resulting in one injury and one fatality. There were 3 reports of hail for the month, with the largest being half-dollar sized (1.25 inches) in Wake County, NC. There were 261 wind reports for the month, which is more than triple the average of 71 reports. Strong winds were observed across the region on February 6th, with the strongest reported gust at 76 mph (34 m/s) in Duval County, FL. In York County, SC, one fatality was associated with the straight-line winds, after a tree fell onto their car while driving. Another fatality occurred in Gaston County, NC that same day, when a vehicle hydroplaned.
- Moderate to heavy rain fell during the month of February across much of the Southeast, saturating soils and causing rivers to reach much-above or near-record high flows in the northern half of Alabama, Georgia, most of South Carolina, western North Carolina, and southern Virginia. In contrast, drought conditions intensified across portions of Florida. A pocket of severe drought (D2) developed, ringed by an area of moderate drought (D1) and dry conditions (D0), in the north-central Florida Panhandle. Abnormally dry conditions (D0) also expanded through north-central Florida. A pocket of abnormally dry conditions (D0) developed in the northwest portion of Puerto Rico. Strawberry growers in Florida reported higher than normal fungal disease pressure and pest pressure due to the warmer temperatures this month. Tomato and potato farmers also reported pest pressure. Citrus groves are running irrigation due to the abnormally dry conditions. Farmers reported seeing color break on late variety oranges and signs of early bloom throughout the month. Most of Alabama received excess rainfall, saturating cropland and pastures. As a result, some wheat fields were under water and nitrogen applications were delayed. Consistent rains kept producers out of onion fields in Georgia, where they would normally be making fertilizer and fungicide applications, leading to disease pressure. Wet conditions have caused disease problems for vegetable growers, as well. In many areas, the wet weather led to insufficient winter grazing, and saturated pastures made providing hay to cattle difficult. Fruit trees have begun to bloom prematurely, which increases concern for their vulnerability to spring freezes.