

Report: January US climate cold and dry

February 8 2011, By RANDOLPH E. SCHMID , AP Science Writer

(AP) -- January was colder than normal for the United States and, in a finding that will surprise many, also drier than usual.

The [average temperature](#) for the month, across the country, was 30 degrees Fahrenheit (1.1 Celsius), which is 0.8 degrees Fahrenheit (0.4 C) colder than usual for the month, the National Climatic Data Center reported Tuesday.

And, despite several large winter storms, it was also the ninth driest January on record going back to 1895, the center reported.

Rain and snowfall across the country averaged 1.48 inches (38 millimeters) for the month, 0.74 inch (19 mm) below normal.

The analysis focuses only on the United States, with worldwide data scheduled to be released later.

Indeed, the last three months have been particularly cool in the U.S. Southeast, even while worldwide readings were going on to tie 2010 with 2005 for the [warmest year](#) on record as [climate](#) change continues to affect the atmosphere.

Atmospheric scientists stress that while the planet is continuing to warm overall, conditions vary from place to place.

January's national temperature was the coolest for the United States since 1994. The unusually cool conditions dominated the country east of

the Rockies, while there were warmer than normal readings in Washington, Oregon and California.

As for rain and snowfall, it was a record dry January for New Mexico, while both Arizona and Nevada had their second driest January on record.

Other states much drier than normal were Virginia, Oklahoma, North Carolina and California.

Greater than normal precipitation fell in North Dakota and Nebraska.

The NCDC report also noted that:

- Several January [winter storms](#) in the Northeast led to record snowfalls in New York City and Hartford, Conn. The 57.0 inches (145 cm) that fell at Hartford's Bradley International Airport was the city's all-time snowiest month on record.

- The storm that crossed the northern plains, [Great Lakes](#) and Northeast on Jan. 9-13 was a Category 3, or "Major" snowstorm, according to preliminary analysis on the Northeast [Snowfall](#) Impact Scale.

- Drought continued to expand during January, and as of February 1, 24.1 percent of the United States was affected by moderate to exceptional drought. At this point last year, only 8.5 percent of the United States was affected.

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Citation: Report: January US climate cold and dry (2011, February 8) retrieved 2 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-02-january-climate-cold.html>

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