

No tornadoes reported anywhere across US in March

March 20 2015, by Justin Juozapavicius



In this May 20, 2013 file photo, Moore police dig through the rubble of the Plaza Towers Elementary School following a tornado in Moore, Okla. There have been fewer tornadoes nationwide through the month of March than in the past 10 years. In Oklahoma, two years after deadly tornadoes ripped into the state's midsection, there could be a second straight year of an uneventful tornado season. It's part of what forecasters are calling a 'tornado drought.' (AP Photo/Sue Ogrocki, File)

With only about two-dozen twisters recorded so far this year during a period when 100 or more are typical, the U.S. appears to be in a tornado

drought as cool, stable air prevents the ingredients of the violent storms from coming together, meteorologists said Friday.

No [tornadoes](#) have been reported so far in March, when [tornado season](#) often begins ramping up for parts of the country. The last time the U.S. had no twisters in March was nearly 50 years ago, according to figures from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Storm Prediction Center in Norman.

Forecasters at the prediction center reported earlier this week that since the beginning of the year, it has issued only four tornado watches and no severe thunderstorm watches—less than 10 percent of the average 52 tornado watches issued by mid-March. The center hasn't issued a watch in March, something that's never happened in its record of watches dating to 1970, said Greg Carbin, warning coordination meteorologist for NOAA's Storm Prediction Center.

"Every day that goes by is quite remarkable (because) we're normally seeing very active day-to-day [weather](#) somewhere in the country," Carbin said. "Four watches is also unprecedented."

Even in tornado-prone Oklahoma, the dominant weather pattern of cold, stable air that prevents a tornado's ingredients from coming together means the state is again starting storm season in sluggish fashion, a repeat of the year before, said state climatologist Gary McManus.



This May 21, 2013 file aerial photo shows the remains of houses in Moore, Okla., following a tornado on May 20, 2013. There have been fewer tornadoes nationwide through the month of March than in the past 10 years. In Oklahoma, two years after deadly tornadoes ripped into the state's midsection, there could be a second straight year of an uneventful tornado season. It's part of what forecasters are calling a 'tornado drought.' (AP Photo/Tony Gutierrez, File)

"We haven't had the prime conditions here in Tornado Alley because the predominant weather pattern doesn't lend itself to severe weather," McManus said. "Not only are we not seeing the tornadoes, we're not seeing the supercell [storm](#) systems that spawn these tornadoes."

Adam Houston, associate professor of atmospheric science at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, cautioned that with spring just starting,

so too is the peak time for tornadoes, and conditions are likely to change. For example, it was May when twisters raked the Oklahoma City suburbs of Moore and El Reno during a two-week period in 2013, killing dozens of people and injuring hundreds more.

"January and February are not active months, so (the tornado drought) hasn't been particularly surprising," he said. "If we're having this conversation in June, then there would be something substantial here."



This May 21, 2013 file aerial photo shows the remains of houses in Moore, Okla., following a May 20, 2013 tornado. There have been fewer tornadoes nationwide through the month of March than in the past 10 years. In Oklahoma, two years after deadly tornadoes ripped into the state's midsection, there could be a second straight year of an uneventful tornado season. It's part of what forecasters are calling a 'tornado drought.' (AP Photo/Kim Johnson Flodin, File)

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Citation: No tornadoes reported anywhere across US in March (2015, March 20) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2015-03-tornadoes.html>

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