

2016 was second warmest year on record for U.S.

January 20 2017



Credit: NOAA Headquarters

Last year will be remembered as warmer than average for much of the nation, and depending on where you live, 2016 was either parched, soggy—or both.

To understand how, here's our U.S. "climate by the numbers" summary for 2016:

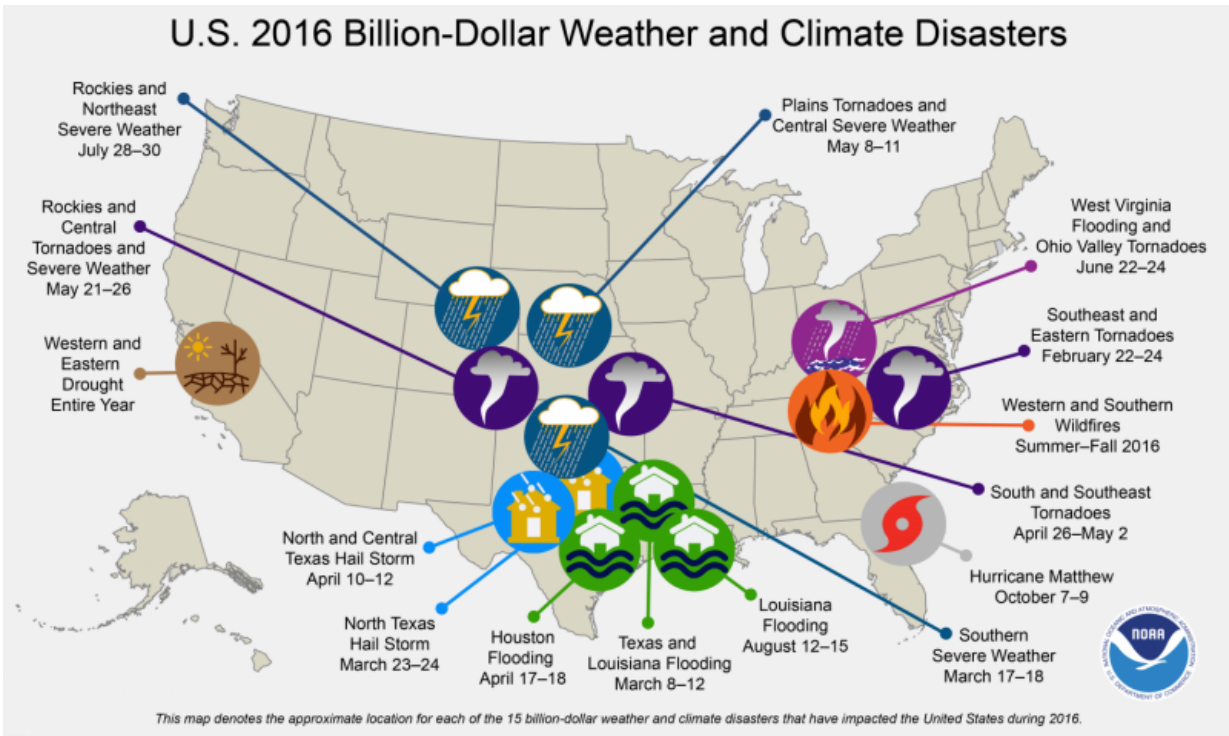
Full year, January through December

The average U.S. temperature in 2016 was 54.9 degrees F (2.9 degrees F above average), which ranked as the second warmest year in 122 [years](#) of record-keeping. This is the 20th consecutive year the annual average temperature exceeded the average. Every state in the contiguous U.S. and Alaska experienced above-average annual temperatures, according to scientists from NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Information.

Precipitation for the year totaled 31.70 inches, ranking as the 24th wettest year. The national drought footprint expanded from about 18 percent in January to about 23 percent by the end of December. At just under 19 percent, the average area of drought in the U.S. for 2016 was the smallest since 2010.

December

The month of December was near the long-term average for the month with an average temperature across the contiguous U.S. of 32.9 degrees F, 0.17 degrees above average. The northwestern quarter of the contiguous U.S. was generally cooler than average for the month, while the southern U.S. and the Atlantic Coast states were warmer than average. The precipitation total for the month was 0.34 inch above normal.



Here's a look at the locations of 15 billion-dollar disasters that occurred in the U.S. in 2016. Credit: NOAA NCEI

Billion-dollar disasters

Deadly, extreme weather caused major loss of life and damage in 2016.

Last year, the U.S. experienced [15 weather and climate disasters](#), each with losses exceeding \$1 billion for a total of \$46 billion. Tragically, the disasters claimed a total of 138 lives:

- 1 drought (affected multiple areas);
- 1 wildfire (affected multiple areas);
- 4 inland floods;
- 8 severe storms; and

- 1 hurricane (Matthew).

This is the second highest number of disasters experienced in one year, with double the record number of inland flooding events for one year.

Since 1980, the U.S. has sustained more than 200 weather and climate [disasters](#) that exceeded \$1.1 trillion in overall damages.

More information: Find NOAA's climate reports at www.ncdc.noaa.gov/sotc/summary...info/national/201613

Provided by NOAA Headquarters

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