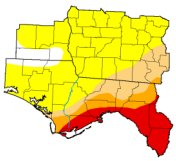
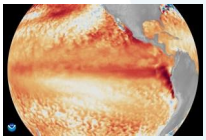




○ ISSUE 53 | ○ Summer | ○ 2026

Tallahassee Topics

NEWS AND NOTES FROM YOUR LOCAL NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE OFFICE.

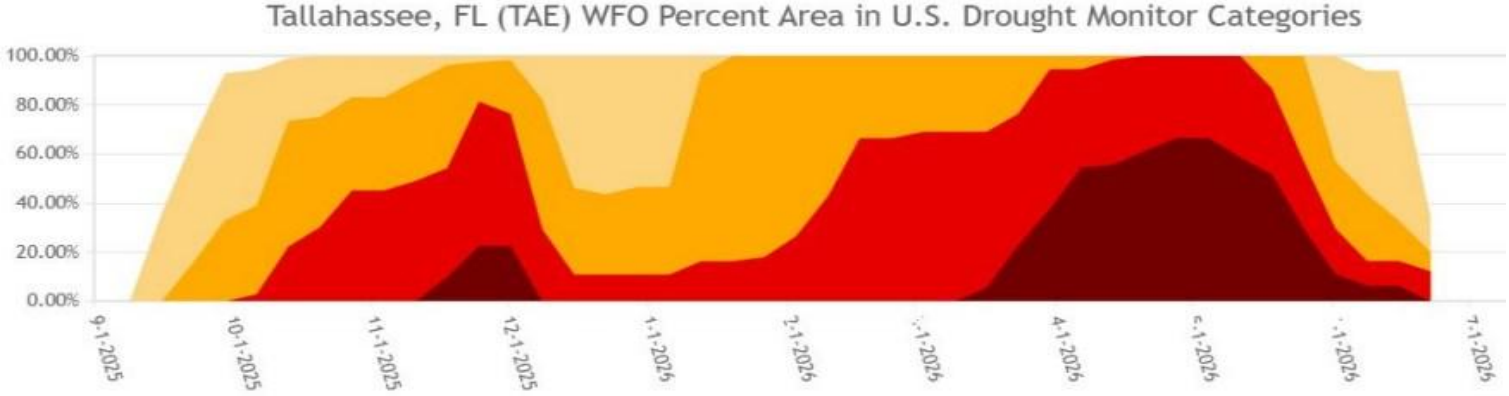
The National Weather Service (NWS) office in Tallahassee, FL provides weather, hydrologic, and climate forecasts and warnings for Southeast Alabama, Southwest & South Central Georgia, the Florida Panhandle and Big Bend across 48 counties, and the adjacent Gulf coastal waters. Our primary mission is the protection of life and property and the enhancement of the local economy.

Important Updates on our Drought Situation

Dating back to Autumn 2025, rapid-onset drought arrived then worsened over the next several months and well into 2026. Long-duration, large precipitation deficits eventually led to the highest possible drought category of Exceptional or D4 (*dark red, figure below*) in Tallahassee for the first time in 14 years! These D4 conditions expanded the most to other parts of the Tri-State area early to mid Spring and rivaled or exceeded the historic drought from 2011-2012. Widespread hydrological and agricultural impacts were felt with extremely low water levels, streamflows, and severely stressed vegetation & livestock.

An unusually wet May 2026 then came along and brought much-needed drought relief to the region, especially west of the Apalachicola-Flint River basin via multiple waves of heavy rain and thunderstorms over the course of the month. Most locations experienced anywhere from about 150-400+ percent of the normal monthly precipitation! From the end of May into late June, much of the western half of the Tri-State area experienced dramatic improvement. Conditions have been noticeably slower to improve in the FL Big Bend and portions of Southwest GA during that same time span where the heaviest rains did not reach.

Here are some key facts: there have been 4 long-duration extreme droughts since 2000 in our region, including this current one. Ten months is a lengthy period of drought, but not the longest stretch in the 26-year history of drought monitoring. Drought severity and coverage has decreased considerably in June with many areas not in any drought status for the first time since early October 2025. This is the first time that D4 Exceptional Drought is not analyzed locally since mid January!



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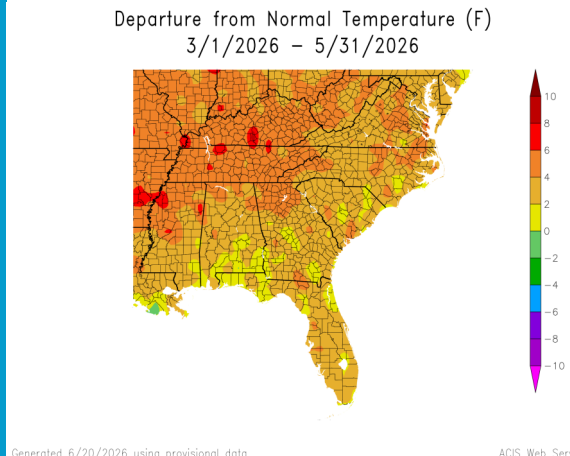
Spring Highlights

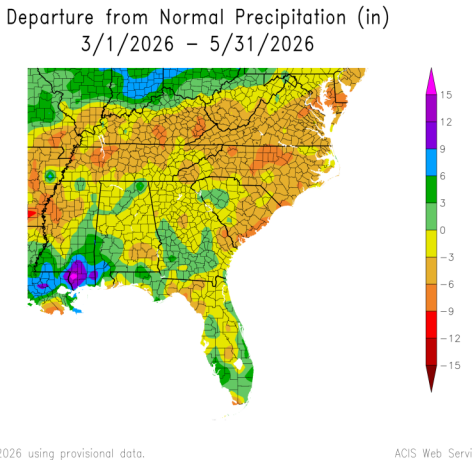
Late-season freeze, dry Spring, wet May, severe & fire weather

March was defined by anomalously warm weather, 2 severe weather events, a late-season freeze, fire weather danger, and expanding/worsening drought. On the 12th, a potent squall line plowed through the Tri-State area and produced 5 survey-confirmed tornadoes, 1 observed waterspout, and 9 explicit severe gusts of at least 58 mph. On the 16th, scattered to numerous thunderstorms led to a flurry of storm reports highlighted by a radar-confirmed tornado in Madison County, FL. A widespread late-season freeze followed this event shortly after our typical resumption of issuing frost/freeze products to accommodate the growing season. The overall continued dearth in precipitation further worsened drought conditions while abnormal warmth aggravated the fire weather environment. The latter contributed to several reported wildfires, and a Red Flag Warning late in the month.

Prolonged dry conditions defined much of April 2026 with minimal rainfall observed. Drought subsequently worsened and the wildfire environment was further aggravated on a number of warm, dry, windy days. The 5 Red Flag Warnings issued mid to late month, equaled the combined number issued from 2023-2025! Several wildfires occurred locally with large distant fires over Clinch County, GA, producing hazy skies downwind of Tallahassee. In terms of convective weather, there were a few isolated severe thunderstorms on the 4th that produced hail ranging in diameter from pea to quarter size.

A much-needed wet pattern brought drought relief to the region, particularly west of the Apalachicola River in May. A Flash Flood Warning was issued for the first time since August 23, 2025 on the 13th. The 262-day warning-less streak was the 4th longest for the NWS Tallahassee office! There were also multiple instances of severe weather with varying reports of storm damage. The biggest convective event of the month was on Memorial Day—highlighted by 2 confirmed EF-1 tornadoes: 1) Villa Tasso/Walton County, FL; 2) Houston-Henry County, AL. Thankfully, there were no injuries or fatalities.





Spring Climate Summary: Tallahassee's average season mean temperature during the Spring months (March-May) was above normal at 70.5°. The highest/lowest temperatures were 92°/30°. The first 90° day of the season was on April 29th with a late-season freeze on March 18th. Continued below-normal rainfall plagued the capital city as only 7.30 inches was measured from March through May. This total represents a nearly 5-inch deficit. The greatest single-day rainfall was 1.83 inches on May 2nd with only 21 total days of measurable rain of at least a tenth of an inch. There were multiple daily records tied or broken at TLH: 2 in March (warm high on the 9th; cold high on the 17th), 6 in May (rainfall on the 2nd, 12th; cold low on the 15th; warm lows on the 27th, 30th, 31st).

Summer Climate Normals: Tallahassee's average mean temperature during the summer months (June-August) is 81.9° with a normal high/low temperature of 91.4°/72.3°. The typical number of 90° days is 69. Seasonal rainfall amounts tend to be the highest of the year at 22.50 inches, which accounts for nearly 40% of the average annual precipitation. These numbers are based on the current 30-year climate normal period (1991-2020). Seabreeze driven thunderstorms, tropical systems, and mesoscale convective systems are the primary summertime rainmakers. Positions of surface high pressure and the prevailing subtropical ridge are perhaps the most important influence on temperature & precipitation this time of year.

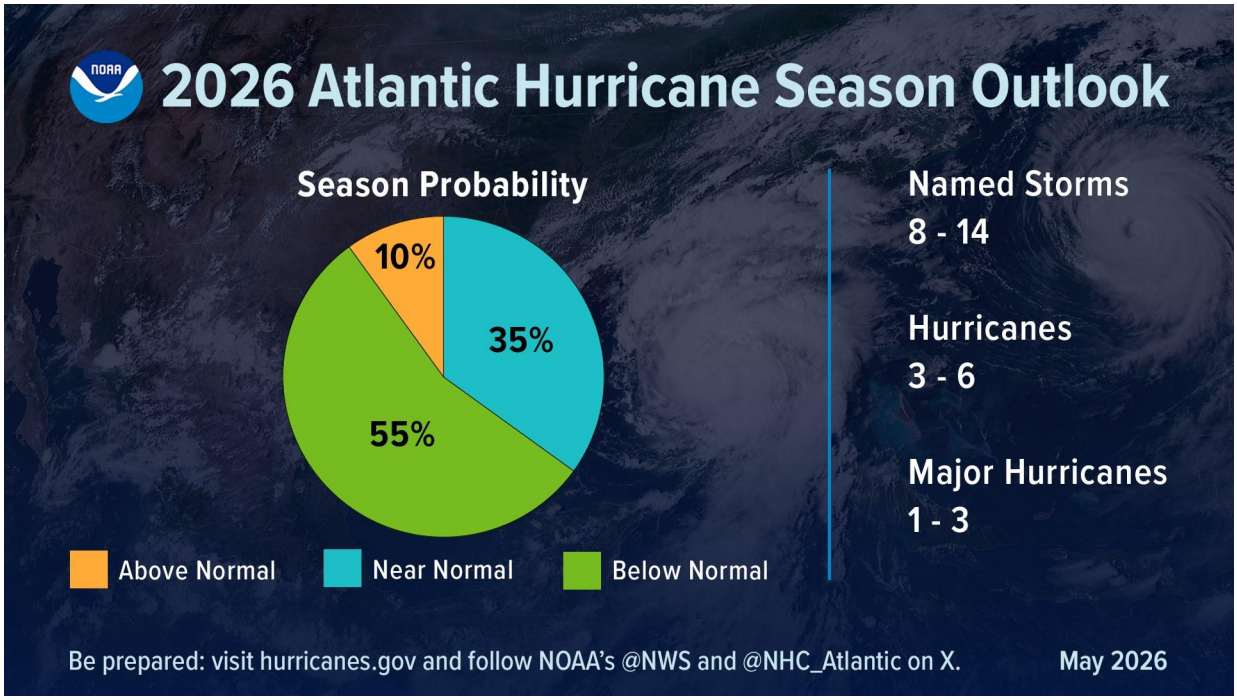
Atlantic Hurricane 2026 Season Preview

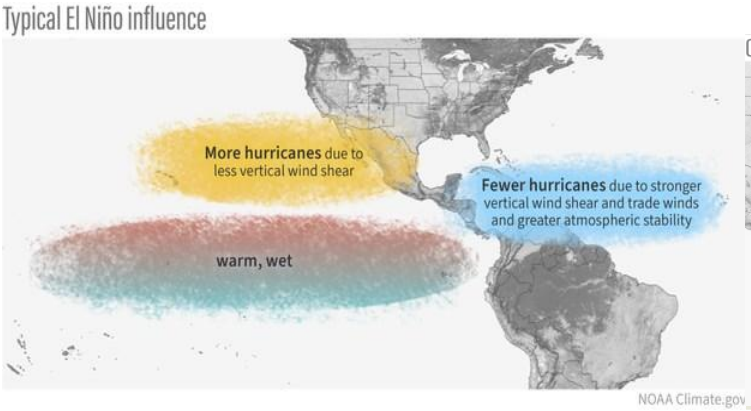
Favorable probabilities for below-average activity

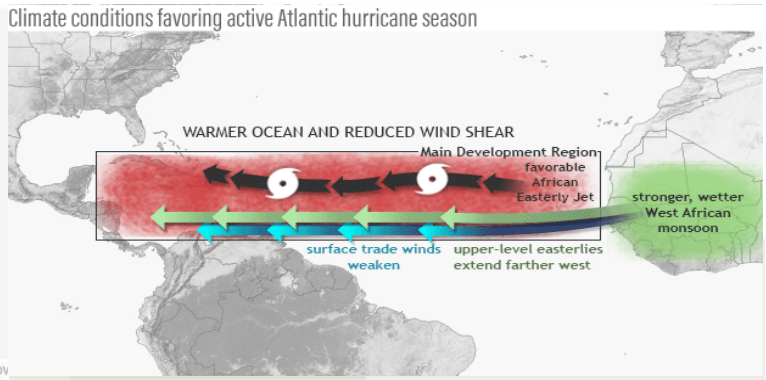
Is there a topic you'd like us to cover? Send us an E-mail:

sr-tae.webmaster@noaa.gov

On May 21st, NOAA released their Outlook for the 2026 Atlantic Hurricane Season. Current projections call for a 55% chance of a below-normal activity with respect to the number of named storms. This is not a landfall forecast. The pie chart below is what should be focused on the most compared to the range of named storms, hurricanes, and major hurricanes. All it takes is one storm anyway to potentially define a season for communities impacted, so please treat each year with the appropriate respect and have a plan in place. The emergence of El Niño early this summer and projected continuance/intensification through at least Northern Hemispheric Winter 2026-2027 is the primary reason for low chances of an above-normal season at 10%. Although not guaranteed each occurrence, El Niño typically suppresses Atlantic tropical activity (*lower-left figure*) thanks to an increase in prevailing vertical wind shear creating a hostile atmospheric environment not conducive for hurricanes. Further raising confidence in this outlook is that El Niño is likely to become strong over the next few months. However, not all El Niño events are the same, in addition to competing factors such as warm sea-surface temperatures (*lower-right figure*) and other modes of ocean-atmosphere natural variability (e.g., Madden-Julian Oscillation, North Atlantic Oscillation). It is also conceivable that the first half of the hurricane season is active, then tempers down in Autumn. The season officially began on June 1st and runs until November 30th. To date, a weak short-lived tropical storm (Arthur) was designated on June 17th near coastal TX/LA with its remnants producing widespread, significant flooding to the Northern Gulf Coast and Lower MS Valley.







Management-Admin Team

Meteorologist-In-Charge

Warning Coordination Meteorologist

Science & Operations Officer

Electronic Systems Analyst

Information Technology Officer

Administrative Assistant

Senior Service Hydrologist

Observation Program Leader

Operational Team

Lead Forecasters (5)

General Forecasters (6)

Electronic Technicians (2)

Spring Outreach

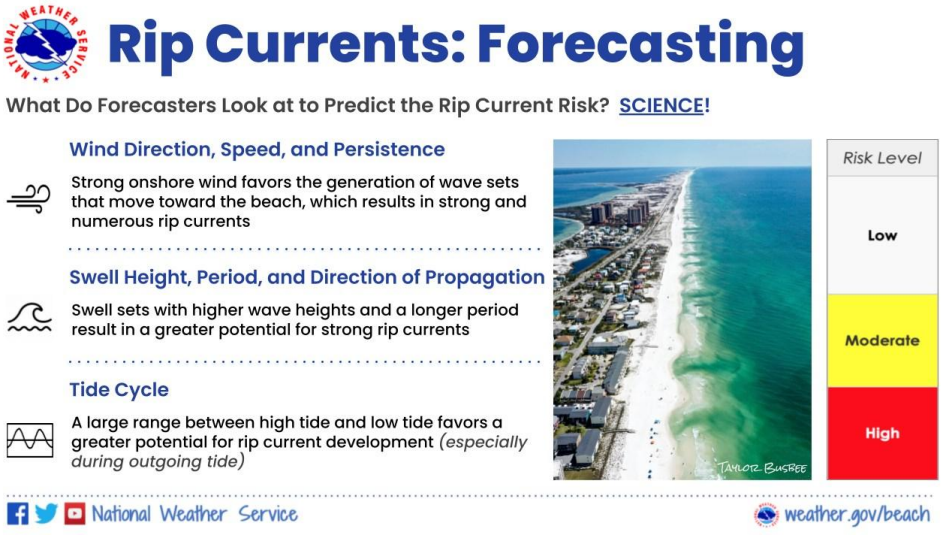
Spring is always a busy time for outreach at our office and this year was no exception. On March 3rd, the Warning Coordination Meteorologist (WCM) briefed local officials at the Big Bend Healthcare Coalition Meeting. On the 11th, a Lead Forecaster and fire-weather focal point spoke at the Florida Forest Service Cooperators' Meeting. On the 16th, the management team toured the new facility for the Florida Department of Emergency Management. On the 25th, the WCM spoke at the Apalachee LEPC meeting.

In April, the WCM and a Lead Meteorologist/Aviation Focal Point attended the Emergency Managers' Association Summit in Jekyll Island, GA. The WCM then joined by an FSU Student Volunteer at the NWS table for FAMU's STEM Day on the 4th. On the 22nd, a forecaster and beach & tropical focal point conducted rip current outreach. On the 23rd, the WCM was interviewed by WCTV on the ongoing drought and its potential impacts on the upcoming hurricane season. On the 24th, the WCM was joined by our Administrative Assistant at a STEM event for 8th graders at the Dream it, Do it! Day at the ATTA Library in Abbeville, AL. The next day, the WCM was joined by a forecaster and a then, FSU student volunteer at the NWS table for Tallahassee Earth Day Festival on the FAMU campus. On the 29th, the fire weather focal point attended the spring meeting of the North FL Prescribed Fire Council.

In May, the management team conducted an Integrated Warning Team meeting on the 7th for Leon County School District leadership safety personal. The WCM and the Meteorologist-In-Charge participated in the FL Governor's Hurricane Conference from the 10th-14th. The fire weather focal point and beach & tropical focal point were joined by the NOAA office of Coast Survey at marine and rip current public training sessions at the Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve and Gulf Coast State College on the 18th. The annual partner tropical training day occurred on the 21st at Tallahassee State College. Finally, the WCM, Senior Service Hydrologist, two Lead Meteorologists, and forecaster joined forces to hurricane season outlook and training sessions for AL Division B Ems, Leon County PIOs, the Emerald Coast LEPC, Tallahassee International Airport, Tri-County United Way, Lowndes County, and three City of Tallahassee neighborhood preparedness events.

Ahead of the of beach season 2026, the National Weather Service coastal offices partnered with inland offices to help spread the word on the dangers rip currents pose through the annual Rip Current Awareness Week (RCAW) program. Another round of RCAW launched from May 18th-25th to accommodate the Memorial Day Weekend. As a reminder, rip currents are the #1 weather-related killer at the beaches along the northern Gulf Coast. Here is a breakdown of the daily themes:

- Monday: All About Rip Currents
- Tuesday: Spot A Rip Current
- Wednesday: Survive A Rip Current
- Thursday: Beach Forecasts (*figure below*)
- Friday: Beach Flags/Resources



Additional rounds of rip current awareness are planned for the Independence Day (July 1st-7th) and Labor Day Weekend (dates TBD). The latter often coincides with the climatological peak of the Atlantic Hurricane Season. Long-period swells generated by distant hurricanes can foster unsuspecting high rip current risks. For more information, visit: www.weather.gov/tae/ripcurrentawareness.

State of ENSO, Summer Seasonal Climate & Drought Outlook, Year-to-Date Climate

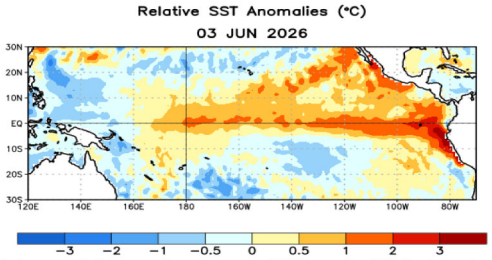


Figure 1. Average relative sea surface temperature (SST) anomalies (°C) for the week c on 3 June 2026. Anomalies are computed with respect to the 1991-2020 base period we means.

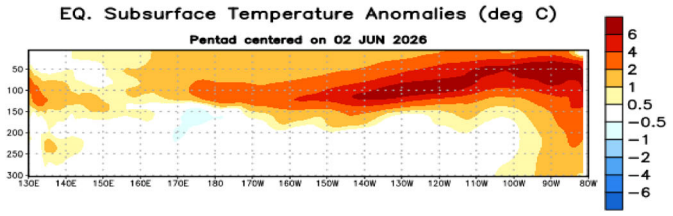
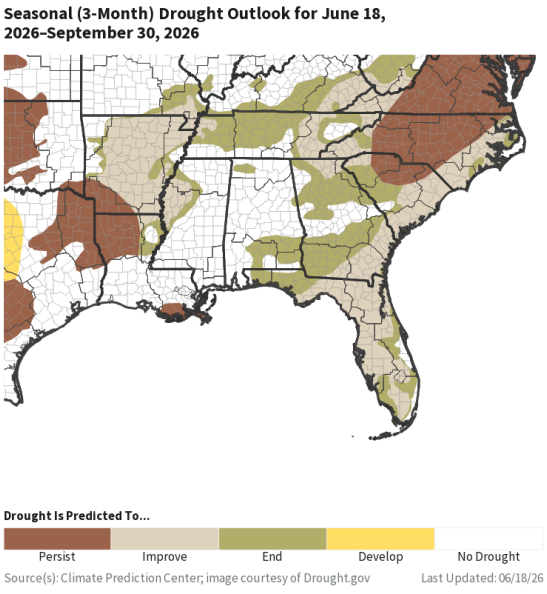
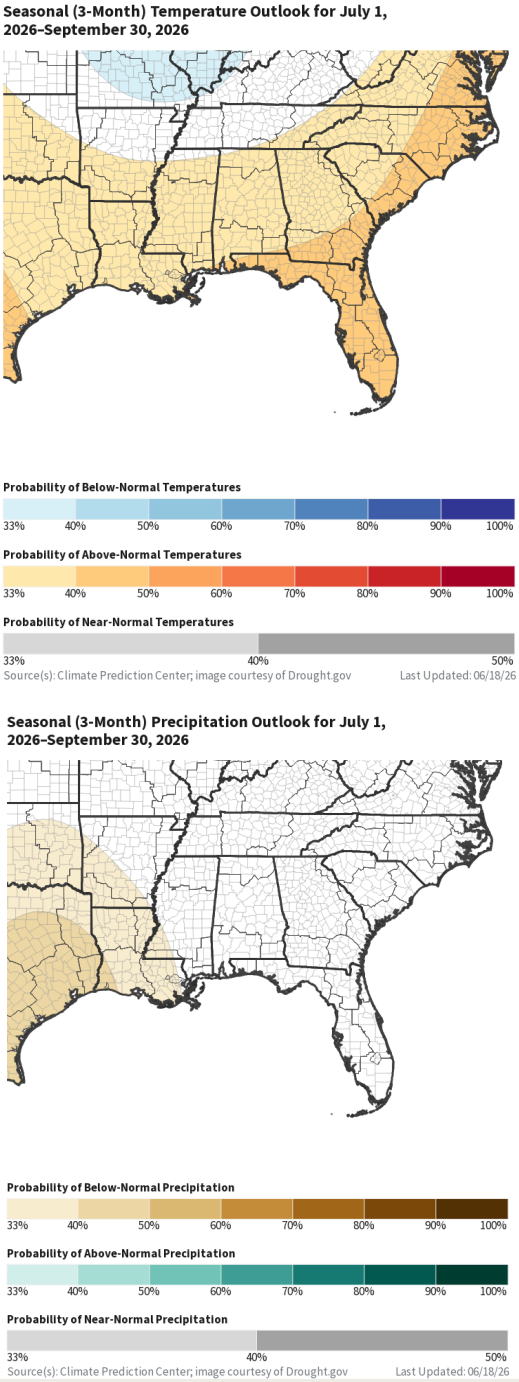


Figure 4. Depth-longitude section of equatorial Pacific upper-ocean (0-300m) temperature anomalies (°C) centered on the pentad of 2 June 2026. Anomalies are departures from the 1991-2020 base period pentad means.

El Niño has arrived: As of June 11th, El Niño conditions are present and projected to strengthen into this Northern Hemispheric Winter. As such, an El Niño Advisory is in effect. A very robust observation signal of above-average sea-surface temperatures (SSTs, *upper-left figure*) across the central to eastern equatorial Pacific are apparent with even stronger sub-surface warm anomalies (*upper-right figure*). Nearly unanimous probabilities of El Niño persisting the next few months fosters high confidence. In addition, there is increasing potential for the magnitude of these conditions to become "very strong", such that region of interest would experience SST anomalies ≥2°C. The Climate Prediction Center (CPC) currently shows a 63% chance of occurrence during November 2026-January 2027. It is important to note that stronger events do not always mean bigger weather and climate impacts, but rather, increase the likelihood that certain impacts occur. The latter may include: suppressed Atlantic tropical activity and a wetter & cooler-than-normal winter in the Southeast US.



Warmer summer + further drought improvement? The CPC shows probabilities leaning towards above-normal temperatures in the July through September months at 33-50% (*right-central figure*), valid June 18th. There is no strong signal to support anomalous or seasonable precipitation. Equal chances are in place at about 33% of either above, below, or near-normal rainfall (*bottom-right figure*). If the influence of El Niño on suppressing tropical activity becomes more apparent, then perhaps future odds lean towards below-normal precipitation. Regardless, recent rains have improved our local drought situation significantly, so although drought is likely to remain, further improvement appears likely through the climatological rainy season (*left-central figure*).



Year-To-Date Climate through the Spring Equinox: Since January 1, 2026 through the end of the Spring Equinox (June 20th), the average mean temperature at Tallahassee was 65.9° (warmer than normal). The highest & lowest temperatures to date were 99° on June 13th and 19° on January 16th. A total of 16.06 inches of rain fell with only 40 days of measurable rainfall. Both values are well below normal for this time period. The former is the driest since 2019.