

March 2011 Climate Summary

Georgia Climate Summary for March 2011

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An active weather pattern in March led to many reports of tornadoes, wind and hail as well as above normal temperatures across the state. Rainfall was highly variable, from a very wet month in Atlanta to dry conditions in southeastern Georgia.

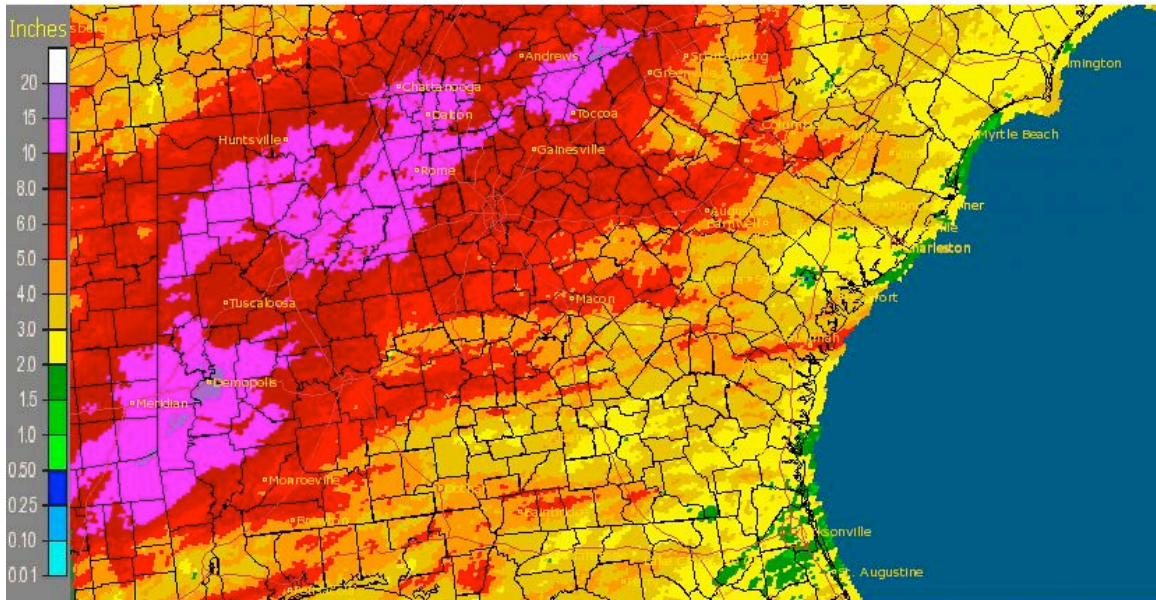
Temperatures across the state were above normal everywhere in Georgia again this month. In Atlanta, the monthly average temperature was 55.8 degrees F (1.5 degrees above normal), in Athens 54.7 degrees (1.2 degrees above normal), Columbus 60.3 (2.7 degrees above normal), Macon 57.5 (1.3 above normal), Savannah 60.9 (1.6 above normal), Brunswick 64.2 (3.8 above normal), Alma 61.5 (0.3 above normal), Valdosta 63.5 (3.7 above normal) and Augusta 57.8 (2.0 above normal).

Record daily high temperatures were set at Alma on March 19 and 22, with a new maximum temperatures of 90 and 88, respectively, surpassing the old records of 88 set in 1963 and 86 set in 1991. Brunswick also set record high temperatures on March 22, 23, 24, and 27, including a new high temperature of 88 degrees set on the 27th, breaking the old record of 78 from 1949. Augusta set a new record of 90 on the 19th, breaking the old record of 84 set in 1997. Columbus, Savannah and Alma also tied record highs during the month.

The warm conditions caused earlier than normal greening of vegetation across the state, according to the National Weather Service. This can lead to increased use of soil moisture by thirsty plants and reductions in runoff to the effect of leaf cover.

Precipitation in March varied quite a bit across the state. The wettest areas of the state were in the northern and western regions, while the driest area was the southeastern corner of Georgia. Five counties reported forest fires in the driest areas of the state associated with the lack of rainfall and severe drought conditions.

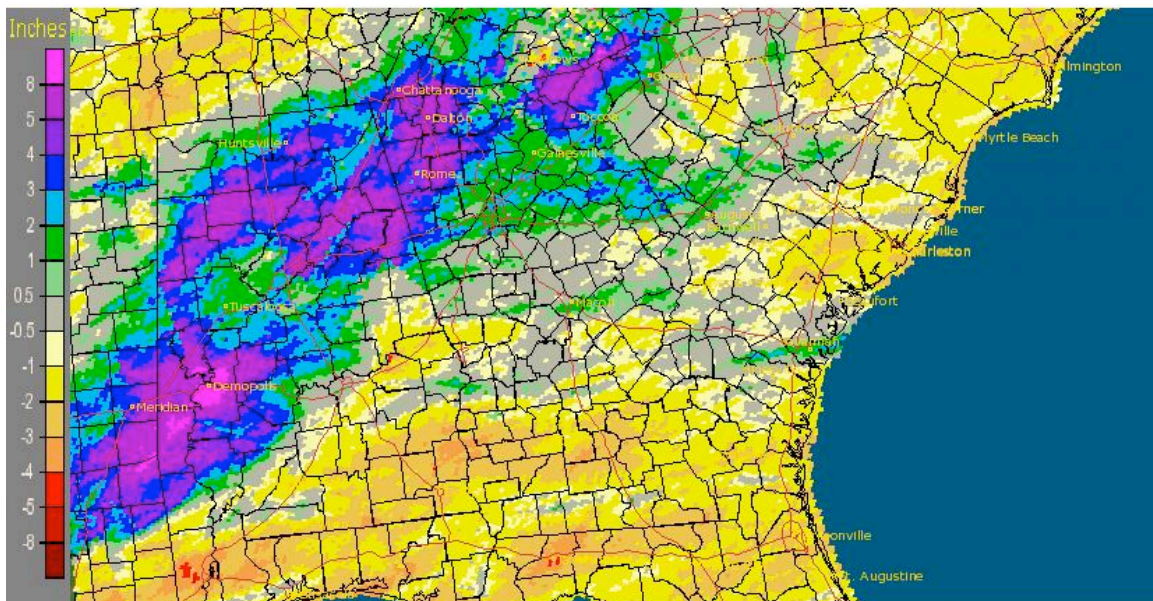
Georgia: March, 2011 Monthly Observed Precipitation
Valid at 4/1/2011 1200 UTC- Created 4/1/11 15:48 UTC



source: www.weather.gov

The highest monthly total precipitation from National Weather Service reporting stations was 9.06 inches in Atlanta (3.68 inches above normal) and the lowest was in Brunswick at 1.73 inches (2.20 below normal). Valdosta received 5.50 inches (0.07 above normal), Athens 6.65 inches (1.66 inches above normal), Alma 4.57 (0.23 below normal), Columbus 5.30 (0.45 below normal), Macon 4.03 (0.87 below normal), Savannah 4.44 (0.80 above normal) and Augusta 5.01 (0.53 inches above normal). This is the 9th wettest March in Atlanta since records began at the airport in 1940.

Georgia: March, 2011 Monthly Departure from Normal Precipitation
Valid at 4/1/2011 1200 UTC- Created 4/1/11 15:50 UTC



Source: www.weather.gov

Columbus reported a new daily rainfall record of 1.44 inches on March 9, breaking the old record of 1.43 inches set in 1978. Alma also reported a new record of 2.19 inches on the March 30, breaking the old record of 1.98 inches set in 1991.

The highest single-day rainfall from CoCoRaHS stations was 4.44 inches north-northwest of Dillard in Rabun County on March 6. Two observers in Rabun Gap nearby reported 4.37 and 4.19 inches on the same day. An observer on Tybee Island in Chatham County observed 4.18 inches on March 28. The highest monthly total precipitation of 15.81 inches was measured by the Dillard observer who also had the highest daily rainfall. Thirty other CoCoRaHS observers in Georgia reported 10 or more inches of total precipitation this month.

Severe weather was reported on seven days in March. A weak tornado was reported on March 9 near Doe Run in Colquitt County. Hail was observed in northern Georgia on March 19. Strong winds and small hail were reported on several other days in scattered locations across Georgia.

The biggest outbreak of severe weather came on March 26-27. The National Weather Service Storm Prediction Center had 8 reports of EF0 and EF1 tornadoes across Georgia, including one that crossed Lake Blackshear in

Sumter County and one that was observed at the Middle Georgia Regional Airport in Houston County. Multiple hail reports of large and damaging hail were reported including a hailstone of 4.25 inches in diameter that was reported nine miles west of Senoia in Coweta County, a record for Georgia for the month of March. A YouTube video of large hail falling in Coweta County can be viewed at

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gERE8RoRSHw> .

In spite of concerns about potential frost damage due to early blooming of fruit trees and scattered frost reports in northern Georgia this month, no significant losses have been reported this year so far. However, the danger of killing frost, particularly in northern Georgia, continues until well into April.

Farmers are working in the fields preparing for the coming growing season.

The weather did not significantly impact agriculture except where heavy rainfall made it difficult for farmers to work their fields.