



National Climatic Data Center / NESDIS / NOAA

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### Significant U.S. Weather and Climate Events for 2000

**January Eastern Winter Storms:** A severe ice storm hit northern Georgia and portions of northwest South Carolina on January 22-23. Over ½ million utility customers were without power during and after the storm, with the Atlanta area severely affected. A storm on the 25<sup>th</sup> dumped heavy snow from the Carolinas to New England, with up to 20 inches of snow and five deaths reported. A third storm, between the 28<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>, brought ice, snow, and freezing rain from Georgia to Maine. Over 300,000 customers lost power after the storm glazed power lines and tree limbs. Six deaths were reported.

**Georgia Tornadoes, February:** Tornadoes ripped across southwest Georgia, killing 19 people and injuring more than 100. One tornado cut a five mile path through a housing development in Camilla, GA--estimated losses \$25 million.

**Tornadoes, Hail, and Flooding, March:** Tornadoes and flooding hit the Forth Worth, TX area, with damages estimated at approximately \$450 million, two deaths due to tornadoes, 2 deaths due to flooding, and one death due to head injuries by baseball-size hail. A tornado hit Houma, LA on March 15, causing about \$100 million in damages.

**Low Water Levels on the Great Lakes:** During spring 2000, water levels in the Great Lakes were at their lowest levels since 1965. The unprecedented drop in lake levels during the 1997-2000 period ended a 30-year period of high lake levels.

**Hail and Storm Damage in Midwest, May:** Missouri reported \$100 million in damages from flooding in early May. Storms on the 11th and 12th caused significant injuries and damage in Iowa and Wisconsin, where tornadoes and straight-line winds exceeding 100 mph occurred. On the 18th, tremendous hail storms resulted from a frontal system associated with a strong upper-level jet stream moving across Iowa, southern Wisconsin, Illinois, and Indiana, spawning a few tornadoes and hail up to 4.5 inches in diameter. Insured losses in Illinois reached \$250 million, with \$115 million in Wisconsin for the month's events.

**May Heat Wave:** The high temperature reached 122 degrees F in Death Valley, CA on May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2000. This broke the state record of 121 set in Blythe, CA in 1910 and earlier years, and also set a new national record maximum temperature for the month of May. Frederick, OK reached 112 degrees F on May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2000. This tied a new all-time May maximum temperature for Oklahoma. The previous record was set the day before at Altus with 112 degrees. On May 24th, the temperature reached 110 degrees F at Carlsbad, NM. This tied the state record maximum temperature for May previously set at Rincon in May of 1896.

**Barrow Thunderstorm in June:** The first thunderstorm on record moved through Barrow, Alaska on the Arctic coast on June 20, a phenomenon that typically occurs in warmer mid-latitude and tropical climates. The storm dropped 0.16 inches of rain in only a couple minutes. Many calls were received at the local weather office from people who had just witnessed their first thunderstorm and lightning display.

**Drought/Heat Wave, Spring-Summer 2000:** Severe drought and persistent heat over the south-central and southeastern states caused significant losses to agriculture and related industries, with a preliminary estimate of over \$4 billion in damages/costs. The heat wave was most severe in July with 46 heat-related deaths across the region. For the year, 140 fatalities due to heat were reported across the country.

**Western Fire Season, Spring-Summer 2000:** A severe fire season in the western states due to drought and frequent winds resulted in over 7 million acres burned for the year and over \$2 billion in damages and firefighting costs. The Los Alamos, NM area was especially hard hit in May, with over 400 homes destroyed.

**New Jersey Flooding, August:** The storm caused about \$166 million in damage in Sussex County alone, where three dams and four concrete bridges were swept away, and numerous roads were damaged after heavy downpours dropped up to 14 inches of rain on the area around Sparta.

**Tropical Storms Gordon and Helene, September:** Tropical Storm Gordon brought welcome rains to parts of Florida and the southeast in mid September. Gordon brought over 8 inches of rain to central Florida, with heavy rains also to parts of Georgia and the eastern Carolinas. Tropical Storm Helene followed about a week later and brought additional heavy rains of up to 10 inches across portions of the Florida panhandle, Georgia, and the Carolinas. There were no hurricane landfalls in the continental U.S. during 2000.

**Heavy Rains Hit South Florida, October:** Abundant tropical moisture and a developing tropical system brought flooding rains to much of Miami-Dade county on October 2-3, 2000. The rain exceeded 20 inches in some locations. Nearly 6000 homes were damaged or destroyed, damages were estimated to be nearly \$700 million, and three people were killed.

**Heavy Rains and Thunderstorms in South-Central Texas, November:** A slow moving cold front brought flooding rains to south-central Texas on November 2-3, with some areas receiving over six inches of rain. The storms were responsible for six deaths.

**Hawaii Thunderstorms, November:** Parts of the eastern half (windward side) of the "Big Island" of Hawaii had flooding during early November. Hilo reported 27.24 inches of rain in a 24-hour period on November 1-2--a new 24-hour record. A few spots received over 35 inches for the event. The rainfall from the thunderstorms flooded numerous homes, forcing dozens of families to evacuate. In addition, several landslides were reported on Hawaii Belt Highway, and schools and most businesses were closed.

**Lake Effect Snows Blanket Buffalo, November:** A very intense lake-effect snowstorm hit Buffalo in late November, causing major disruptions for the area. Lake effect snows are triggered by cold air aloft passing over the warmer Great Lakes waters, causing instability and heavy snow bands. The snows are often accompanied by lightning and thunder, which was the case in this event. The snow in the Buffalo area, according to the National Weather Service, was the station's third-highest snowfall over a 24-hour period with 24.9 inches. The monthly total was 45.60 inches, a new monthly November record.

**Early Season Southeast Snowstorm:** Parts of the southeast states from northeast Georgia through the Carolinas into eastern Virginia received snowfall on December 3<sup>rd</sup>. The western areas were affected by an upper level low which dropped 1 to 7 inches of snow in some locations. Eastern NC and VA were hit by a coastal storm which dropped up to 15 inches of snow on the coastal plain.

**Deadly December Tornadoes in Alabama and Mississippi:** Deadly tornadoes at about mid-month affected parts of Mississippi and Alabama. Preliminary reports indicate that 12 people died in the event, 11 of those in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. The Tuscaloosa F4 tornado was on the ground for a total of 18 miles, all within Tuscaloosa county. The tornado path was estimated to be 750 yards wide at its maximum intensity. The morning after the tornadoes, temperatures dropped into the 20's in Tuscaloosa, with wind chills to near 0F.

The scope of this report is to highlight the major climate and weather events for 2000 and is not all inclusive. This report was compiled at the National Climatic Data Center (NCDC) on 12/21/00 by NCDC meteorologists Tom Ross ([tom.ross@noaa.gov](mailto:tom.ross@noaa.gov)); Neal Lott ([neal.lott@noaa.gov](mailto:neal.lott@noaa.gov)) and William Brown ([william.brown@noaa.gov](mailto:william.brown@noaa.gov)).

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