



# FLORIDA COCORAHS

## APRIL 2009

### NEWSLETTER

#### Out Like A Lion?

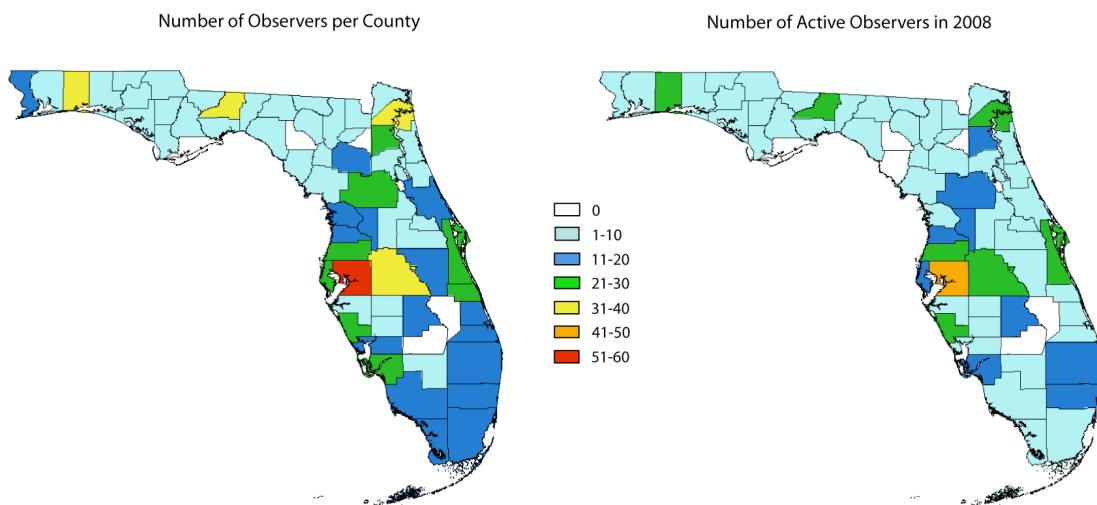
Spring has officially come to Florida... but I think someone forgot to inform Mother Nature. I woke up this yesterday morning to frost on the roof of the house, on the grass and on my azalea bushes. It reminded me about the Easter Freeze of 2007, which did damage to a lot of agricultural industries in the Southeast U.S.

The old saying goes, "*If March comes in like a lion, it will go out like a lamb.*" So, what happens if March comes in like a lamb? Portions of the state found out over the last two weeks.

#### A Quick Status Update

Vermont and Arkansas were the latest states to become members of CoCoRaHS. That brings the total number of states active in the program to 42. West Virginia will be coming on board in May, Hawaii in June and Connecticut in July. If you know anyone in these states who might be interested in becoming a volunteer observer, let them know that CoCoRaHS is on its way.

In Florida, we have slowly been approaching 850 observers. Here's a little graphic that shows where all of our observers are, and how many were active in 2008.



#### Current State Of The Drought

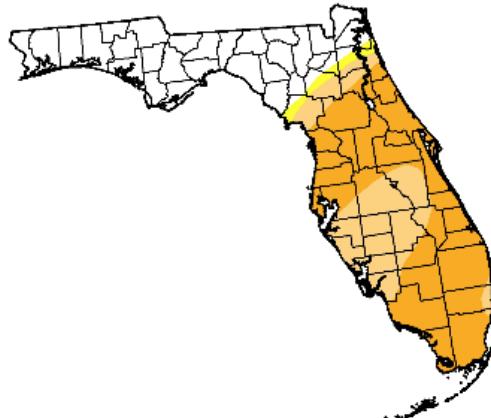
At the beginning of last month, all of the state was listed as having some sort of drought impact (D0-D4). The weather systems that moved through north Florida recently have erased the D0 drought conditions in the western Panhandle in parts of the Big Bend. There is an extremely small line from Cedar Key to St. Augustine that defines the areas that are in and out of drought.

The area of D2 (severe drought) has expanded in the past month, and now encompasses most of south Florida and the Interstate 4 corridor. Water restrictions have been enacted in many parts of these areas.

## U.S. Drought Monitor Florida

**April 7, 2009**  
Valid 7 a.m. EST

	Drought Conditions (Percent Area)					
	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	35.2	64.8	62.9	43.0	0.0	0.0
Last Week (03/31/2009 map)	17.8	82.2	78.7	36.6	0.0	0.0
3 Months Ago (01/13/2009 map)	44.0	56.0	13.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Start of Calendar Year (01/06/2009 map)	44.0	56.0	13.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Start of Water Year (10/07/2008 map)	75.8	24.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
One Year Ago (04/08/2008 map)	73.3	26.7	17.9	0.0	0.0	0.0



*Intensity:*

- |   |                       |   |                          |
|---|-----------------------|---|--------------------------|
| ■ | D0 Abnormally Dry     | ■ | D3 Drought - Extreme     |
| ■ | D1 Drought - Moderate | ■ | D4 Drought - Exceptional |
| ■ | D2 Drought - Severe   |   |                          |

*The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions.  
Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary  
for forecast statements*



*Released Thursday, April 9, 2009*

*Author: Mark Svoboda, National Drought Mitigation Center*

Despite the record rainfall amounts that have fallen over parts of north Florida, spring is usually a dry period for us here in Florida. So, remember: "0.00" is a valid value and it's just as important to know where/when it hasn't rained as where/when it has.

You can take a look at the latest NOAA Seasonal Drought Outlook at this link:

[http://www.cpc.noaa.gov/products/expert\\_assessment/seasonal\\_drought.html](http://www.cpc.noaa.gov/products/expert_assessment/seasonal_drought.html)

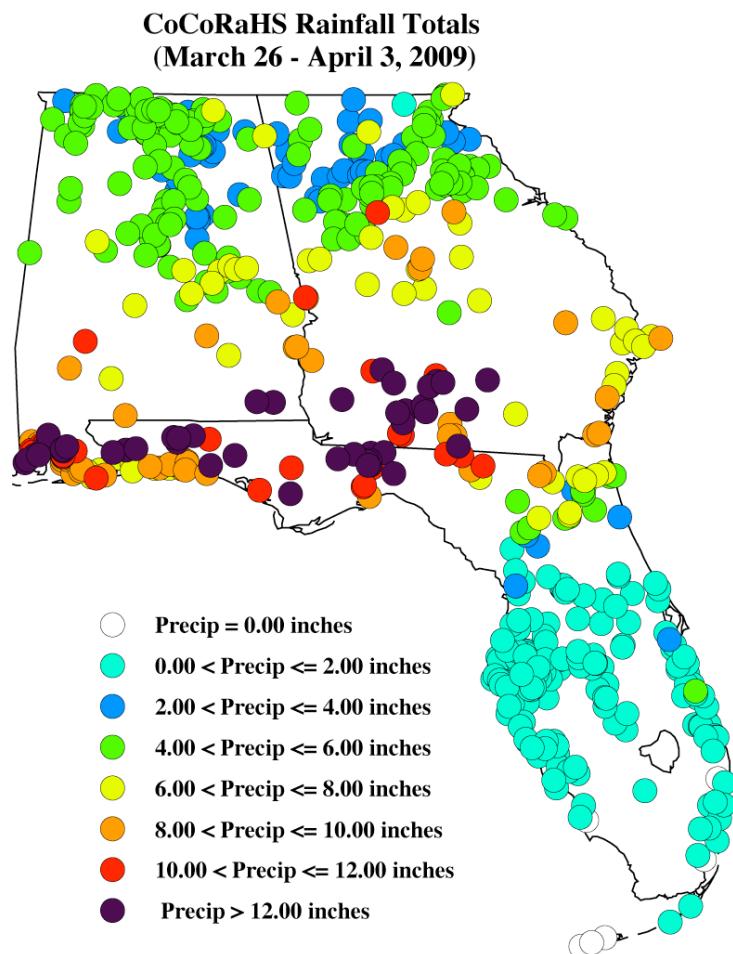
### Soggy North Florida, Dry Elsewhere

The last week of March brought a shift in the large-scale weather patterns across the Southeast U.S., characterized by an active pattern with frequent low-pressure systems moving across the northern Gulf Coast. These systems were accompanied by classic pre-frontal squall lines that dumped heavy rain across the Panhandle and north Florida on March 26-28th and again on the 31<sup>st</sup>. The slow-moving nature of these systems resulted in widespread heavy rainfall across the entire area, with weekly accumulations of nearly 20 inches north of Pensacola, decreasing to 5-6 inches near Tallahassee as you move eastward. This active weather pattern continued into the first week of April with even more heavy rainfall events for north Florida, Alabama, and Georgia. We will not detail the nature of these events in this summary for March, but will address the major flooding issue that the combined totals produced.

Unfortunately, the torrential rains failed to progress down the peninsula where the driest areas of the state are located. South of a diagonal line from Gainesville to St. Augustine, the peninsula received only 1-2 inches during the month of March and continued the string of months with below-normal rainfall. The one exception is the area around Pompano Beach, where a localized heavy storm produced 6.05 inches on March 18.

Station	Total Rainfall	Departure from Normal
Pensacola	12.34	5.14
Tallahassee	5.29	-1.18
Jacksonville	4.79	-0.86
Orlando	1.39	-2.45
Tampa	0.98	-1.86
Miami	1.78	-0.78
Key West	0.72	-1.14

Here's a map of all the CoCoRaHS stations in Alabama, Florida, and Georgia that reported during the 9-day period of March 26<sup>th</sup> through April 3<sup>rd</sup>. (Note: Most of the observations from central and south Florida during the 9-day period were under an inch.)



### Highest CoCoRaHS Totals in Alabama, Florida and Georgia

Station	Rainfall Total
AL-MB-1	12.93"
GA-LN-1	12.88"
GA-DH-1	12.87"
FL-ES-4	12.87"
AL-MB-22	12.81"
FL-SR-4	12.71"
GA-LW-4	12.70"

The progression weather systems in late March/early April produced heavy rainfall across north Florida, Alabama, and Georgia resulting in major flooding in low-lying areas and record or near record heights on the area's rivers. Below are some of the recorded or forecast river crests from the NWS Southeast River Forecast Center:

#### Pinetta Florida on the Withlacoochee River – Record Flood

- Pinetta is forecast to crest at a new record near 88.00 feet. The old record was 85.05 on April 5, 1948.

#### Three Rivers Estates on the Suwannee River – Major Flood

- Three Rivers Estates is forecast to rise above major flood level towards mid-week.

#### Havana Florida on the Ochlockonee River – Major Flood

- Havana crest at 33.45 feet, a major flood, and just under the 2nd highest flood on record. The 2nd highest flood on record was 33.71 feet.

#### Altha Florida on the Chipola River – Major Flood

- Altha crest at 30.66 feet with the 4th highest level on record.

#### Bruce Florida on the Choctawhatchee River – Major Flood

- Bruce crested at 20.52 feet with the 5<sup>th</sup> highest level on record.

#### Ellaville Florida on the Suwannee River – Major Flood

- Ellaville is forecast to crest next weekend at a level that would be the 2nd highest on record. Florida Department of Transportation has closed US 90 over the Suwannee and may be required to close a portion of Interstate 10 and US 27 as early as 4/9/09. These closures would force travelers going east/west in the Panhandle to take a detour through Georgia.

## Have Questions?

If at any time you have questions about CoCoRaHS, reading your rain gauge, or finding a location to set-up your rain gauge, please feel to contact a CoCoRaHS Coordinator. We are lucky enough to have regional support from the National Weather Service offices across the state, as well as a few members who have offered to help out at the county/local level. You can find all of the contact information for the CoCoRaHS Coordinators at:

[http://www.cocorahs.org/Content.aspx?page=coord\\_FL](http://www.cocorahs.org/Content.aspx?page=coord_FL)

Take care,

Melissa Griffin

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*"Because Every Drop Counts!"*