Climate Summary for Florida – February 2026

Prepared by Emily Powell of the Florida Climate Center, The Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida
Online at: http://climatecenter.fsu.edu/products-services/summaries

Summary

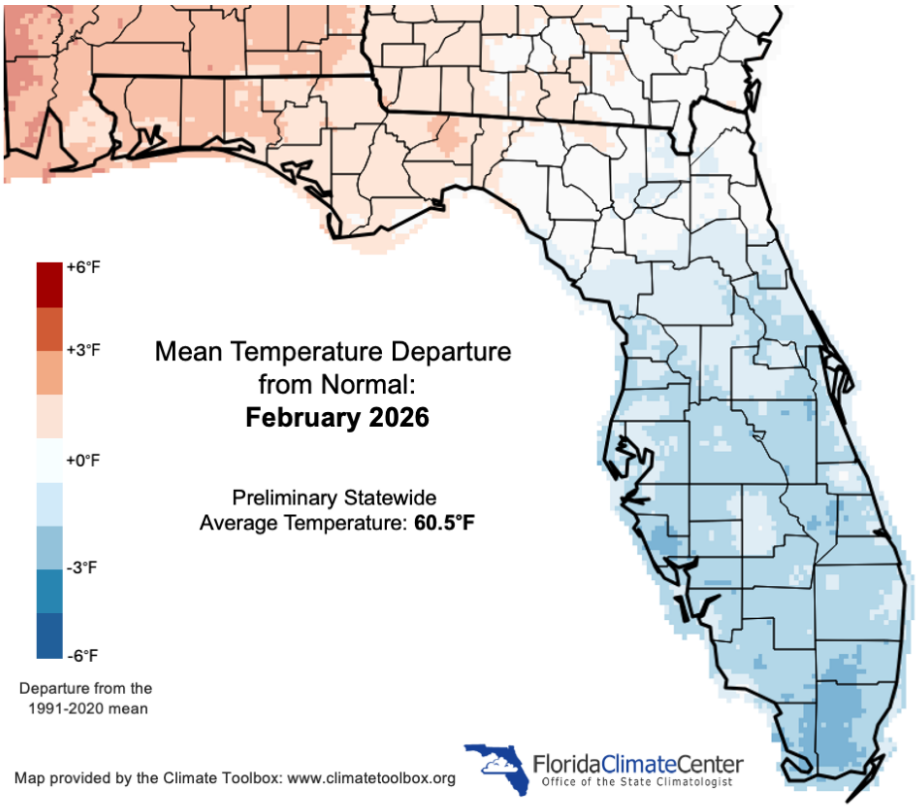
- Monthly mean temperatures in February were above normal in the Florida Panhandle and below normal in the Peninsula.
- Monthly precipitation totals in February were mostly below normal in Florida.
- Drought conditions persisted and extreme drought (D3) expanded across Florida during the month.
- A La Niña advisory continued during the past month with a transition to ENSO-neutral expected in February-April 2026 (60% chance).

Monthly average temperatures in February were above normal in the Florida Panhandle and below normal in the Peninsula. Average monthly temperature departures from normal ranged from -5.3℉ at the Archbold Bio Station (near Lake Placid) to +1.4℉ in Pensacola for the month (see Table 1 and Appendix 1 for select cities). The frigid weather in late January continued in early February, and it was the coldest, or 2nd-coldest, start to February on record across the Florida Peninsula. In addition, the period from January 27 to February 9 was the coldest or one of the top 5 coldest periods across Florida. Most places were impacted with at least 2-4 consecutive nights of hard freezes, including as far south as Port Charlotte and West Palm Beach. Tallahassee and Gainesville each saw 8 consecutive nights below 30℉. Many new daily record low minimum temperatures were broken early in the month. The record cold start to the month was followed by a warmup mid month but another round of much below average temperatures impacted the state during the last week of February. Large temperature swings this winter resulted in near average mean temperatures for winter overall (Dec-Feb). Appendix 2 provides select daily record low temperatures tied or broken during the month.

Table 1. February average temperatures and departures from normal (℉) for select cities.

Station	Mean Temperature	Departure from Normal
Pensacola	58.2	+1.4
Tallahassee	56.1	+0.5
Jacksonville	56.1	-1.4
Orlando	60.4	-3.2
Tampa	61.4	-3.3
Miami	66.4	-4.3
Key West	68.6	-3.7

Figure 1. Monthly average temperature departures from normal (˚F) for February 2026 for Florida.

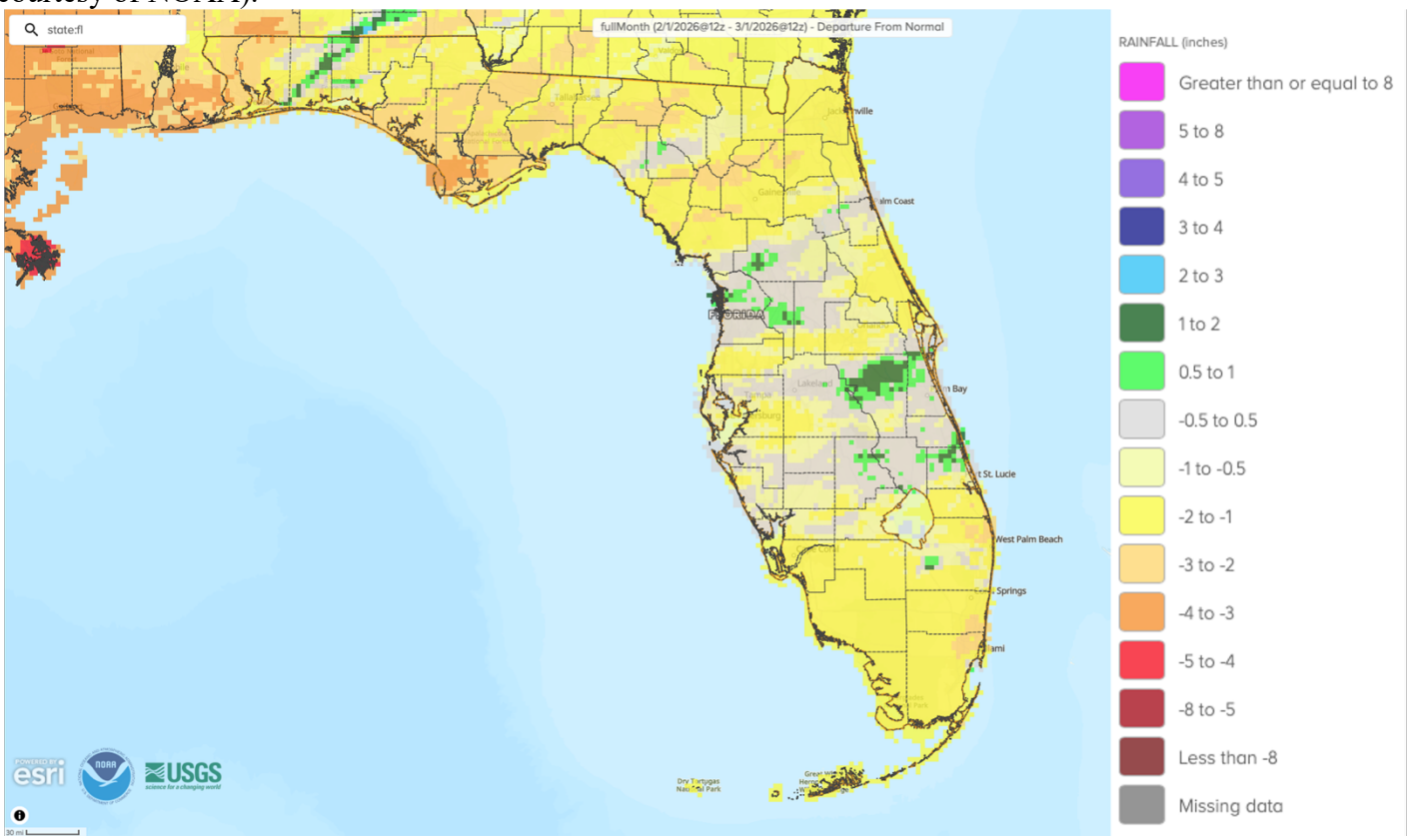


Monthly precipitation totals in February were mostly below normal. The monthly precipitation departures from normal ranged from -2.40 inches in Tallahassee to +0.24 inches in Sarasota (see Table 2 and Appendix 1 for select locations). February saw a continuation of below-average rainfall with widespread deficits of 1-2.5 inches and only isolated parts of central Florida registering near to above average rainfall for the month. Several locations experienced one of their top 10 driest months of February on record, including Jacksonville (3rd-driest based on 87 years), Miami (4th-driest based on 89 years), Clermont (5th-driest based on 66 years), and Ft. Lauderdale (6th-driest based on 87 years). Winter seasonal precipitation (DJF) had deficits on the order of 4-5 inches in the Panhandle, 2-3 inches in Central Florida, and 3-7 inches in South Florida. West Palm Beach tied for its 2nd-driest winter on record with 7.57 inches **below** average for the season (128 years); winter precipitation in Stuart was also 2nd-driest on record with 7.27 inches **below** average (66 years). The lack of rainfall over the past 6 months has led to very low streamflows in Florida.

Table 2. February precipitation totals and departures from normal (inches) for select cities.

Station	Total Rainfall	Departure from Normal
Pensacola	3.26	-1.51
Tallahassee	1.88	-2.40
Jacksonville	0.67	-2.19
Orlando	0.60	-1.44
Tampa	2.04	-0.58
Miami	0.08	-2.07
Key West	0.09	-1.45

Figure 2. A graphical depiction of the monthly rainfall departure from normal (in inches) for February 2026 (courtesy of NOAA).



La Niña Advisory

The tropical equatorial Pacific Ocean has remained in a La Niña state with below-average sea surface temperatures in the east-central region of the equatorial Pacific Ocean. Subsurface temperature anomalies increased with expanding above-average subsurface temperatures across the tropical Pacific Ocean. A transition to ENSO-neutral is favored in February-April 2026 (60% chance). ENSO-neutral is likely to continue through the Northern Hemisphere summer 2026 (56% chance in June-August 2026). The probability for an El Niño increases during late summer and beyond, with a 50-60% chance, though large uncertainty remains that far out.

Hazardous Weather Events in February.

According to the Local Storm Reports issued by the local National Weather Service offices serving Florida, there were 148 individual local reports of hazardous weather events recorded across the state during the month of February (see Table 3 for a breakdown by event type). Snow flurries were reported in the overnight hours of January 31st to February 1st in west-central and southwest Florida, including in Manatee, Sarasota, Hillsborough, Pinellas, Charlotte, and Lee Counties, but no accumulation occurred. Wildfires picked up during the month with continued dry conditions and gusty winds. During the first week of February, wildfires in Putnam County led to school and road closures. On the 2nd, bush fires broke out in Brevard County and a fire shut down a 7-mile stretch of I-95 in both directions due to low visibility but was quickly contained. On the 5th, a wildfire in Flagler County forced the evacuation of 25 residences and a building. Two wildfires broke out late during the month, one in western Broward County near I-75 and US 27 in the Everglades and another wildfire near the runway of the Homestead General Airport. The largest wildfire was the National Fire in the Big Cypress National Preserve in South Florida which had burned more than 35,000 acres, affected visibility in the region, and closed several roadways including a portion of I-75 known as Alligator Alley.

Table 3. Breakdown of storm reports submitted in Florida during the month of February 2026 (compiled from Iowa State University/Iowa Environmental Mesonet).

Report Type	Number of Reports
Heavy Rain	0
Flood	0
Hail	9
Snow Flurries	10
Marine Thunderstorm Wind	24
Non-Thunderstorm Wind Gust	45
Thunderstorm Wind Damage	13
Thunderstorm Wind Gust	20
Non-Thunderstorm Wind Damage	2
Tornado/Waterspout/Funnel Cloud	0 / 1 / 2
Wildfire	22

Daily Record Events in February.

Table 4. Summary of daily records **broken** in Florida in February 2026 (source: NCEI Daily Weather Records).

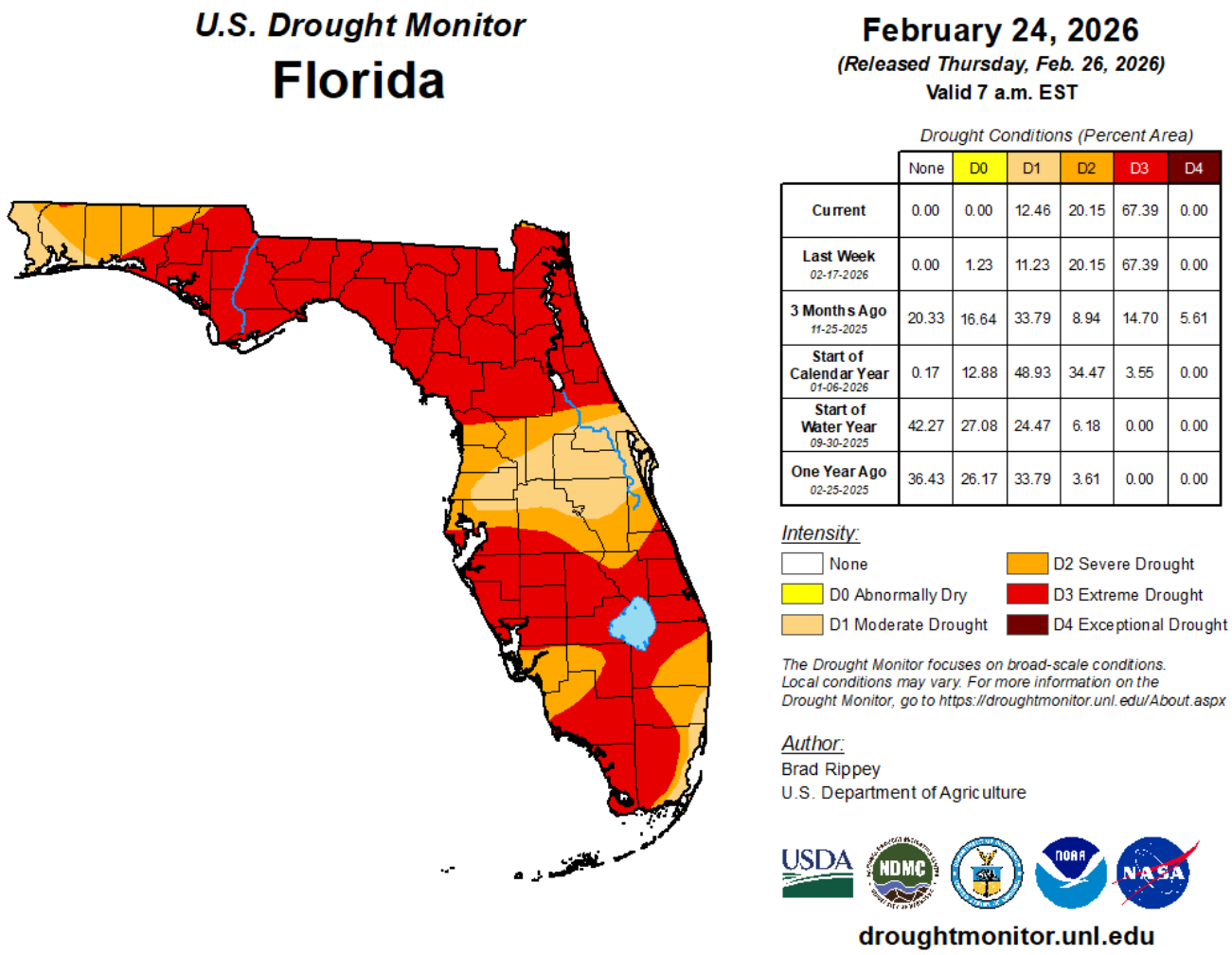
Category	Number of Records
Highest daily max. temp.	59
Highest daily min. temp.	19
Lowest daily max. temp.	72
Lowest daily min. temp.	120
Highest daily precipitation	6
Total	**276**

Drought-Related Impacts.

By mid-month, drought continued to affect virtually all of Florida with 99% of the state in some level of drought (D1-D4). As of February 17, approximately 67% of the state was in extreme drought (D3), 20% was in severe drought (D2), and 11% was in moderate drought (D1); about 1% of the state was abnormally dry (D0), according to the U.S. Drought Monitor. By the end of the month, approximately 67% of the state was in extreme drought (D3), 20% was in severe drought (D2), and 12% was in moderate drought (D1); no areas were considered abnormally dry (D0) (Figure 2 below).

As of February 28, the Lake Okeechobee water level was 12.27 ft. above sea level (Feet-NGVD29), which is below average for this time of year. At the first of February, the water level was 12.72 ft. above sea level.

Figure 3. A graphical depiction of the latest drought conditions in Florida according to the U.S. Drought Monitor (courtesy of the National Drought Mitigation Center, University of Nebraska-Lincoln).



	None	D0	D1	D2	D3	D4
Current	0.00	0.00	12.46	20.15	67.39	0.00
Last Week 02-17-2026	0.00	1.23	11.23	20.15	67.39	0.00
3 Months Ago 11-25-2025	20.33	16.64	33.79	8.94	14.70	5.61
Start of Calendar Year 01-06-2026	0.17	12.88	48.93	34.47	3.55	0.00
Start of Water Year 09-30-2025	42.27	27.08	24.47	6.18	0.00	0.00
One Year Ago 02-25-2025	36.43	26.17	33.79	3.61	0.00	0.00

Agriculture-Related Impacts.

Following a dry fall and winter, concerns for spring crops are increasing for producers. At the end of February, the entire state was experiencing some level of drought conditions. The continuation of dry weather in most areas along with widespread hard freezes during the first part of the month impacted crop conditions. The hard freezes damaged strawberries, blueberries, sugarcane, citrus, and vegetable crops. The availability of water for freeze protection during the ongoing drought was a concern as well. Winter freezes overall have led to an estimated $3.2 billion in losses to Florida agriculture this season. Ongoing rainfall deficits impacted winter grazing and cover crops, and watermelon and rice planting were halfway completed by month's end. Hay and supplemental feeding for livestock continued, though hay supplies were tight due to poor pasture quality due to months of dry, cold conditions. For more information, consult the Crop Progress - State Stories, which are published by the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service each year from December – March.

Appendix 1. Additional February departures from normal data for select Florida locations (source: NWS).

Station	Average Temperature (ºF)	Departure from Normal (ºF)	Total Rainfall (in.)	Departure from Normal (in.)
Gainesville	55.9	-2.5	0.87	-1.80
Sarasota	61.7	-3.1	2.16	+0.24
Melbourne	60.3	-3.7	2.06	+0.08
Fort Myers	63.9	-3.4	0.47	-1.31
West Palm Beach	65.3	-3.1	0.75	-1.88

Appendix 2. Select daily record low minimum temperatures tied or broken during February (compiled from NOAA).

Location	Date	Record (°F)	Broken/Tied	Last
Apalachicola	1	20	Broken	26 in 1977
Daytona Beach	1	23	Broken	31 in 1965
Deland	1	22	Broken	26 in 1936
Fernandina Beach	1	22	Broken	25 in 1936
Inverness	1	22	Broken	23 in 2022
Lake City	1	19	Broken	22 in 1909
Lisbon	1	23	Broken	30 in 1979
Ocala	1	20	Broken	24 in 1977
Stuart	1	28	Broken	36 in 1979
Titusville	1	25	Broken	30 in 1965
Wauchula	1	24	Broken	26 in 2022
Marianna	1	20	Broken	22 in 1951
Orlando	1	24	Broken	33 in 1979
Gainesville	1	20	Broken	28 in 1965
Miami	1	35	Broken	43 in 1979
Tampa	1	29	Broken	33 in 1965
West Palm Beach	1	30	Broken	38 in 1979
Lakeland	1	24	Broken	33 in 1979
Jacksonville	1	22	Broken	24 in 1977
Fort Lauderdale	2	34	Broken	38 in 1979
Fort Pierce	2	27	Broken	34 in 1980
Homestead	2	33	Broken	42 in 2003
Kissimmee	2	24	Broken	31 in 1980
Lake City	2	19	Broken	21 in 2005
Melbourne	2	26	Broken	33 in 1980
Plant City	2	26	Tied	26 in 1936
Gainesville	2	22	Broken	30 in 2013
Vero Beach	2	27	Broken	37 in 1951
Tallahassee	2	18	Broken	19 in 1951
Melbourne	3	29	Broken	35 in 1979
Orlando	3	30	Broken	33 in 1976
Marianna	24	26	Broken	31 in 2002
Gainesville	24	25	Tied	25 in 1989
Crestview	24	24	Tied	24 in 1978
Fort Lauderdale	25	44	Broken	49 in 2010
Usher Tower	25	22	Broken	24 in 1989