



Important Messages:

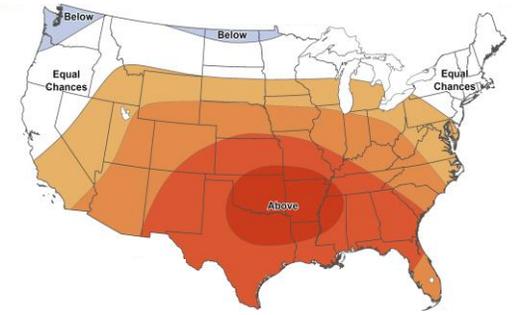
ENSO in Transition

- ✓ La Niña continues to fade with ENSO neutral conditions favored (90%) by the end of the three month period (MAM).
- ✓ The ENSO transition favors a mean zonal flow pattern across much of the region with the highest uncertainty across the north central U.S.
- ✓ The ENSO transition combined with reduced snowpack favors warmer than normal temps.

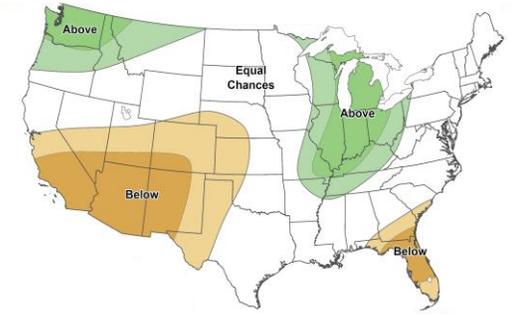
March 2026 Temperature & Precipitation Outlooks

- The expected ENSO transition supports a mean zonal to southwesterly flow pattern this March, which is consistent across forecast guidance and tools.
- A zonal flow pattern favors warmer than normal temps across much of the region, the exception being the far north, where less certainty exists.
- Drier than normal conditions are favored near the Four Corners with wetter than normal conditions across the Midwest, in part, due to residual La Niña effects.

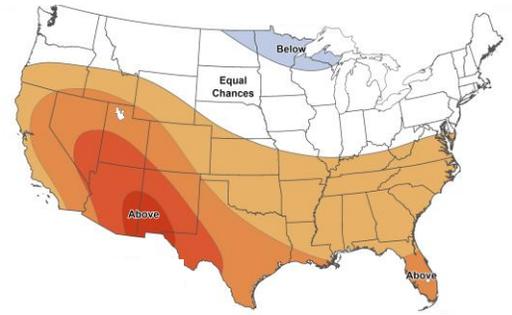
One Month Temperature Outlook



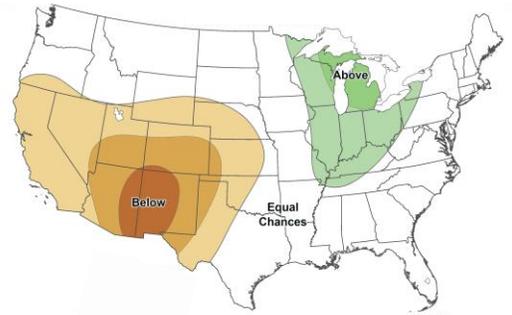
One Month Precipitation Outlook



Three Month Temperature Outlook

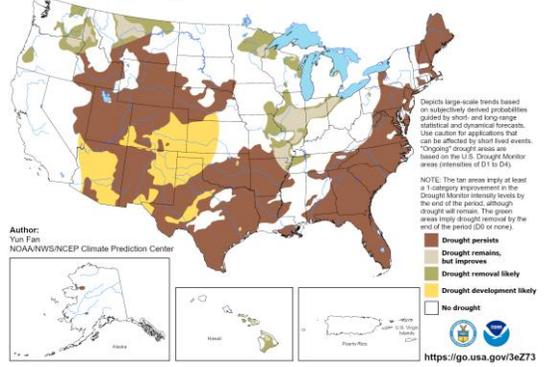


Three Month Precipitation Outlook



Seasonal Drought Outlook

U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook
Drought Tendency During the Valid Period
Valid for February 19 - May 31, 2026
Released February 19, 2026



- Robust signals for wetter than normal precipitation favors improvement in drought conditions across much of the Midwest and Great Lakes.
- A lean towards drier than normal conditions strengthens over the southwest portion of the region with time, leading to the expansion/persistence of drought.

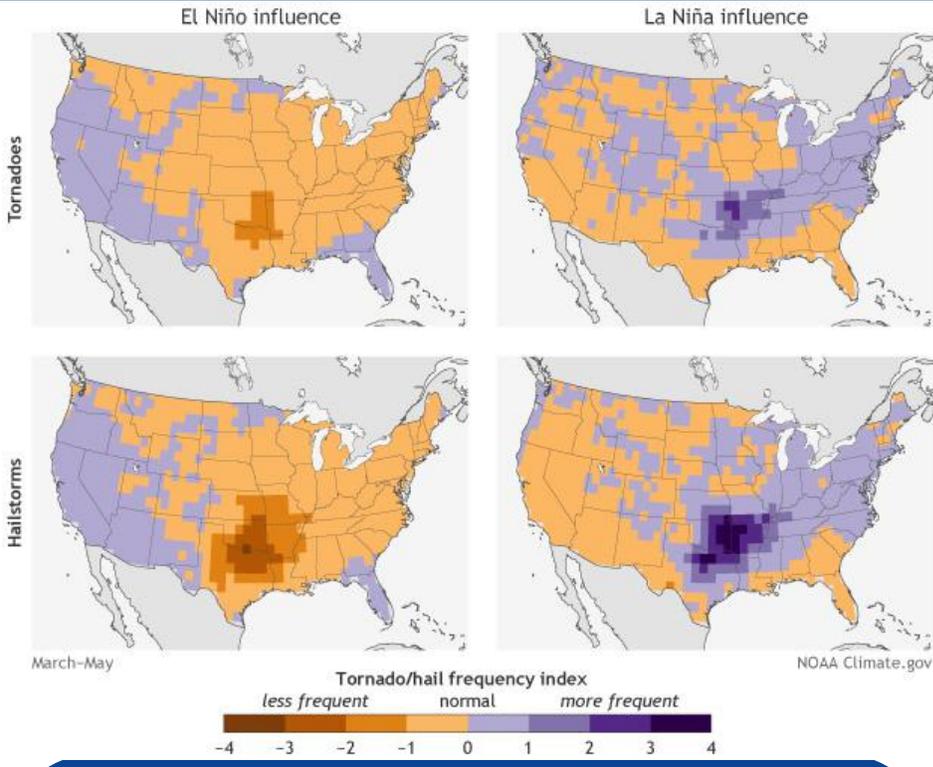
Mar-Apr-May (MAM) 2026 Temperature & Precipitation Outlooks

- ENSO neutral conditions signal mean zonal flow continuing into MAM, with warmer than normal temps favored across the southern parts of the region with some potential coolness to the north.
- The drier than normal precip signal strengthens across the west-central Plains (MAM) with a robust signal for above normal precip across the mid-Mississippi Valley/Great Lakes.





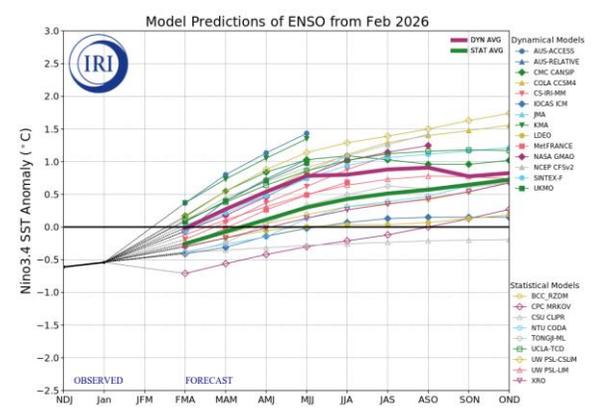
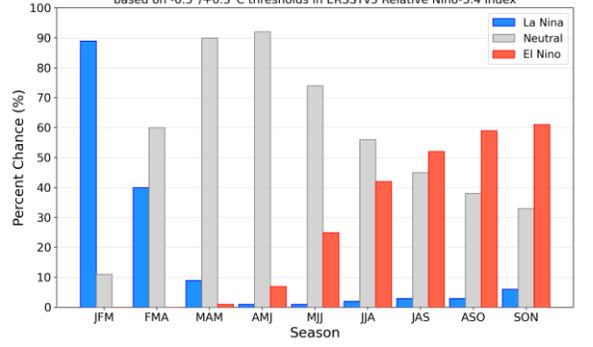
ENSO Transition: Impacts on the Severe Weather Season



As La Niña conditions transition to ENSO neutral over the coming season, some lingering impacts of La Niña may impact severe weather frequencies across the US. The above maps highlight changes in severe weather frequency based on ENSO phase. ENSO phase, transition speed and the magnitude of ENSO conditions can all influence the impact of ENSO on severe weather (while also acknowledging that severe weather is highly variable and more noisy than just temperature and precipitation data).

IRI/CPC Probabilistic ENSO Forecast/Plumes

Official NOAA CPC ENSO Probabilities (issued February 2026)
based on -0.5/+0.5°C thresholds in ERSSTv5 Relative Niño-3.4 index



- Upper ocean heat anomalies show significant temperature rises of approximately 1.6 degrees from mid-November through mid-February.
- High probabilities (90%) for ENSO neutral conditions by MAM give way to increasing probabilities for El Niño by JAS.

Other Teleconnection Info

- The Arctic Oscillation (AO) ensembles are clustered around a positive AO phase returning in early March, favoring a locked polar vortex, and consequently a low potential for a cold air intrusion.
- Persistence of a positive Pacific-North American (PNA) favors lower-than average pressure tendencies western U.S.

Useful Links/Info:

- Latest information from [NOAA Climate Sea Surface Temperatures](#) from the Climate Prediction Center
- [Latest ENSO Discussion](#) from the Climate Prediction Center
- [Drought Information](#) from the US Drought Monitor
- [Interactive GIS Mapping](#) from NCEI (Anomalies/Rankings)

