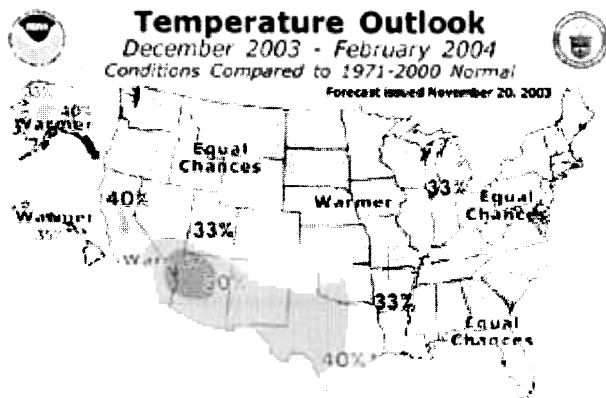


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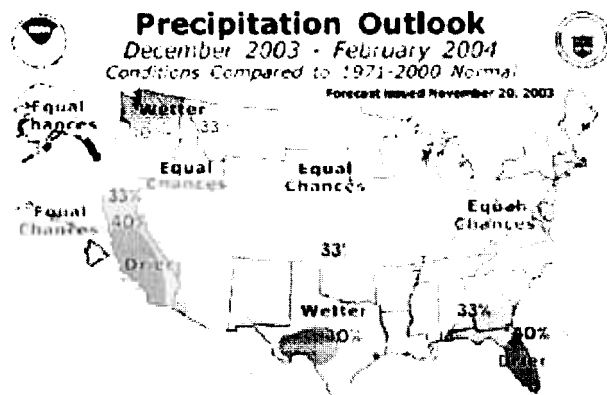
NOAA ISSUES WINTER OUTLOOK UPDATE; WINTER WEATHER STILL PROMISING MUCH VARIABILITY



Nov. 20, 2003 — The [NOAA Climate Prediction Center](#) today released its update to the U.S. winter outlook, which says temperatures and precipitation may vary this season, especially in the East. **(Click [NOAA image](#) for larger view of forecast winter temperatures for the USA. Click [here](#) for high resolution version, which is a large file. Please credit "NOAA.")**

For December, January and February, [NOAA](#) forecasters are calling for the likelihood of above-average precipitation over Texas, Oklahoma, Washington, northern Oregon and northern Idaho, while below-normal precipitation is likely over Florida, southern Georgia, and California. Meanwhile, above normal temperatures are now likely over the central U.S. from Texas to Wisconsin, including almost all of the Great Plains. Above-normal temperatures are also expected for the southwest U.S., including all of New Mexico and Arizona; and West Coast states of California, Oregon, and Washington, and for Alaska and Hawaii. For other parts of the nation, the winter will have equal chance of above-, below- or near-normal temperatures and precipitation.

NOAA forecasters continue to expect the existing multi-year drought conditions in much of the interior West and parts of the Central Plains to continue for at least the next three months. Some improvement is likely, mostly in some areas in the north-central Plains and parts of the West. In many areas in the inter-mountain region, from Arizona to Montana and the western Great Plains, drought will likely persist and contribute to a lingering, long-term water shortage. **(Click [NOAA image](#) for larger view of forecast winter precipitation for the USA. Click [here](#) for high resolution version, which is a large file. Please credit "NOAA.")**



"Conditions in the central Pacific will not play a strong role in the winter weather patterns over the U.S.," said Edward O'Lenic, meteorologist at the NOAA Climate Prediction Center. "While last winter's jet stream patterns were relatively persistent, leading to cooler than average conditions in the eastern U.S., this winter we see more frequent jet stream swings, resulting in more variable weather patterns and regimes lasting from one to several weeks," he added.

Today's winter outlook update expands the area of warmer-than-normal expected conditions from the South and West to include all of the central U.S., but excludes the inter-mountain West and Rocky Mountain region. The wetter-than-normal area in the

Northwest, and the slight increased risk of dryness in the southeast and California are also new. These changes are based on updated empirical and dynamical prediction tools NOAA forecasters utilize to make seasonal climate forecasts.

Over the last month and the first few weeks of November, the U.S. has been experiencing some dramatic weather events. However, according to the [NOAA Climatic Data Center in Asheville, N.C., October 2003](#) ranked as the 8th warmest and 30th driest October for the U.S. in 108 years. The Western region and central part of the U.S. were mostly dry, while the Northeastern and extreme Northwestern regions were mostly wet for October. The outlook for December through February implies a continuation of at least some of the elements that contributed to these observations. In particular, odds are better than average for abnormally wet conditions in the Northwest, while drier-than-average conditions are more likely than average in California and Florida.

NOAA will issue an update for the January-February-March period and beyond on December 18, 2003.

The NOAA Climate Prediction Center is part of the [NOAA National Weather Service](#), which is the primary source of weather data, forecasts and warnings for the United States and its territories.

NOAA is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing environmental stewardship of the nation's coastal and marine resources. NOAA is part of the [U.S. Department of Commerce](#).

Relevant Web Sites

[NOAA Climate Prediction Center](#)

[NOAA Drought Information Center](#)

[El Niño/Southern Oscillation \(ENSO\) Diagnostic Discussion](#)

[Weekly El Niño/Southern Oscillation \(ENSO\) Update](#)

[Most Recent 2 Months Sea Surface Temperature Anomaly Animation](#)

[El Niño and La Niña-related Winter Features over North America](#)

[Sea Surface Temperature Outlook](#)

[ENSO Impacts by Region](#)

[NOAA Storm Watch](#) — Get the latest severe weather information across the USA

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