



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE



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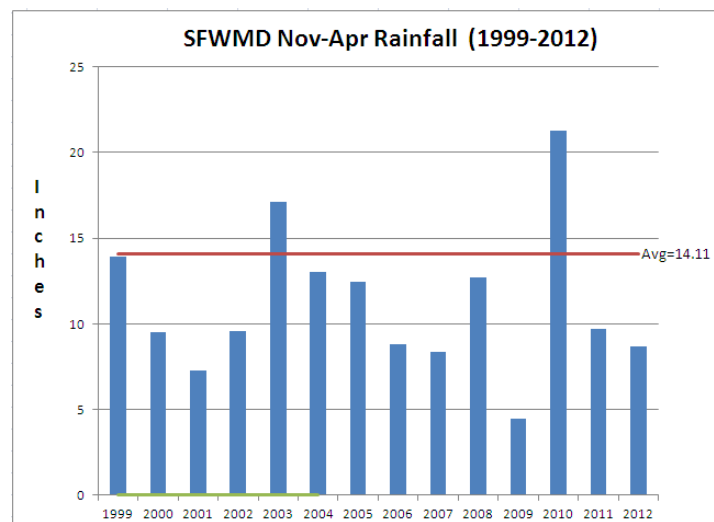
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South Florida Forecast: An Uncommonly Average Dry Season

A majority of dry seasons in the past 14 years have been below the historic average



Very few dry seasons in the past 14 years were close to the historic average. (Click graphic for a larger version.)

West Palm Beach, FL — South Florida is forecast to experience one of the few dry seasons with near-average rainfall in the past 14 years, officials announced today at a joint briefing by the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) and the National Weather Service (NWS). With water levels currently above average in key areas, the region will likely not see the drought conditions or the water supply challenges of previous years.

“Water managers like to see water levels at their highest safe levels going into the dry season to protect water supplies,” said Susan Sylvester, SFWMD Chief of the Water Control Operations Bureau. “While we still have the potential for significant rainfall this wet season, an average dry season should prevent the water supply concerns of the past several years.”

Only two South Florida dry seasons, 1998-1999 and 2003-2004, have actually been about average in the past 14 years, with two above average and 10 below average dry seasons. Released this week, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Climate Prediction Center forecast calls for equal chances of slightly above or slightly below average rainfall for the first three months of the upcoming dry season.

But both NWS and SFWMD climatologists and meteorologists caution that the uncertainty associated with a weather pattern known as El Niño means this dry season forecast has a lower confidence than previous years.

Among the official forecast highlights for the 2012-13 South Florida dry season:

- Near normal precipitation is mostly likely during the first part of the dry season, from November to February
- A drier-than-normal trend may characterize March and April
- Average dry season precipitation: 12 to 15 inches in the interior/west to 15 to 21 inches in the east
- Long-term average winter temperature: 64 to 66 F in the interior/west to 67 to 69 F in the east

*Just the Facts:
South Florida's Dry Season*

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- *November – May*
 - *About 18 inches of rain is the average*
 - *May and October are important transition months*
 - *March, April and May have the highest evaporation rates and lowest rainfall*

Wet Season Update

The new dry season forecast follows a 2012 wet season that has seen above average rainfall in nearly the entire 16-county District, from Orlando to the Florida Keys. District-wide, an average of 41.73 inches of rain, or 6.65 inches above the average, fell between May 8 and Thursday, October 18.

Palm Beach, Broward and Miami-Dade counties, along with the Kissimmee region, experienced the largest rainfall totals, including the historic deluge from Tropical Storm Isaac. In Palm Beach County alone, nearly 15 inches of rain fell in a 72-hour period. In its flood control operations, the District moved an estimated 105 billion gallons of water away from residents in several counties.

The historic rainfall pushed Lake Okeechobee to 15.9 feet NGVD on Friday, 0.84 inches above its historic average for this time of year.

Highlights of South Florida's Weather Roller Coaster:

- **Normal:** Florida receives an average of 52 inches of rainfall a year, with 70 percent falling during the five-month wet season from approximately June through October.

- **Record Wet Conditions:** Tropical Storm Isaac in late August 2012 proved to be a 1-in-100 year storm event.
- **Record Dry Conditions:** January 2012 was the driest January in the agency's 16-county region since recordkeeping began in 1932.
- **Record Dry Conditions:** The 2010-2011 dry season saw one of its latest starts in 20 years. October 2010 was the driest October on record in South Florida since 1932. The drought continued, with the driest October-to-mid-June period on record.
- **Record Wet Conditions:** In 2009, the sea breeze cycle ushered in the wet season in May. With 9.04 inches of rain falling across the District, May 2009 became the wettest May on record, according to District records dating back to 1932.

For more information:

- [SFWMD Weather/Rainfall Data](#)
- [National Weather Service Dry Season Forecast](#)
- [Climate Prediction Center Precipitation Forecast](#)

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About the South Florida Water Management District

The South Florida Water Management District is a regional, governmental agency that oversees the water resources in the southern half of the state – 16 counties from Orlando to the Keys. It is the oldest and largest of the state's five water management districts. The agency mission is to manage and protect water resources of the region by balancing and improving water quality, flood control, natural systems and water supply. A key initiative is cleanup and restoration of the Everglades.