



North Dakota Monthly Climate Summary

January 2026

Volume 20. No. 1

NORTH DAKOTA STATE CLIMATE OFFICE



January 2026



Optical effects were commonly seen throughout January



January 2026

January was roughly split between a mild, dry first half and a cold, dry second half. Early in the month, well-above-average temperatures prevailed across the region as Pacific air moved across the Northern Plains. In contrast, the latter half of January brought well-below-average temperatures as Arctic air took hold over much of the Eastern United States. Overall, the milder air had a greater influence, leading to above-average monthly temperatures for much of central and western North Dakota. Eastern and northeastern portions of the state ended up near average or slightly below average.

With only a few exceptions, much of North Dakota experienced drier-than-average conditions in January. The limited precipitation that did occur came primarily from Alberta Clipper systems, which have been the dominant weather feature across the state since early December.



Figure 1: The year kicked off to a frosty start as rime frost took over Western North Dakota for days in early January



Precipitation

Precipitation Summary

January 2026 Statewide Average Precipitation: 0.28"

Percent of Normal Statewide Precipitation: 55%

January is already a dry month, averaging about a half inch of precipitation, but this January was especially dry. Eastern North Dakota was the driest part of the state, except along the extreme edges of the Canadian border.

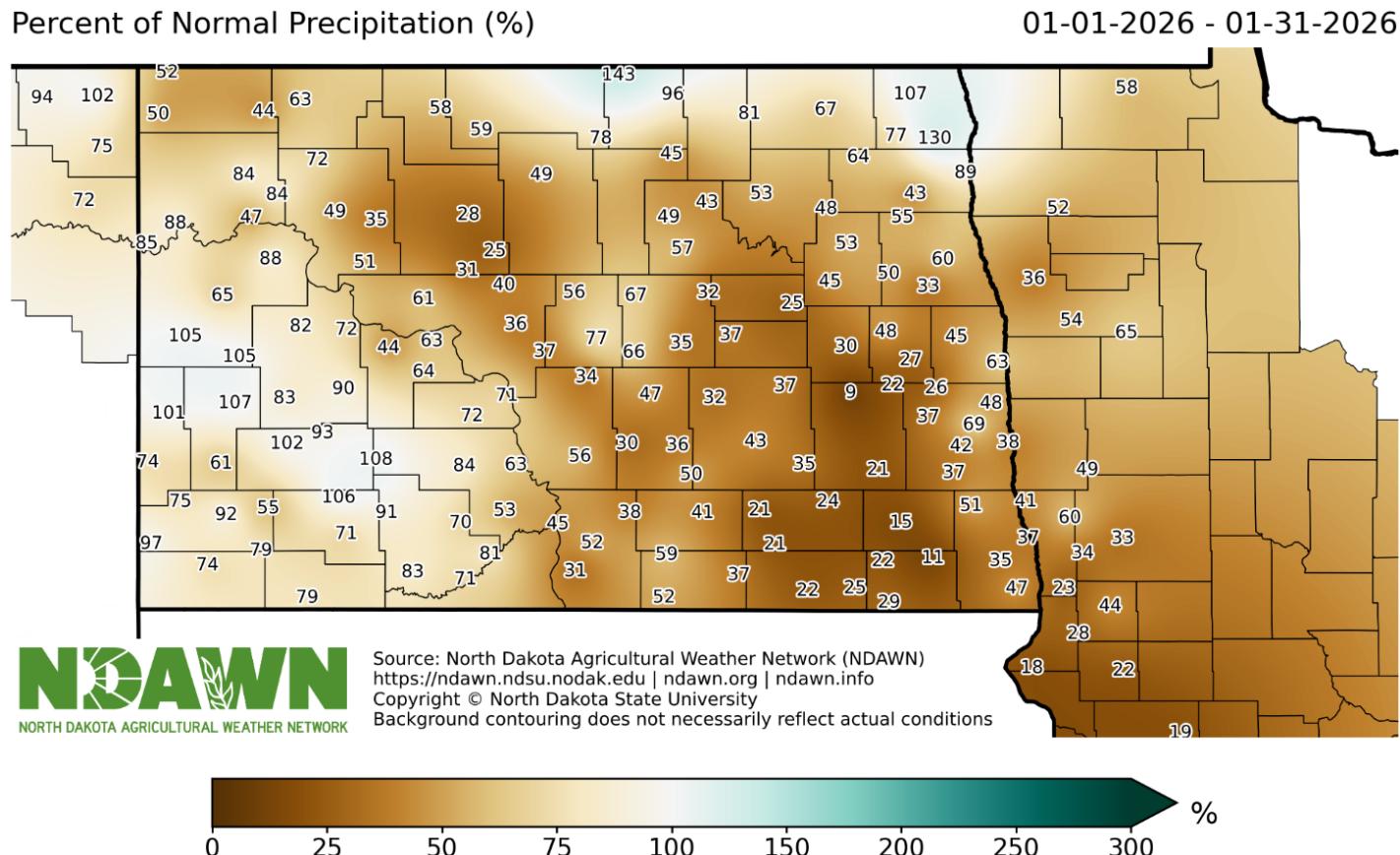


Figure 2: Percent of Average Precipitation measured at NDAWN stations with all-season precipitation gauges in January 2026

Precipitation

The maximum monthly precipitation recorded by NDAWN in North Dakota during the month of January was 0.66 inches at the Peace Garden station in Rolette County. That was 143% of average. The minimum monthly precipitation recorded at NDAWN in North Dakota was at the Dazey 2E station with only 0.04 inches of precipitation, 9% of normal (Figure 3).

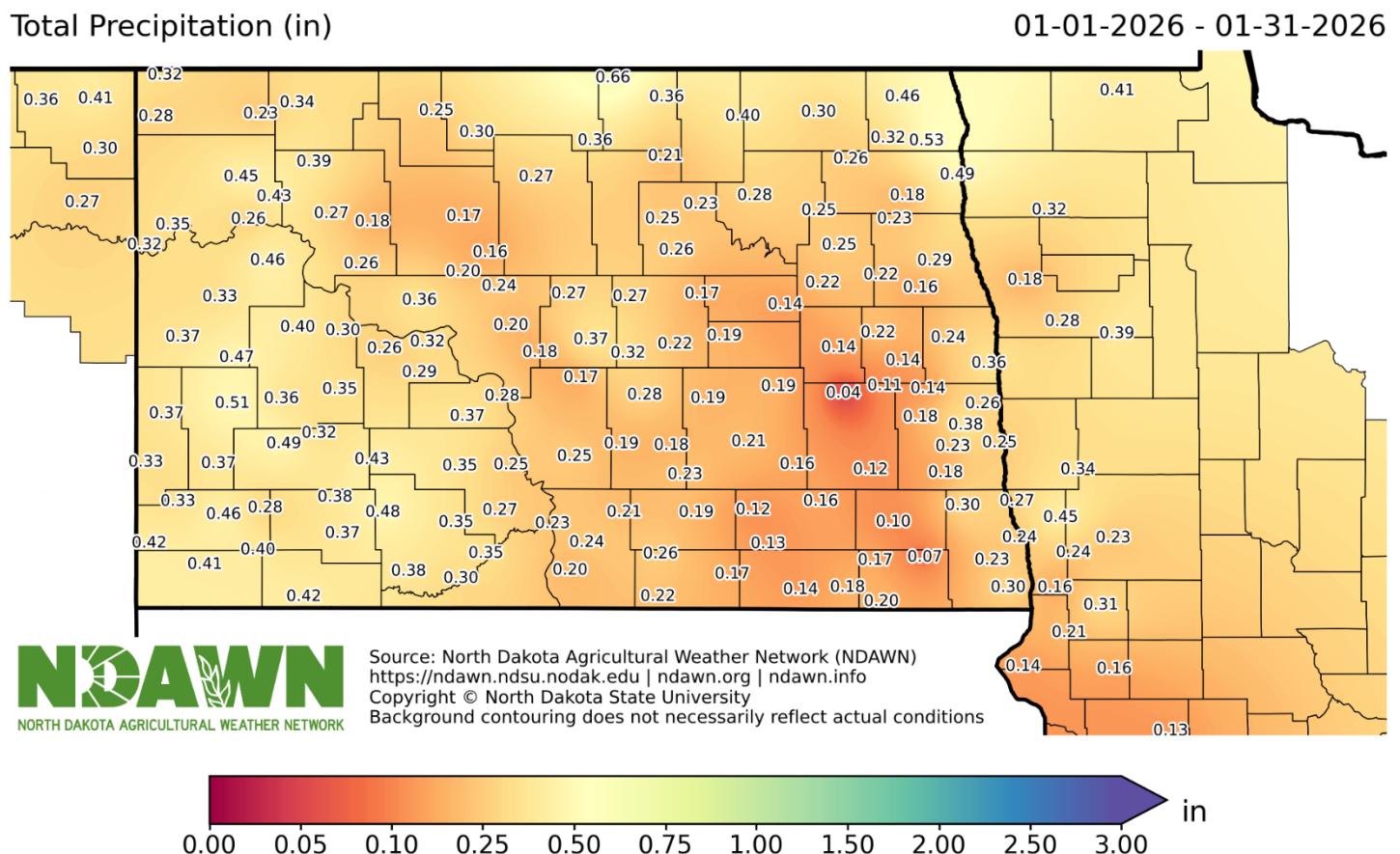


Figure 3: Total Precipitation measured at NDAWN stations with all-season precipitation gauges in January 2026



Precipitation

For the current water year (October 1 – January 31), southeast North Dakota remains dry, with most of the rest of the state well above average precipitation (Figure 4).

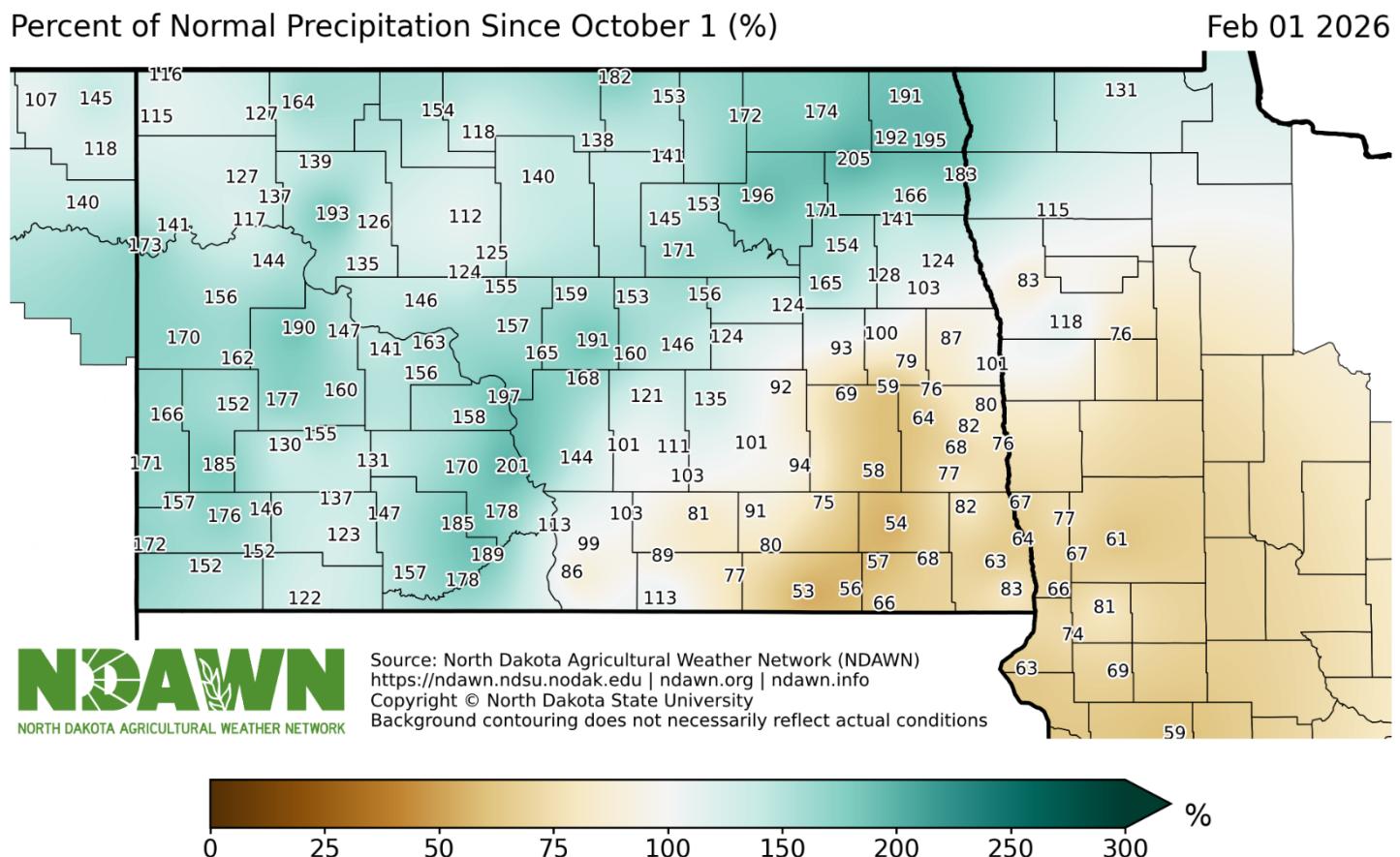


Figure 4: Percent of Average Precipitation measured at NDAWN stations with all-season for the current water year



Precipitation

Frozen soils kept the drought monitor unchanged throughout January. (Figure 5).

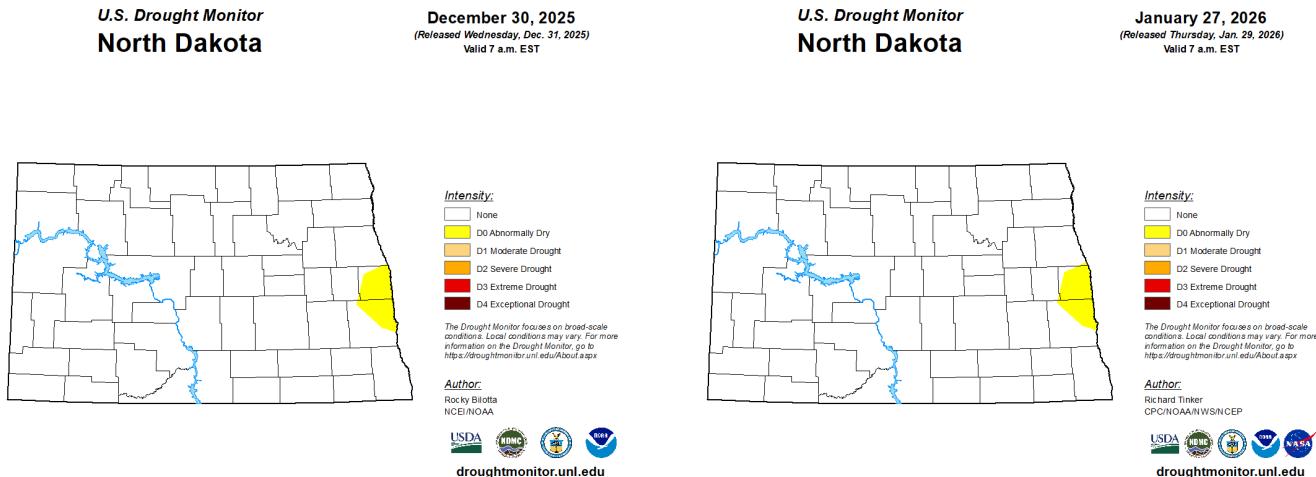


Figure 5: U.S. Drought Monitor conditions December 30, 2025 (left) and January 27, 2026 (right)

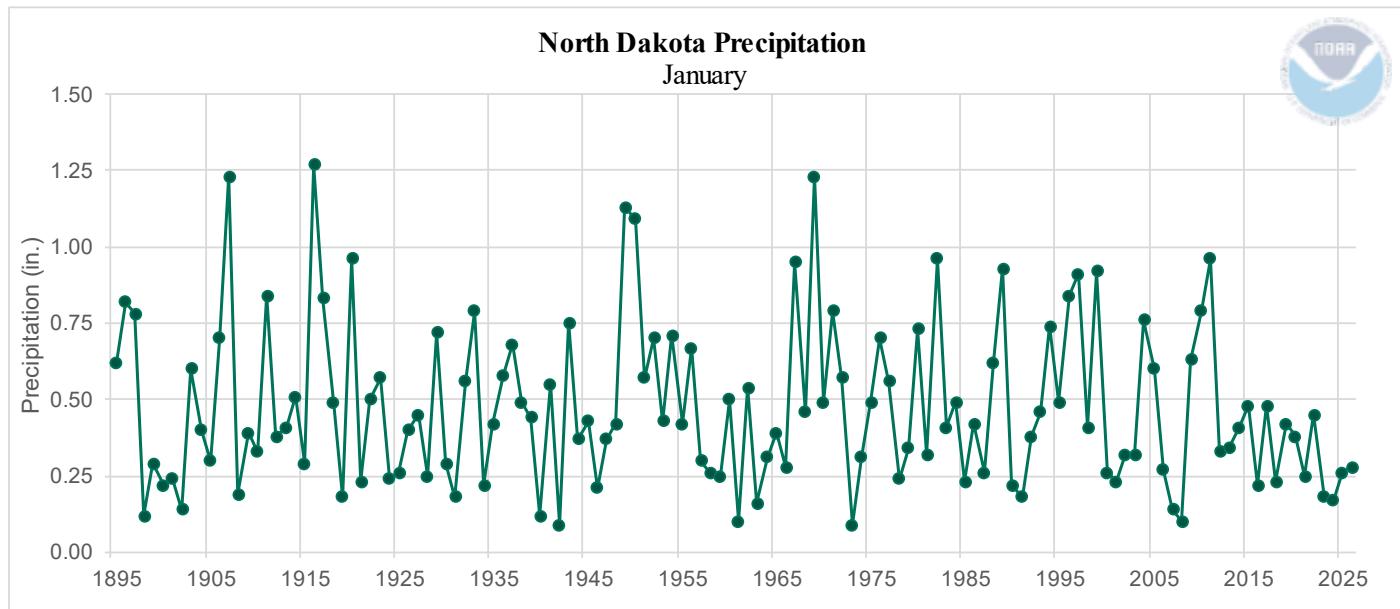


Figure 6: Average Statewide Total Precipitation in North Dakota for the month of January (via NCEI)

Precipitation

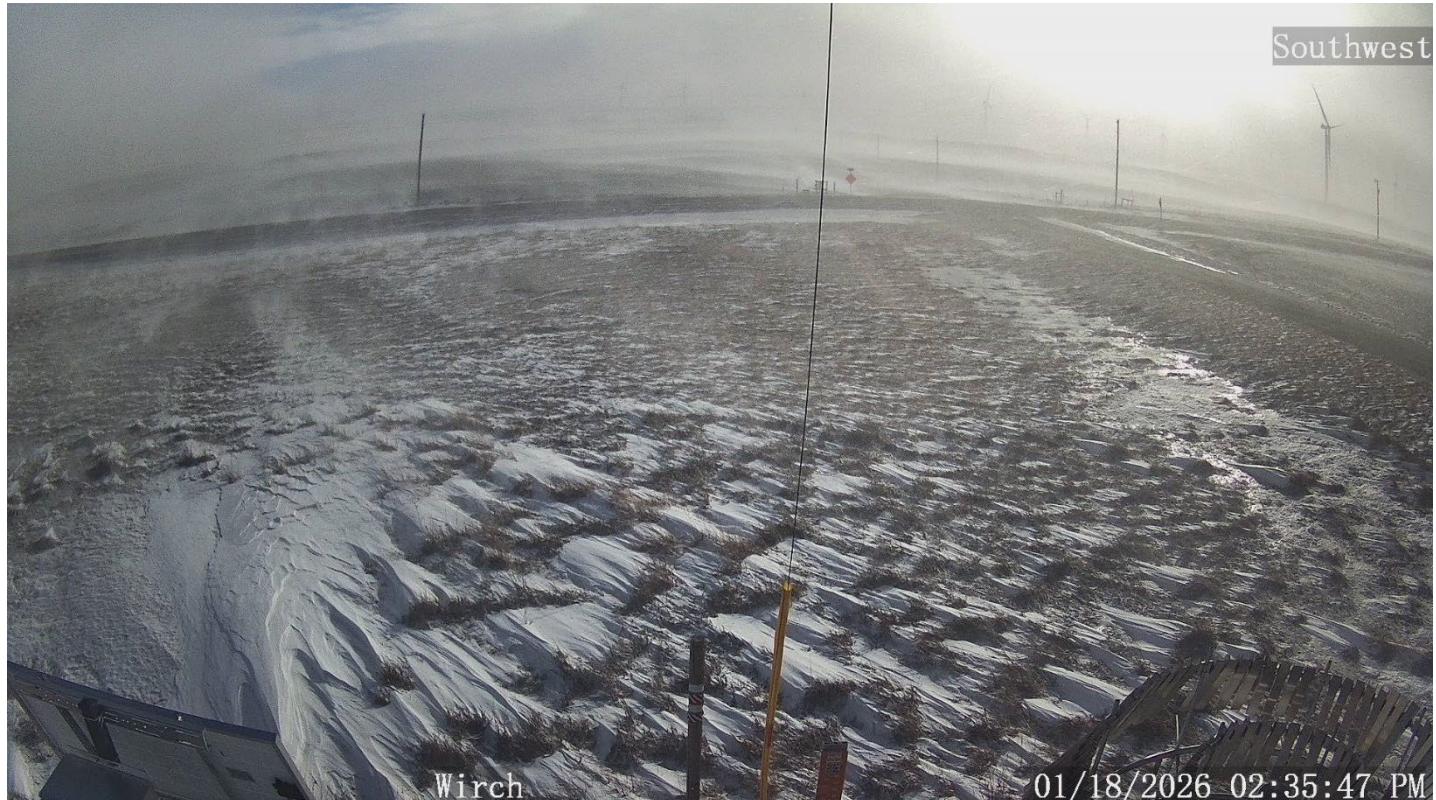


Figure 7: Strong winds produced localized blowing snow events throughout the month of January

North Dakota January Precipitation Summary

January 2026	Precipitation	Normal	Anomaly	Rank	Record Year
	0.28"	0.51"	-0.23"	96th Wettest	1.27" (1916)
				38th Driest	0.09" (1942)

Table 1: January precipitation summary for North Dakota. 2026 statistics from NDAWN station data. Ranking and records based on NCEI climate data (1895-2026) (NOAA).

Temperature

Temperature Summary

January 2026 Statewide Average Temperature: 11.9°F

Departure from Normal Statewide Temperature: 1.5°F above normal

Overall statewide, January was above average temperature-wise (Figure 8), however looking at a monthly map doesn't tell the whole story, as January was a tale of two halves. The first half of the month (January 1 – 15) was well above normal with an average temperature of 23.5°F (+13.0°F), whereas the second half (January 16 – 31) was well below normal with an average temperature of 1.1°F (-9.2°F) (Figure 9).

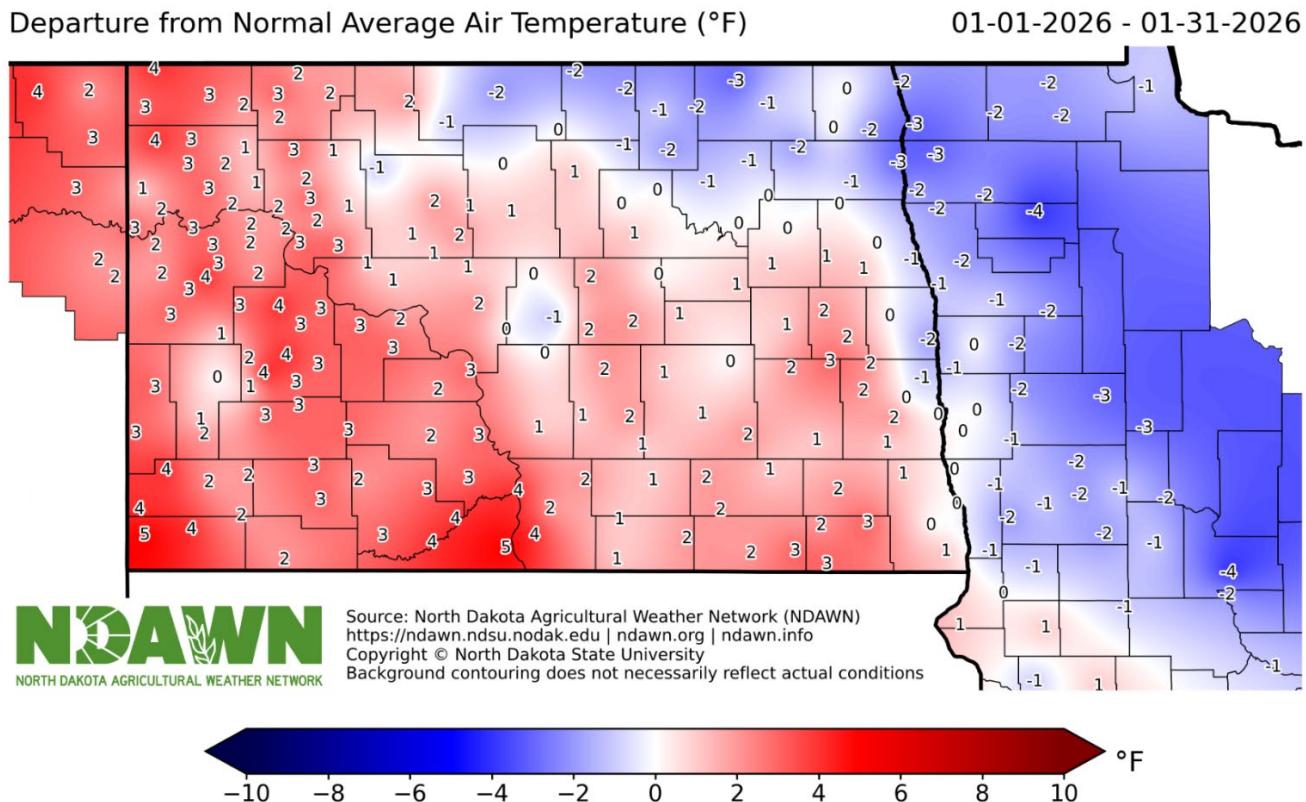
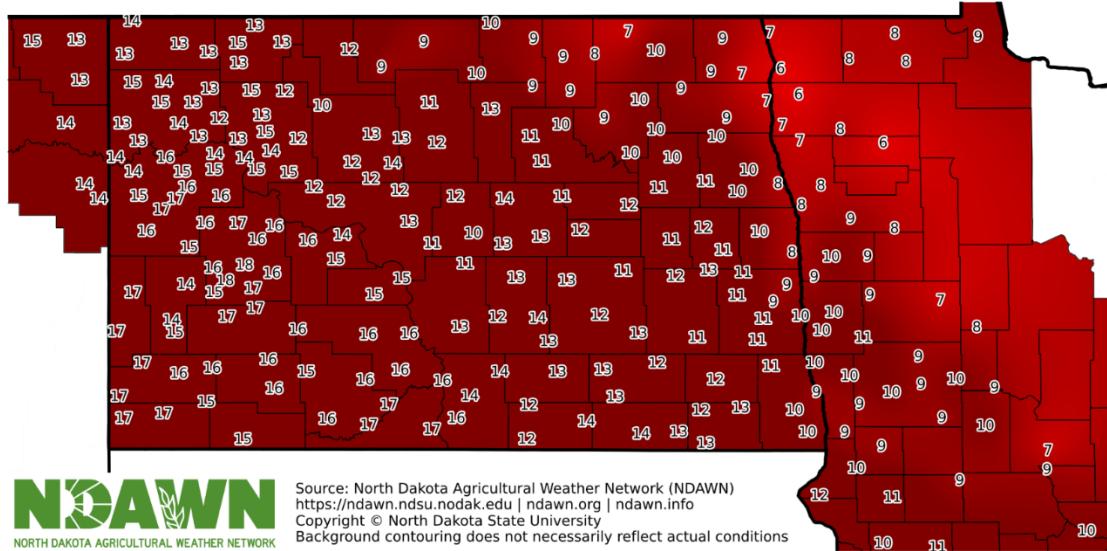


Figure 8: Departure from Normal Average Air Temperature measured at NDAWN stations in January 2026



Temperature

Departure from Normal Average Air Temperature (°F) 01-01-2026 - 01-15-2026



Departure from Normal Average Air Temperature (°F) 01-16-2026 - 01-31-2026

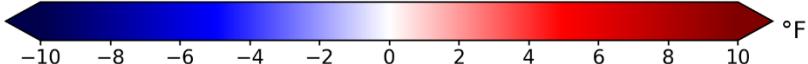
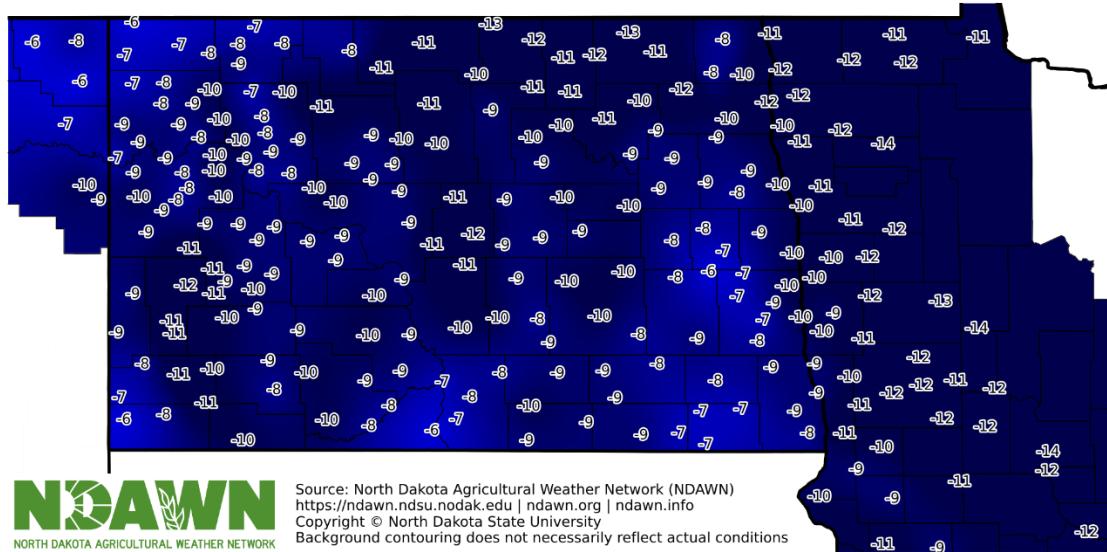


Figure 9: Departure from Normal Average Air Temperature for the first half (top) and the second half (bottom) of January 2026 as measured at NDAWN stations

Temperature

The highest temperature recorded during January at NDAWN stations was 56°F at the Sunny Slope 3W NDAWN station on January 4 and January 12 (Figure 10). The Baker 1N, Edmore 3NW, and Wolford 4E NDAWN stations only reached a maximum temperature of 36°F this month.

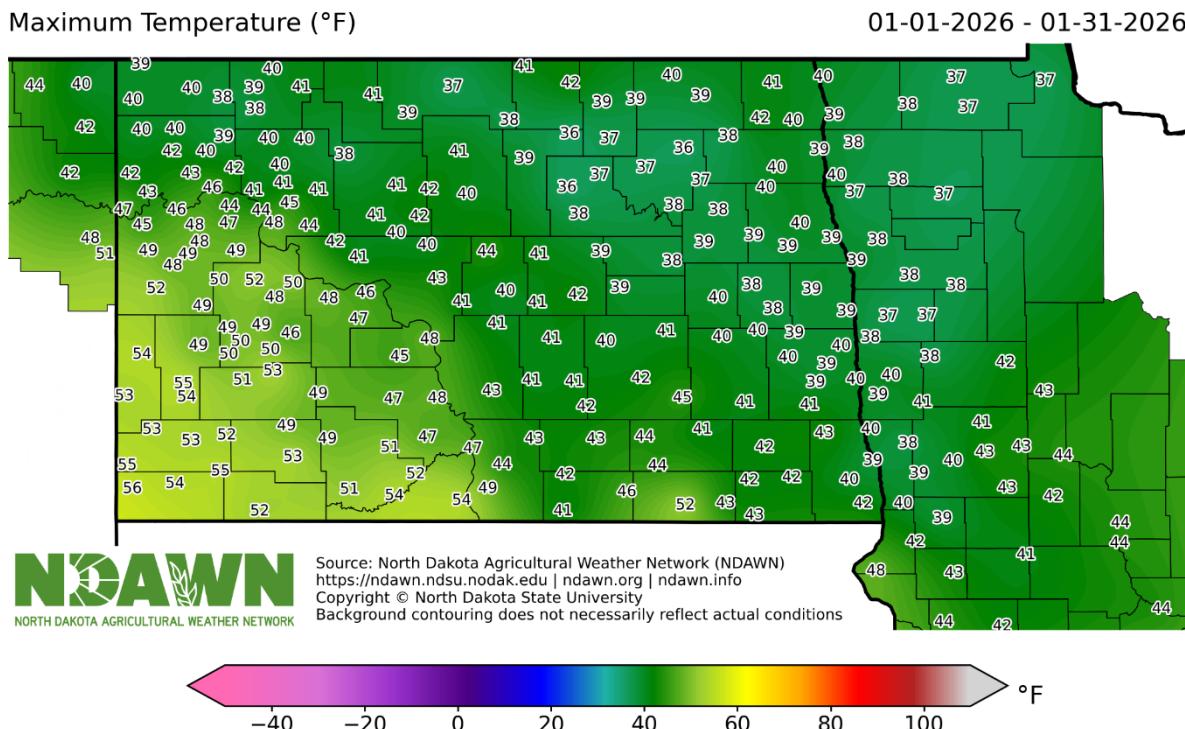


Figure 10: Maximum Air Temperature measured at NDAWN stations in January 2026

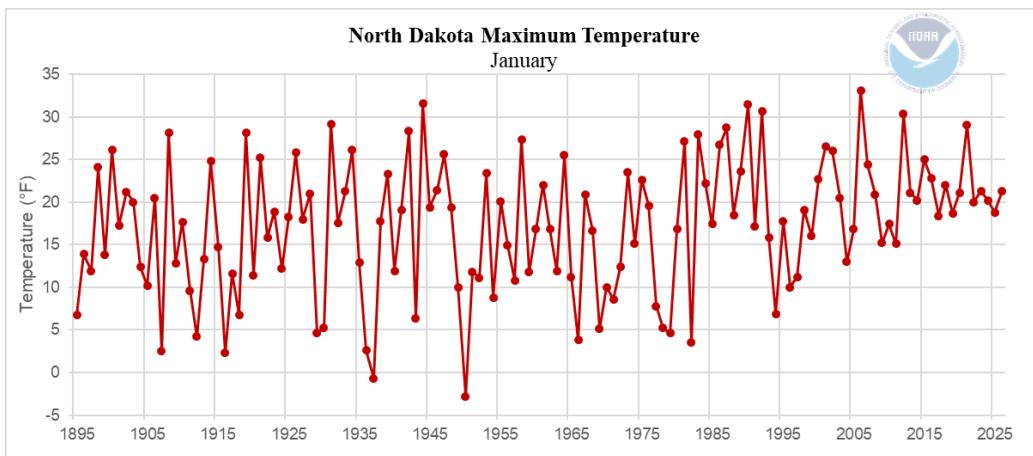


Figure 11: Average Maximum Temperature in North Dakota for the month of January (via NCEI)

Temperature

The lowest temperature recorded during January at NDAWN stations was -40°F at the Peace Garden NDAWN station on January 25 (Figure 12). The Milnor 1S NDAWN station only reached a minimum temperature of -18°F this month.

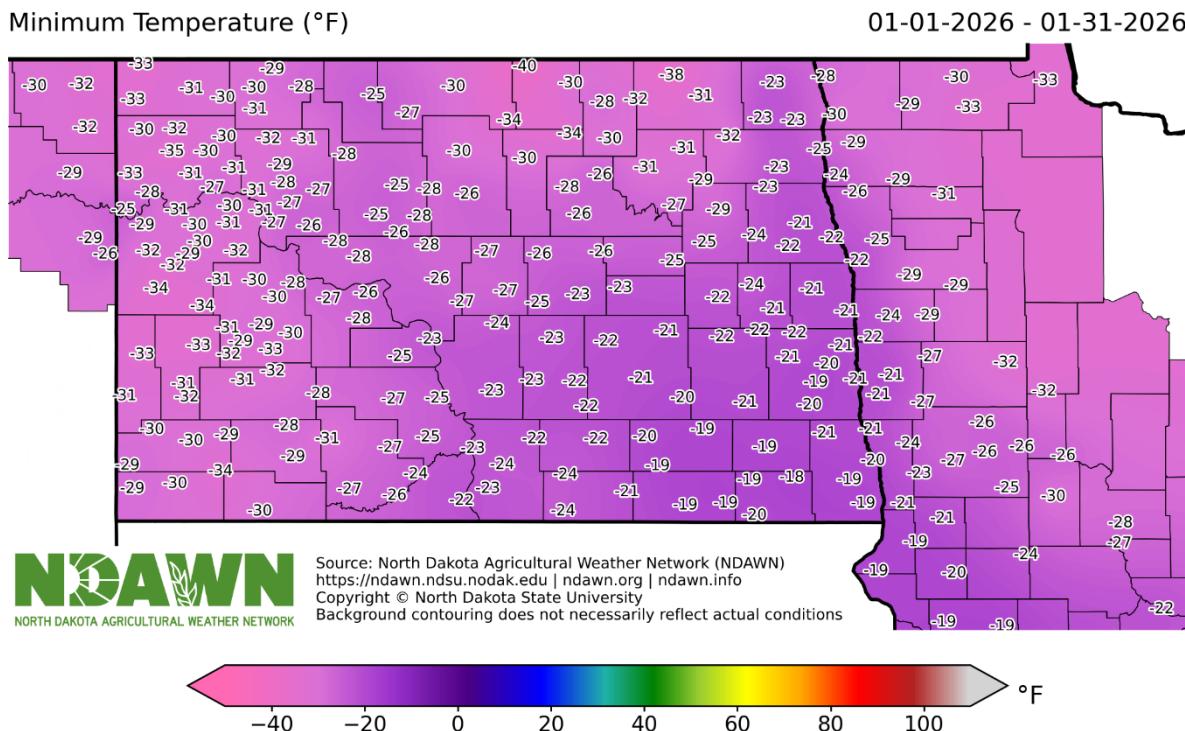


Figure 12: Minimum Air Temperature measured at NDAWN stations in January 2026

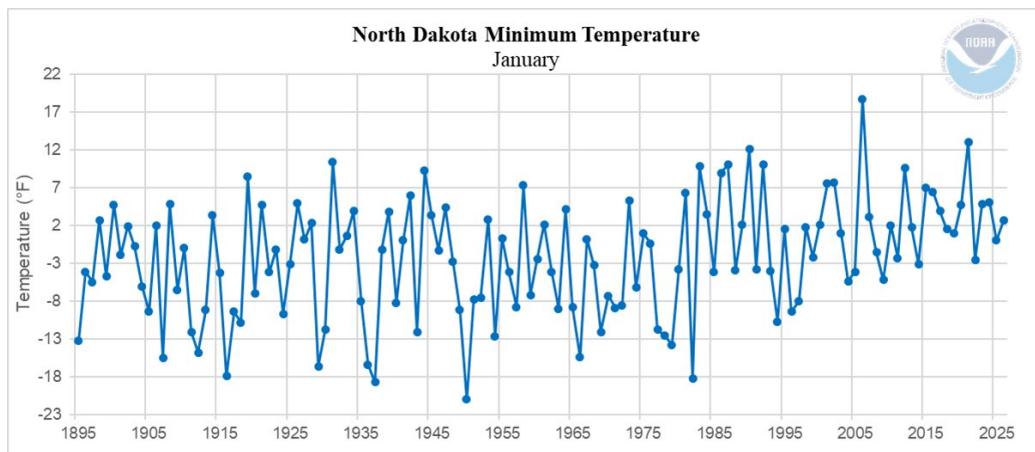


Figure 13: Average Minimum Temperature in North Dakota for the month of January (via NCEI)



Temperature

North Dakota January Temperature Summary

January 2026	Average T	Avg max T	Avg min T	Maximum	Minimum
	11.9°F	21.3°F	2.6°F		
Anomaly	+1.5°F	+1.2°F	+2.0°F	56°F	- 40°F
Rank					
Warmest	39th Warmest	41st Warmest	38th Warmest		
Coolest	94th Coldest	94th Coldest	95th Coldest		
Record					
Warmest	25.9°F (2006)	33.1°F (2006)	18.7°F (2006)		
Coolest	-11.9°F (1950)	-2.8°F (1950)	-21.0°F (1950)		

Table 2: January temperature summary for North Dakota. 2026 statistics from NDAWN station data. Ranking and records based on NCEI climate data (1895-2026) (NOAA).

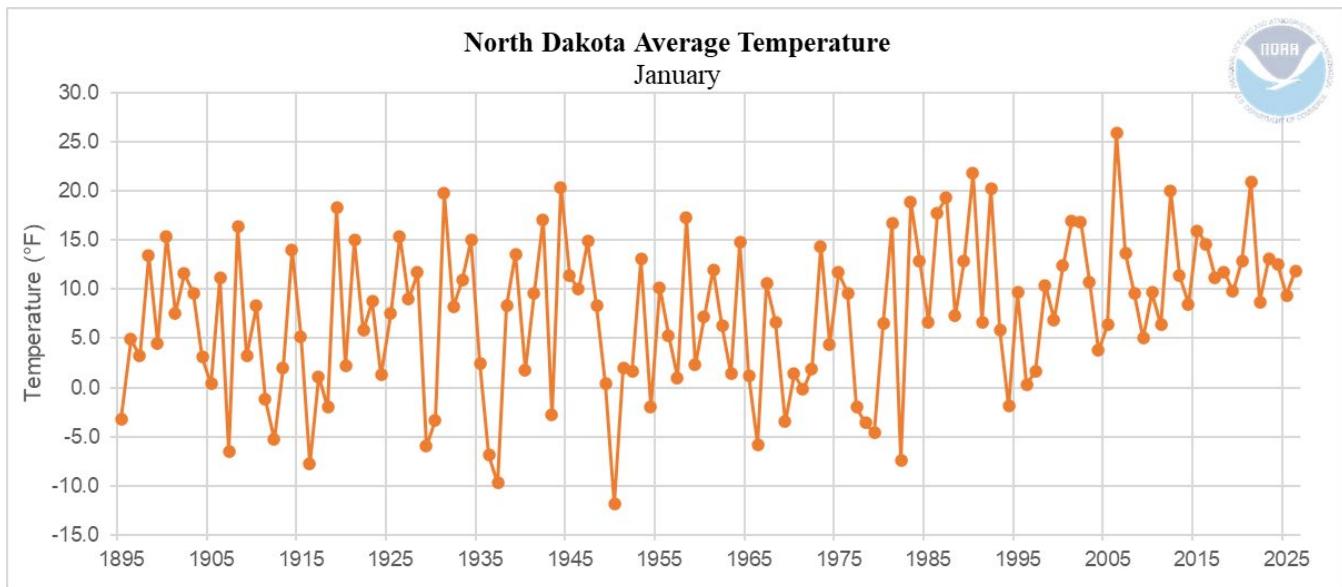


Figure 14: Average Temperature in North Dakota for the month of January (via NCEI)

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