North Dakota State Climate Office

Quarterly Climate Summary

Summer 2026 Volume 20, No. 3

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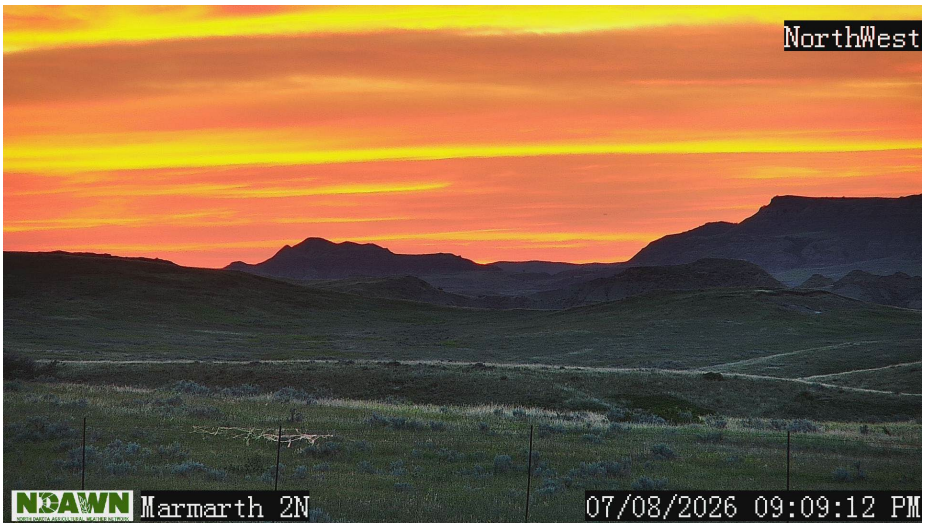
From the Office of the North Dakota State Climatologist

The Summer of 2026 will likely be remembered for being both hot and dry. Although in many parts of the state the entire summer was dry, the heat was mostly confined to just July. July was well above average for temperatures, yet, June and August in much of the state were closer to average for temperatures. The dry conditions were severe, especially in the central and southern Red River Valley where there were likely areas that recorded the driest summer since at least 1976.



A vibrant, orange sunset at Marmarth 2N NDAWN.

Seasonal Precipitation Summary

Summer 2026 Statewide Average Precipitation: 6.70”

(77% of normal)

Precipitation varied widely across the state this summer due to spotty thunderstorms that had more miss than hit. The southern Red River Valley is running deficits of around 6-7” for the summer, with each month drier than the last. However, despite a very dry July, the far northwestern corner of the state had a relatively wet summer.

The highest precipitation total for the season measured at North Dakota stations of the North Dakota Agricultural Weather Network (NDAWN) occurred at Portal 1SE NDAWN in Burke County with 13.89 inches, which is 177% of normal (+6.06”). The lowest seasonal rainfall occurred in Cass County at the Gardner 2SSW NDAWN station, which recorded 2.99 inches, which was 28% of normal (-7.50”).

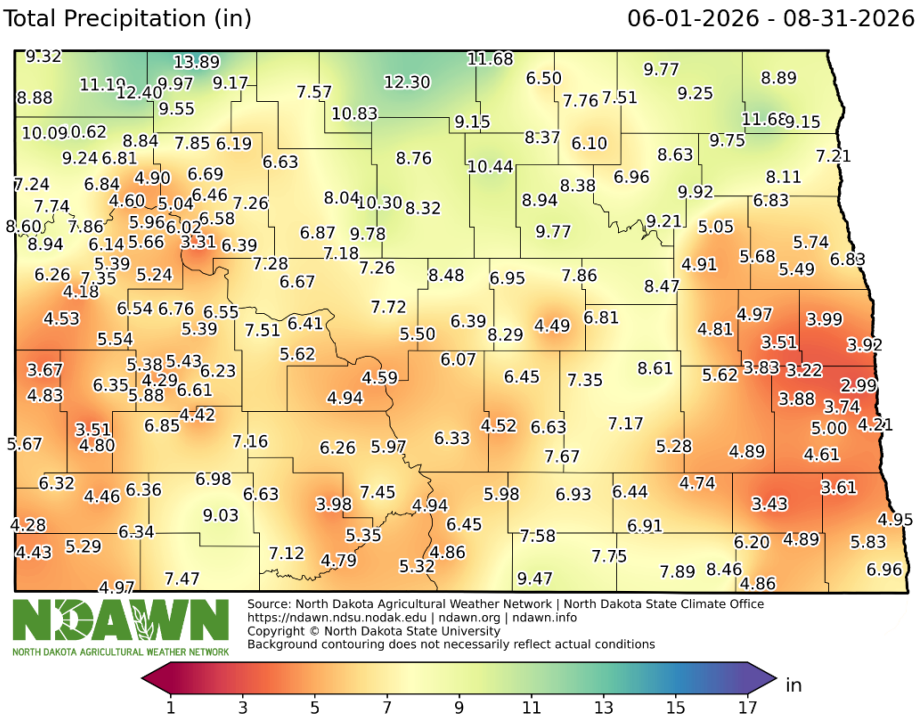


Figure 1: Total precipitation recorded by NDAWN stations with all-season precipitation gauges in Summer 2026

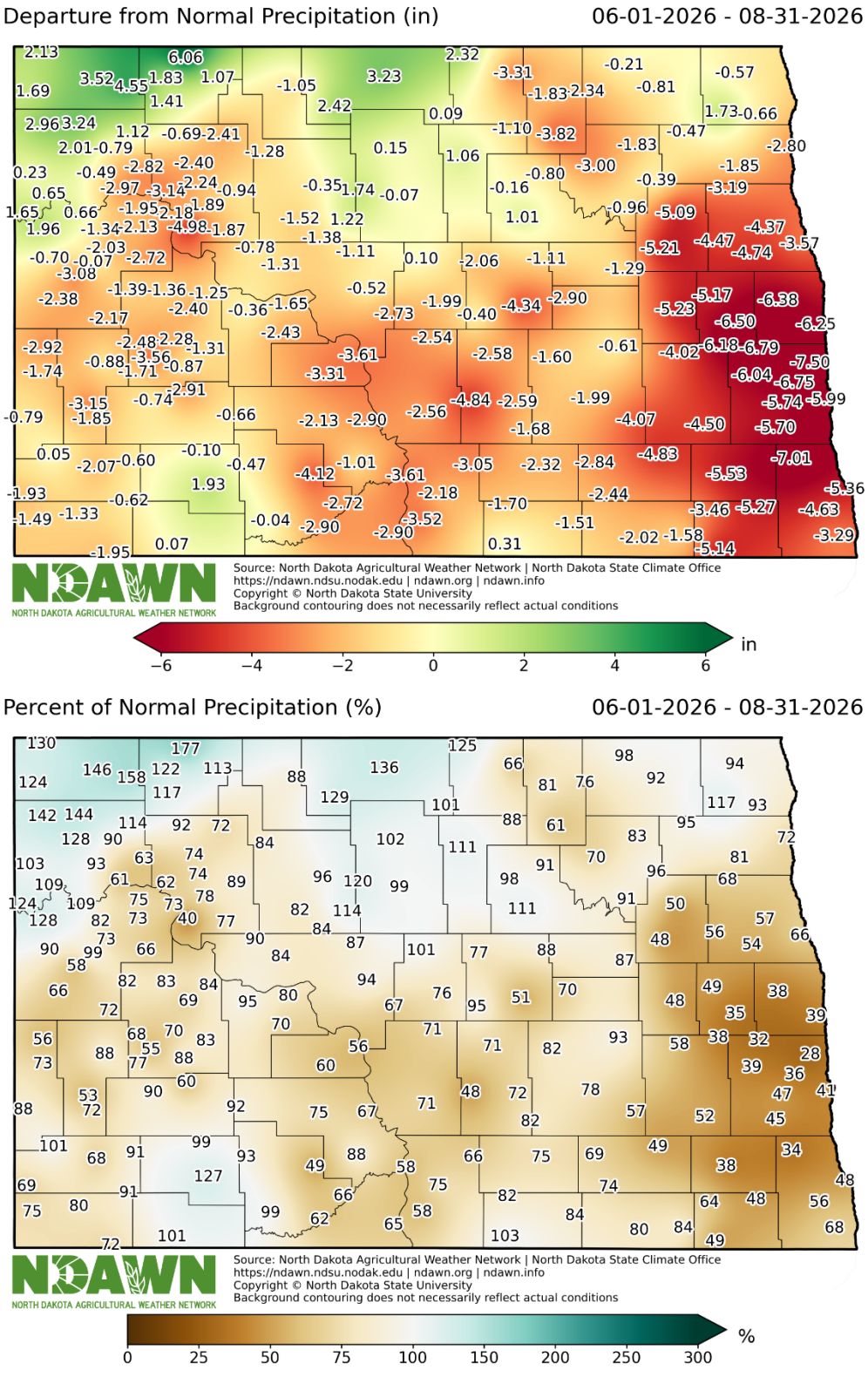


Figure 2: Departure from (top) and percent of normal precipitation (bottom) at NDAWN stations in Summer 2026

The relatively wet June in northern North Dakota kept drought development at bay, but a very hot and dry July accelerated expansion (Figure 3). Continued dryness in August propelled expansion, with Extreme Drought (D3) being introduced. Currently, 85.7% of the state is in a drought category (D1-D3), with a further 11% Abnormally Dry.

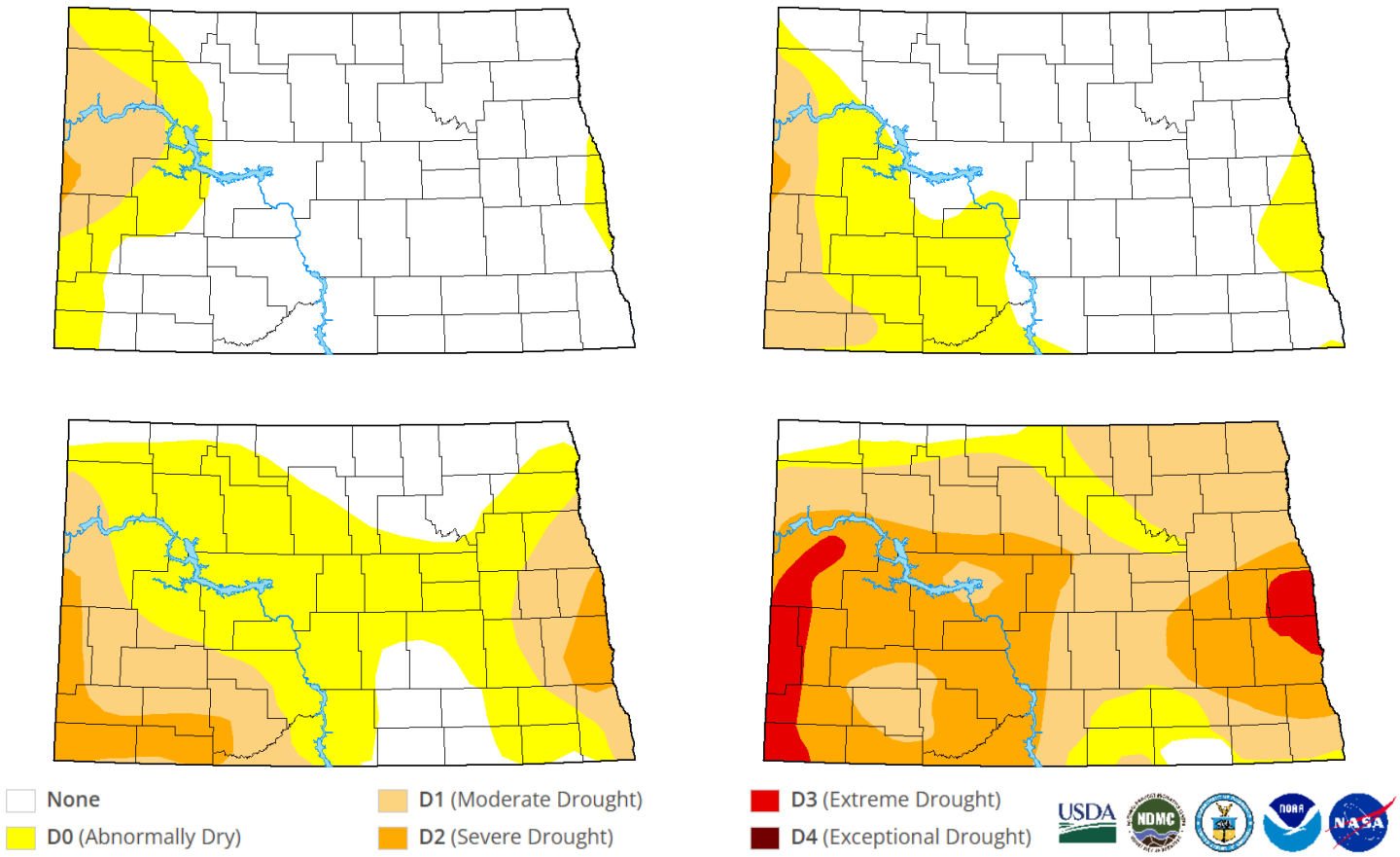


Figure 3: U.S. Drought Monitor conditions on, starting clockwise from top left, June 2, June 30, August 25, and July 28

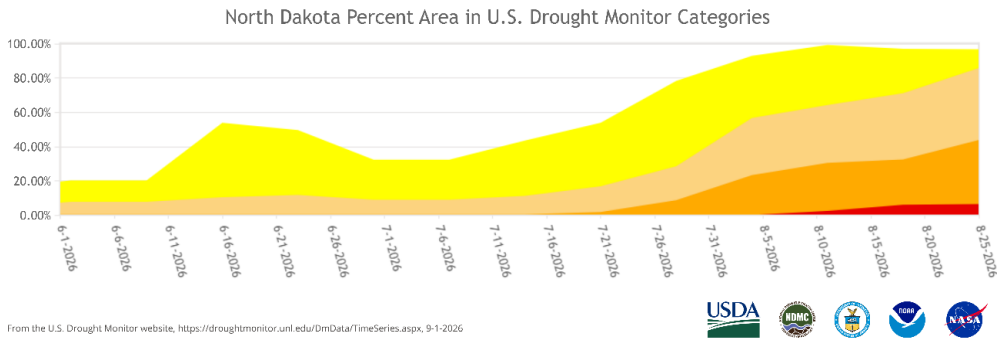


Figure 4: Time series of the percent area of North Dakota in a drought monitor category this summer season (USDM)

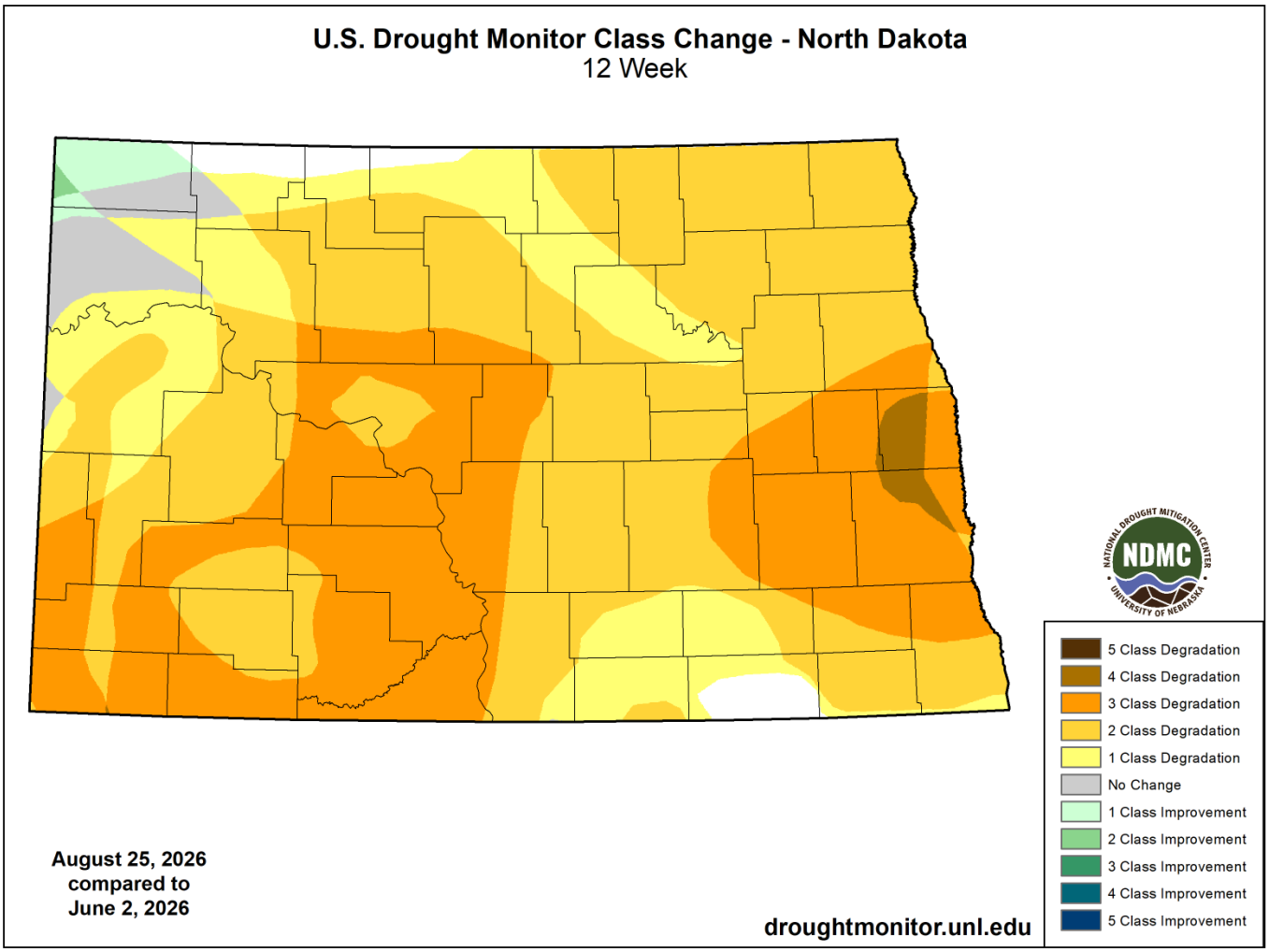


Figure 5: Category change in the U.S. Drought Monitor during this summer season

Week	None	D0	D1	D2	D3	D4
2026-06-02	79.87	12.45	7.34	0.34	0.00	0.00
2026-06-30	67.80	23.40	8.45	0.35	0.00	0.00
2026-07-28	21.93	49.69	19.86	8.52	0.00	0.00
2026-08-25	3.39	10.94	41.97	37.43	6.27	0.00
Change	**-76.48**	**-1.51**	**+34.63**	**+37.09**	**+6.27**	**0.00**

Table 1: Categorical Percent Area and overall change in the U.S. Drought Monitor from June 2 to August 25, 2026

Seasonal Temperature Summary

Summer 2026 Statewide Average Temperature: 68.2°F

(1.2°F above normal)

Summer 2026 was overall warmer than normal due to a much warmer than normal July; June and August were slightly cooler than normal. Williams County was the “cool spot” of the state this season at about 1°F below normal. Conversely, South Central, Central, and East Central North Dakota hovered around 3°F above normal (Figure 6).

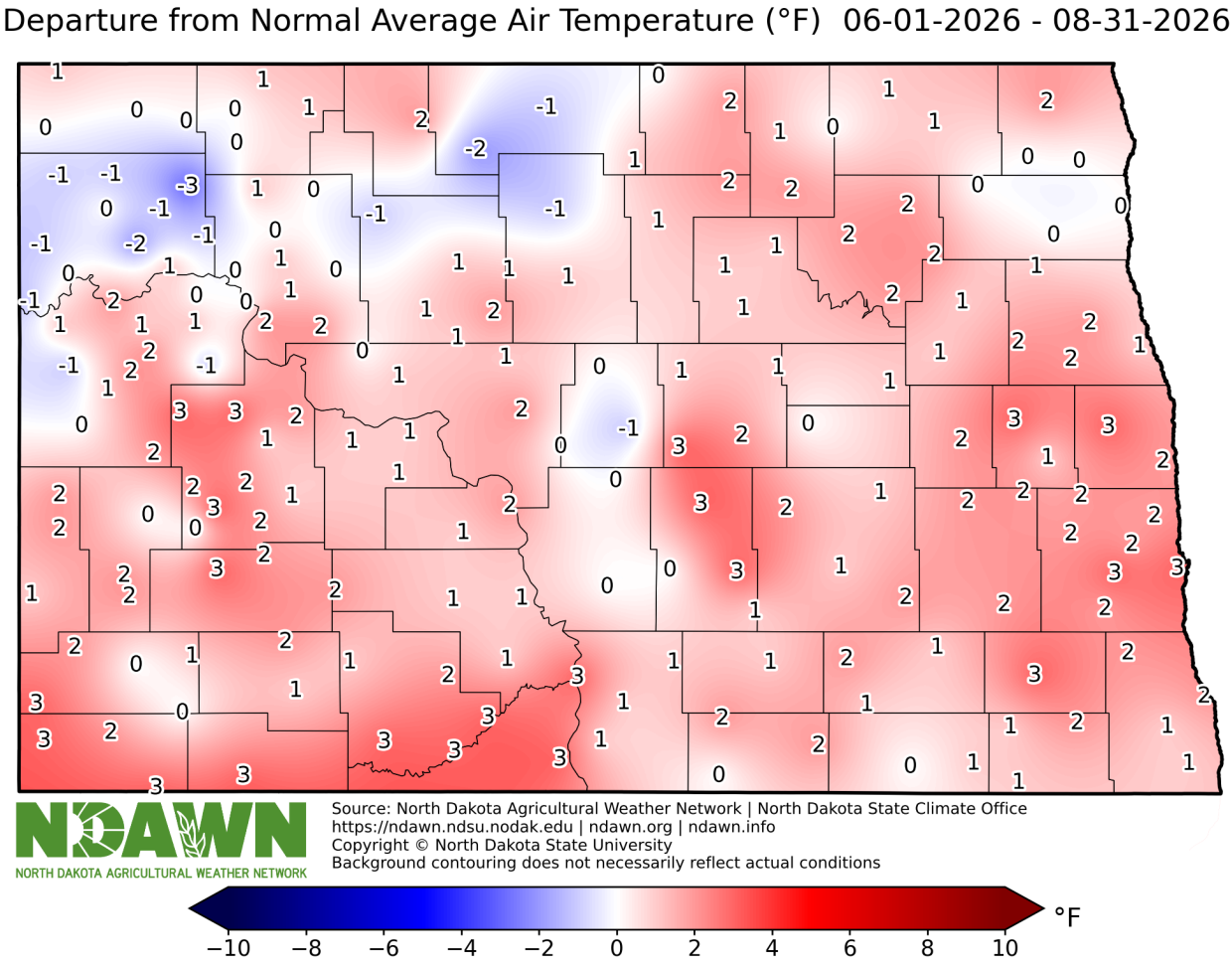


Figure 6: Departure from normal average air temperature recorded by NDAWN stations in Summer 2026

The warmest temperature of the summer was recorded at Haley 3W NDAWN in southern Bowman County on July 12 with a reading of 109.9°F (Figure 7). Haley 3W NDAWN recorded the most days with a high of 100°F or higher at NDAWN with 13 days (11 in July, 2 in August). Taylor 6NW NDAWN in Stark County recorded the most days with a high of 90+°F with 34 days (3 in June, 21 in July, 10 in August).

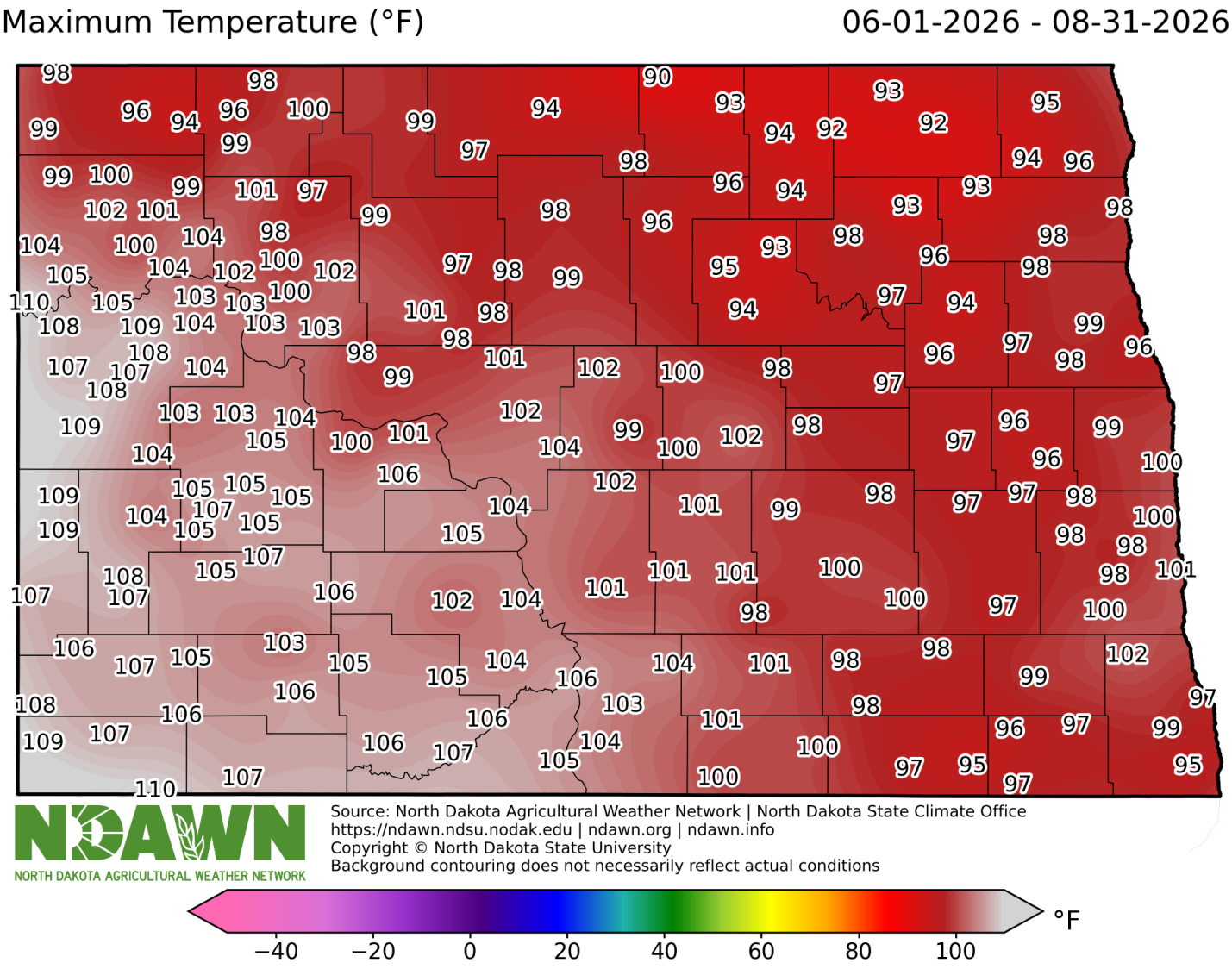


Figure 7: Maximum air temperature recorded by NDAWN stations during Summer 2026

The coldest temperature of the season occurred at Taylor 6NW NDAWN in Stark County with a minimum of 31.9°F on June 14 (Figure 8). While there was no widespread freeze or frost, parts of Southwest and North Central North Dakota did experience brief, single-morning frosts this summer. On the flipside, during the warm spell in July, many parts of the state saw lows above 70°F, with parts of Billings, Grand Forks, Golden Valley, Stark, and Walsh County not dropping below 75°F at night.

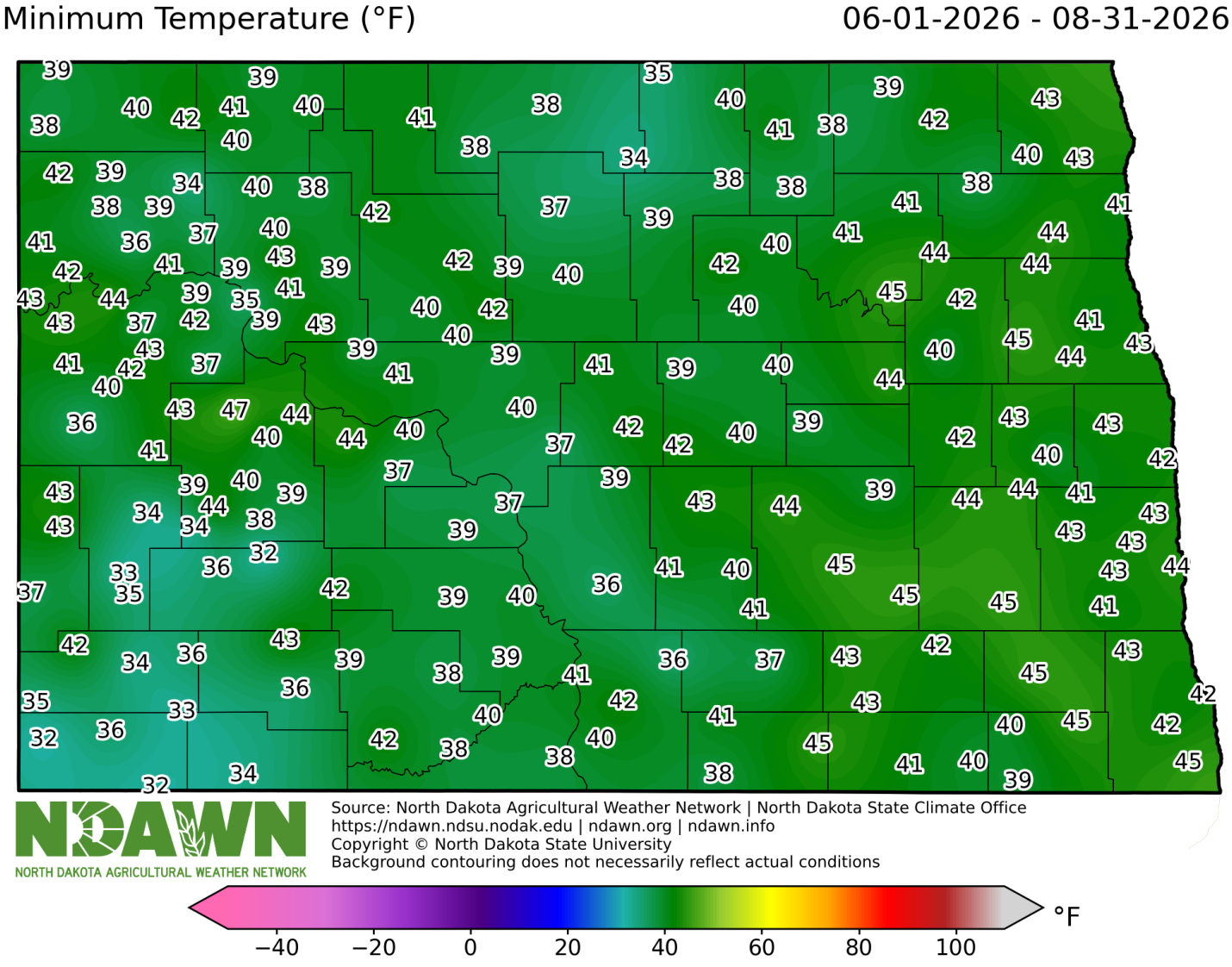


Figure 8: Minimum air temperature recorded by NDAWN stations during Summer 2026

North Dakota Summer 2026 Overview

	Total	Normal	Anomaly	Rank	Record
Precipitation	6.70”	8.68”	-1.98”	105th Wettest	15.65” (1993)
				28th Driest	3.32” (1929)

	Average T	Avg Max T	Avg Min T	Maximum	Minimum
Temperature	68.2°F	81.1°F	55.2°F	109.9°F	31.9°F
Anomaly	+1.2°F	+1.6°F	+0.7°F		
Rank					
Warmest	23rd Warmest	30th Warmest	18th Warmest		
Coolest	109th Coolest	101st Coolest	111th Coolest		
Record					
Warmest	72.0°F (1936)	87.2°F (1936)	56.8°F (1936)	121°F (Steele, July 1936)	4°F (Hansboro, June 2004)
Coolest	61.2°F (1915)	72.8°F (1993)	48.8°F (1915)		

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

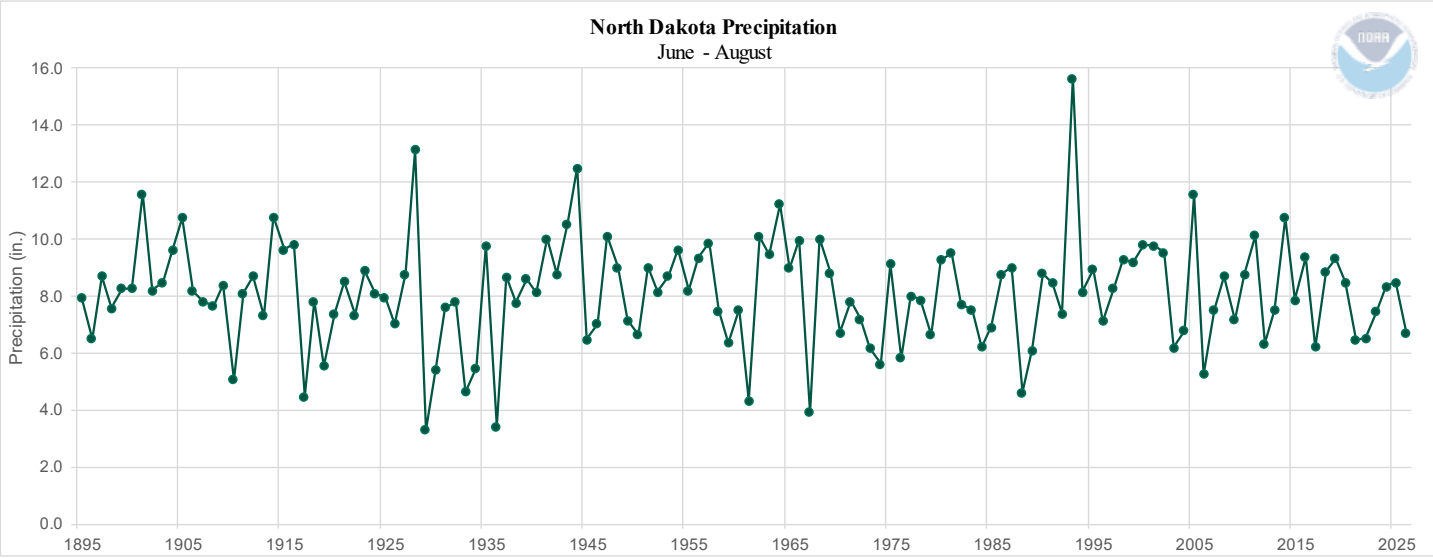
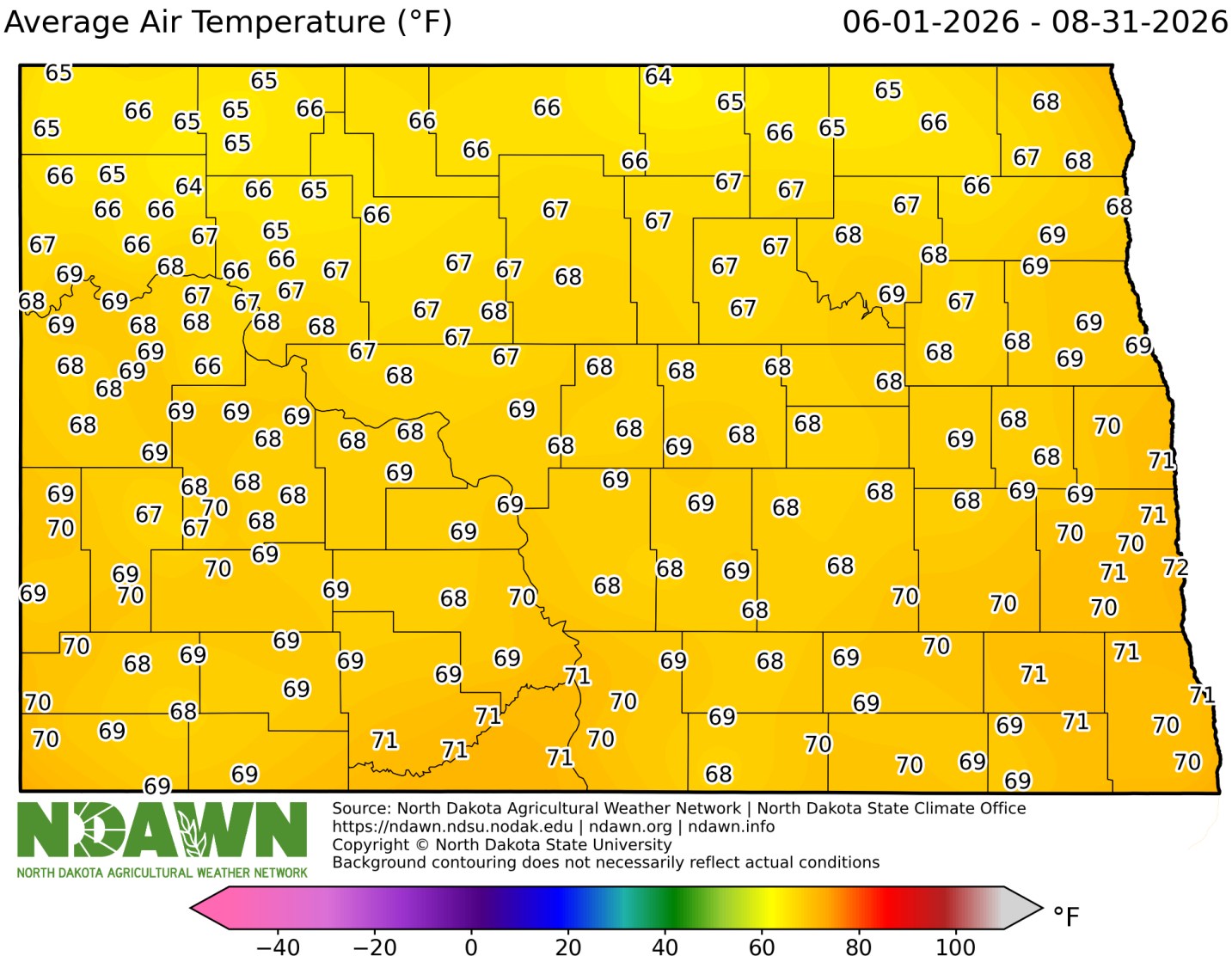


Figure 9: Average precipitation in North Dakota for the summer season (via NOAA)



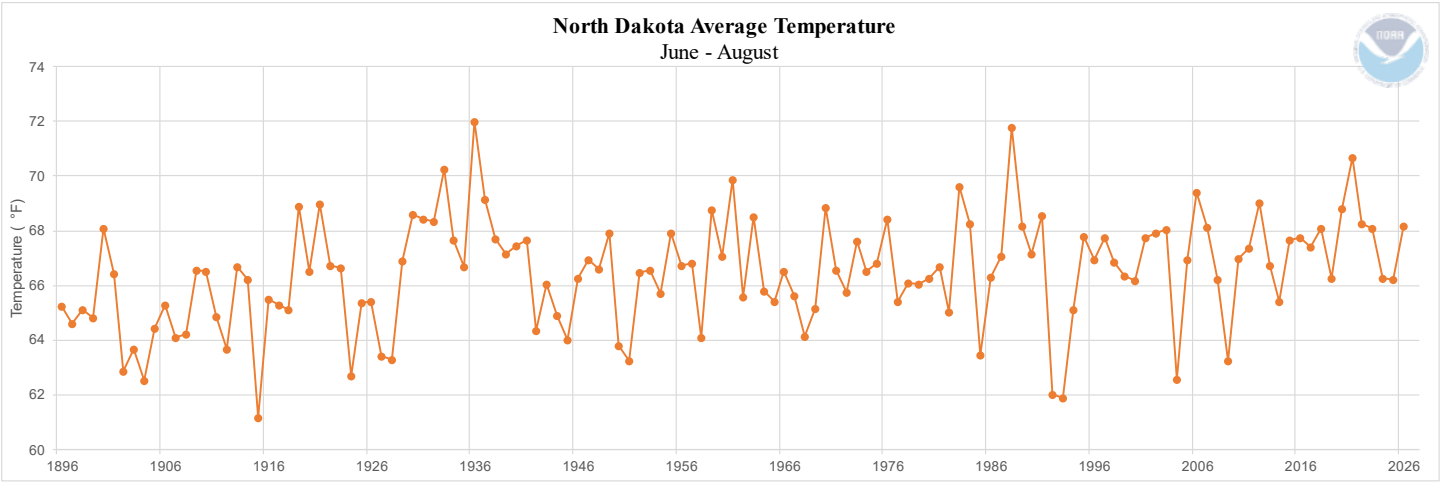
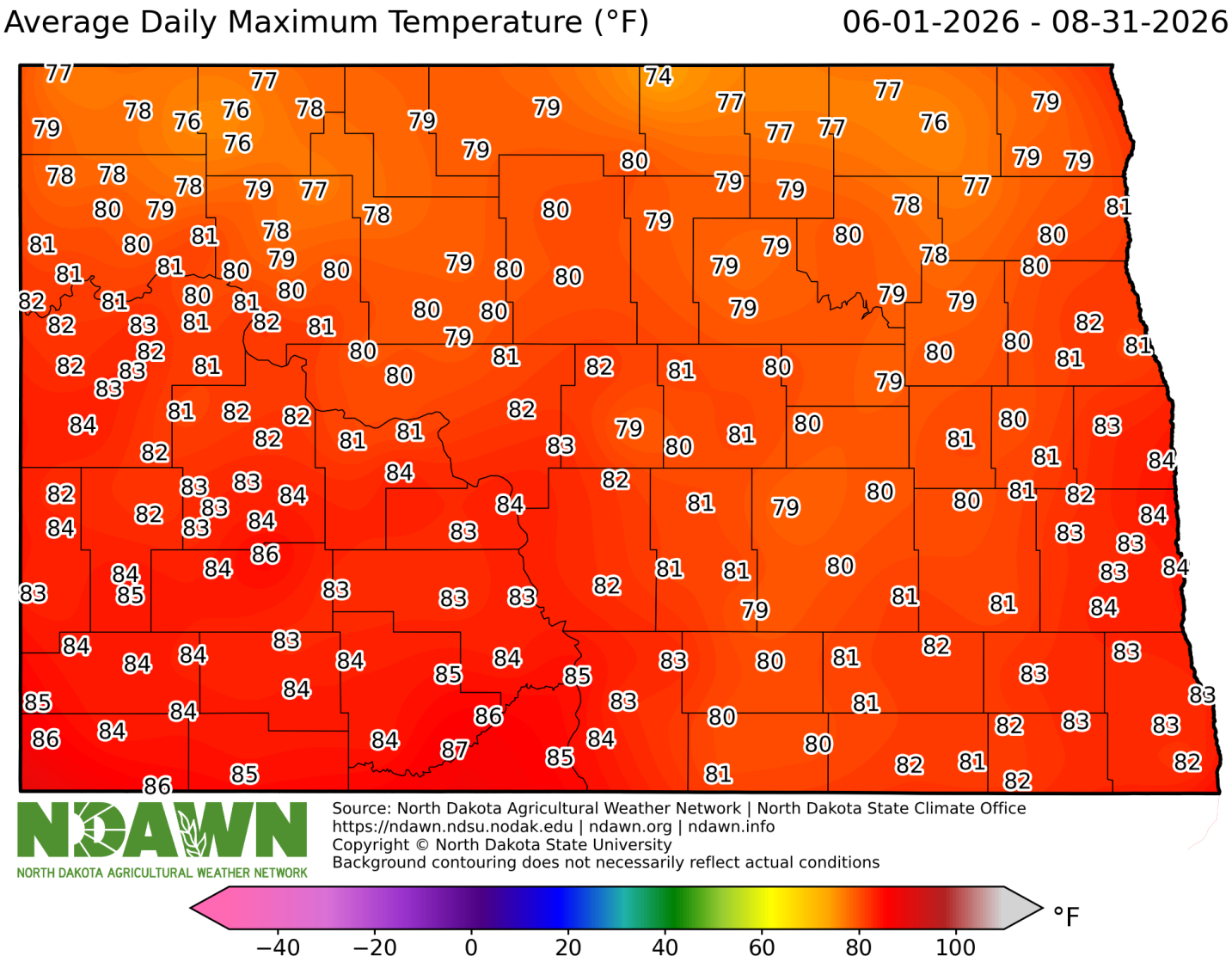


Figure 10: Average Air Temperature for the summer season at NDAWN stations (top) and historically via NOAA (bottom)



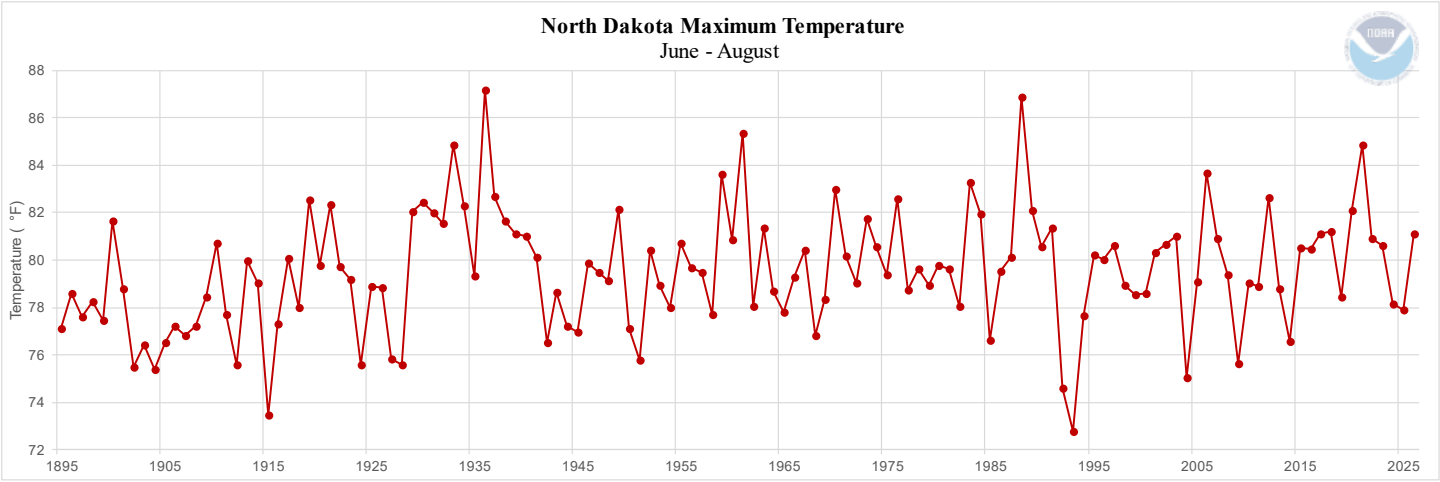
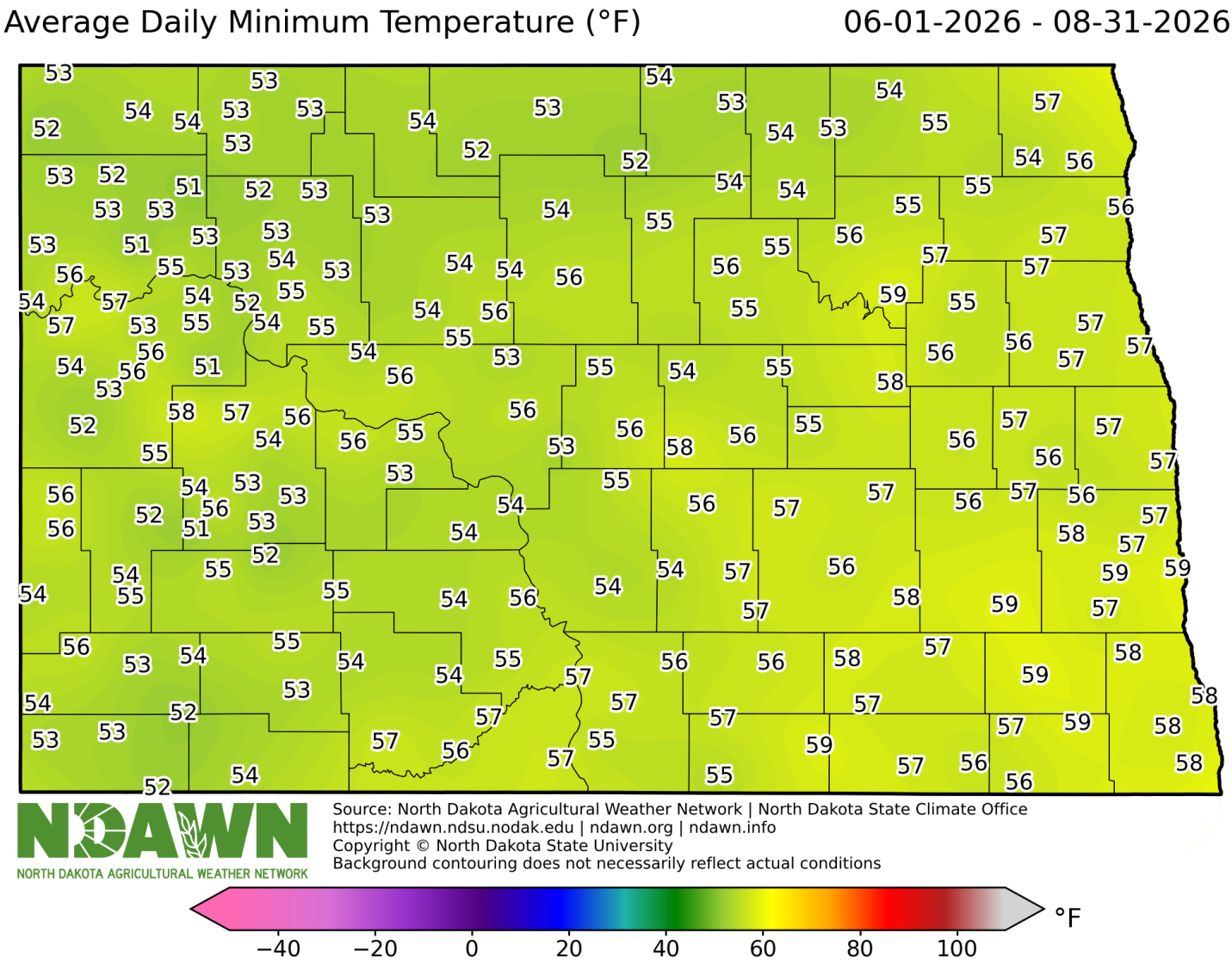


Figure 11: Average Maximum Temperature during summer at NDAWN stations (top) and historically via NOAA (bottom)



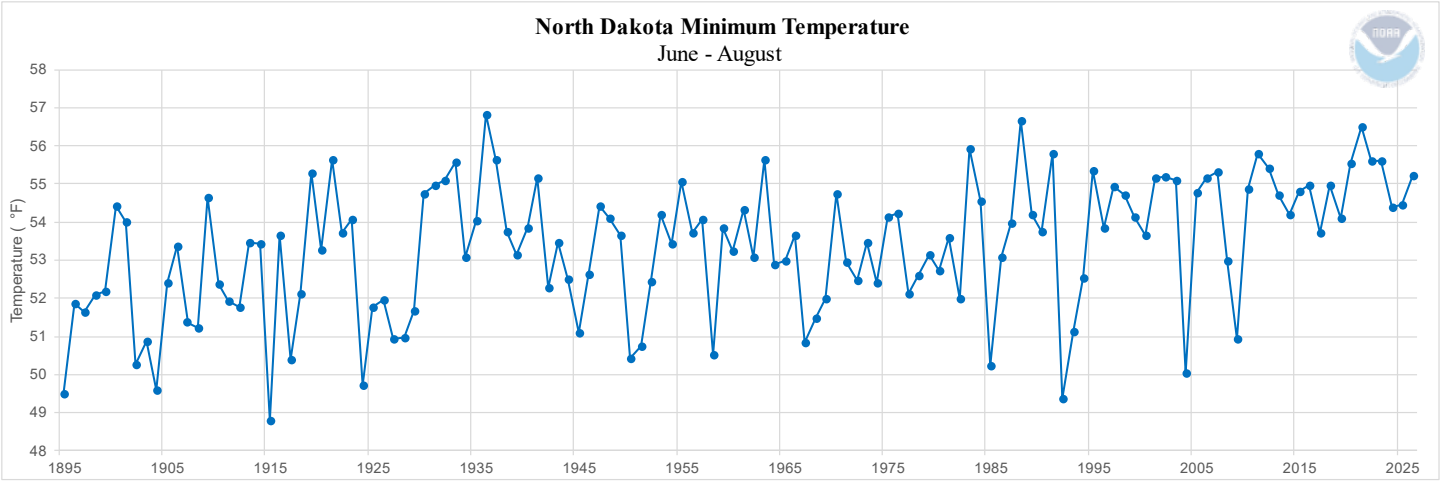


Figure 12: Average Minimum Temperature during summer at NDAWN stations (top) and historically via NOAA (bottom)

August 2026 City Overview

	Total // Average	Normal	Anomaly	Rank	Record
Bismarck					
Precipitation	4.52”	8.94”	-4.42”	132nd Wettest	20.21” (1993)
				21st Driest	1.19” (1936)
Temperature	71.2°F	68.8°F	+2.4°F	12th Warmest	75.0°F (1936)
				141st Coolest	62.0°F (1915)
Fargo					
Precipitation	4.22”	9.96”	-5.74”	137th Wettest	18.88” (1944)
				10th Driest	1.86” (1936)
Temperature	71.6°F	69.0°F	+2.6°F	7th Warmest	73.9°F (1988)
				140th Coolest	63.3°F (1915)
Grand Forks					
Precipitation	8.07”	10.70”	-2.63”	77th Wettest	20.68” (2002)
				51st Driest	2.17” (1910)
Temperature	70.8°F	67.6°F	+3.2°F	8th Warmest	73.9°F (1988)
				118th Coolest	61.6°F (1915)
Williston					
Precipitation	7.71”	6.68”	+1.03”	33rd Wettest	14.70” (1993)
				88th Driest	2.37” (1961)
Temperature	67.9°F	67.6°F	+0.3°F	50th Warmest	73.2°F (1988)
				71st Coolest	61.6°F (1993)

Table 3: Summer precipitation & temperature summary for select North Dakota cities. Ranking and records based on NWS climate data (Bismarck 1875-2026; Fargo 1881-2026; Grand Forks 1893-2026; Williston 1907-2026) (NOAA).

Seasonal Outlook for Autumn 2026

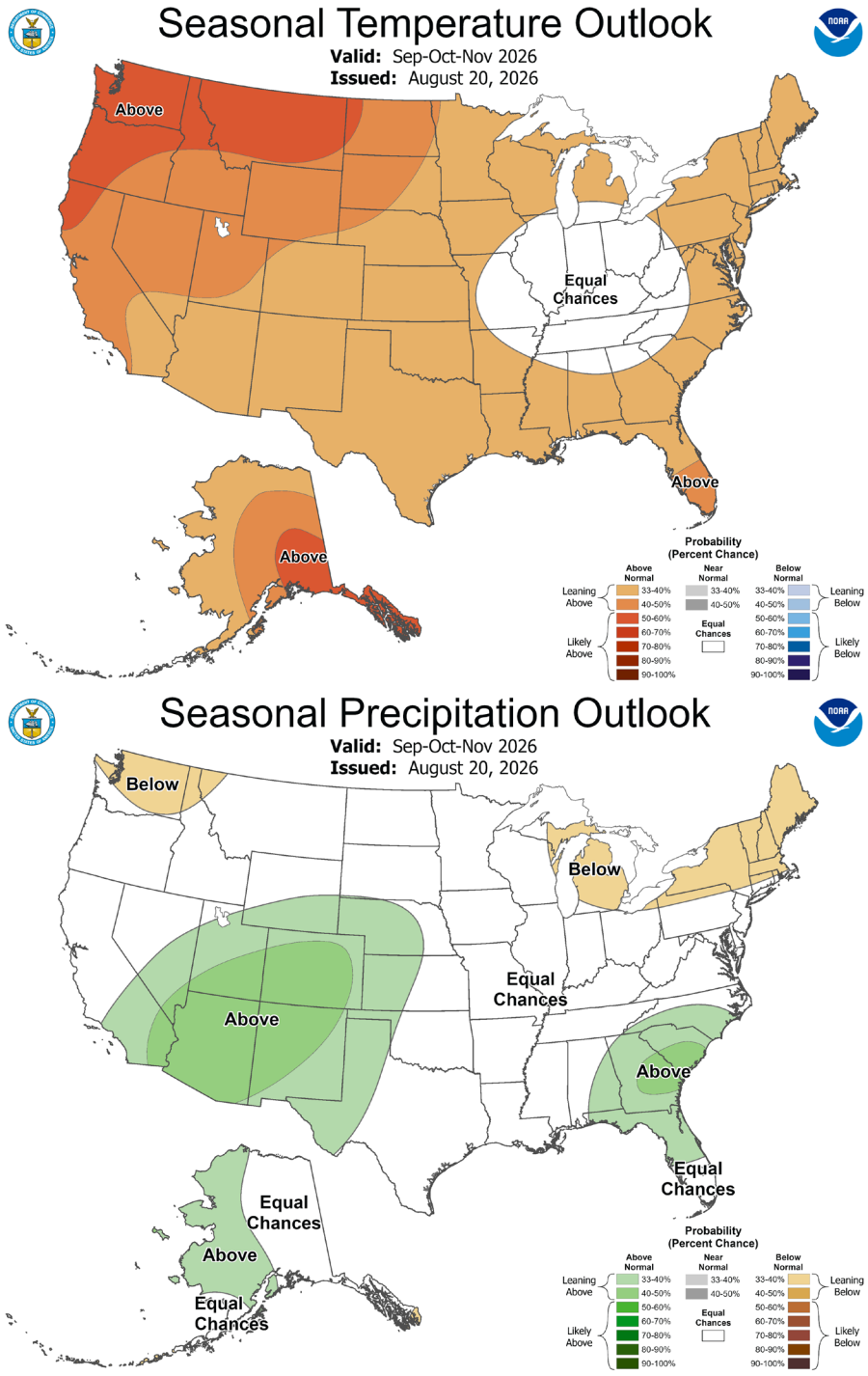


Figure 13: Temperature (top) and Precipitation (bottom) Probabilistic Outlook for Autumn 2026 (CPC)

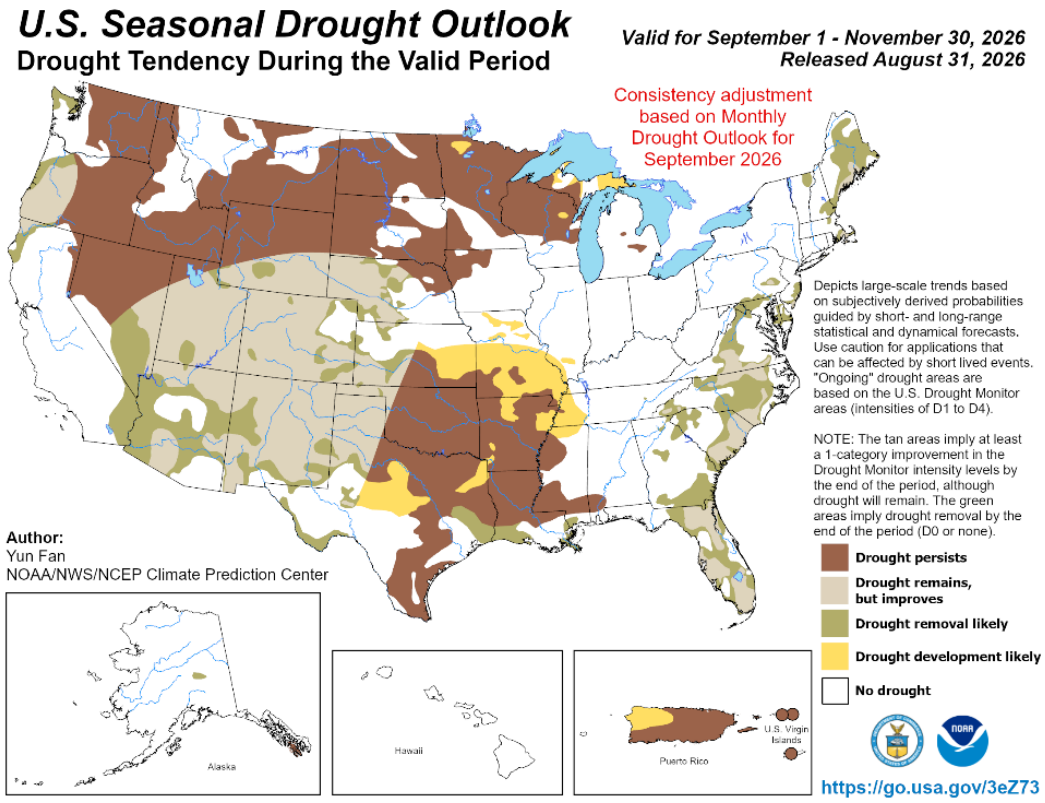


Figure 14: Drought Tendency Outlook for Autumn 2026 (CPC)

Detailed monthly summaries and the full archive can be found at ndsu.edu/ndsco.
NDAWN monthly, seasonal, and annual climate statistic maps can be found at ndawn.info/climate_statistics.

Sources

- North Dakota Agricultural Weather Network (NDAWN)
- National Weather Service (NWS)
- U.S. Drought Monitor (USDM)
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).
- Climate Prediction Center (CPC)

Editor: Julia Poblotzki For questions, comments, or concerns regarding this publication, email daryl.ritchison@ndsu.edu or ndsco@ad.ndus.edu.