



The North Dakota Monthly Climate Summary

December 2015

Precipitation:

Three out of the last four Decembers recorded below average precipitation in North Dakota. Would December 2015 continue that trend, or be excessively wet as was the case in 2008, 2009 and 2010 when the state recorded three Top 5 wettest Decembers on record? The month was a mix of both noticeably drier and wetter than normal areas across the state (Figure 1). Taking an average of the cooperative and CoCoRaHS (Community Collaborative Rain, Hail and Snow Network) observers, the average precipitation for North Dakota was 0.52 inches, just slightly below the average of 0.58 inches. Much of the precipitation occurred from two snow events, one on December 1 and the other on December 15-16. Although it was not an exceptionally snowy month for most locations, Grand Forks, one station that was hit by both storms recorded 15.3 inches during the month, the 12th highest monthly total on record for that location.

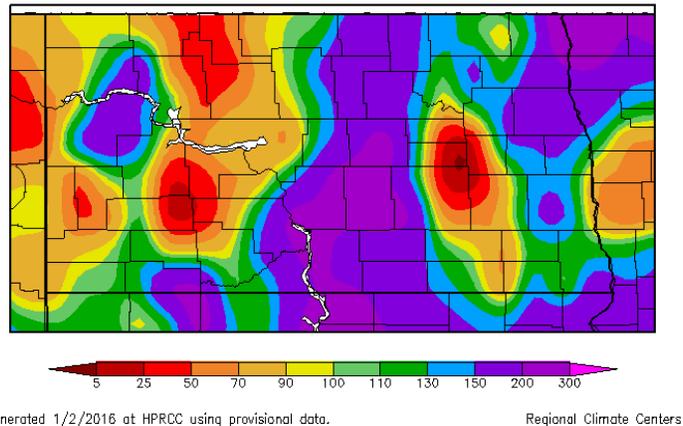


Figure 1. Precipitation Percent of Normal in December, 2015 for North Dakota (High Plains Regional Climate Center)

Temperature:

Although precipitation may have finished near average for the month, the temperatures in December 2015 were no where near normal (Figure 2). The month was consistently well above average with some North Dakota Agricultural Weather Network (NDAWN) stations in far northeastern North Dakota and northwestern Minnesota recording temperatures 10° to 12° above average for the month. The average temperature for the North Dakota NDAWN stations in December was 20.8° which is 7.3° above normal for those stations. That average temperature of 20.8° would tie for the 14th warmest December since 1895. Some individual city rankings include, Fargo Moorhead recording the 6th warmest, Grand Forks the 11th warmest, Williston the 21st warmest and Bismarck the 30th warmest December on record.

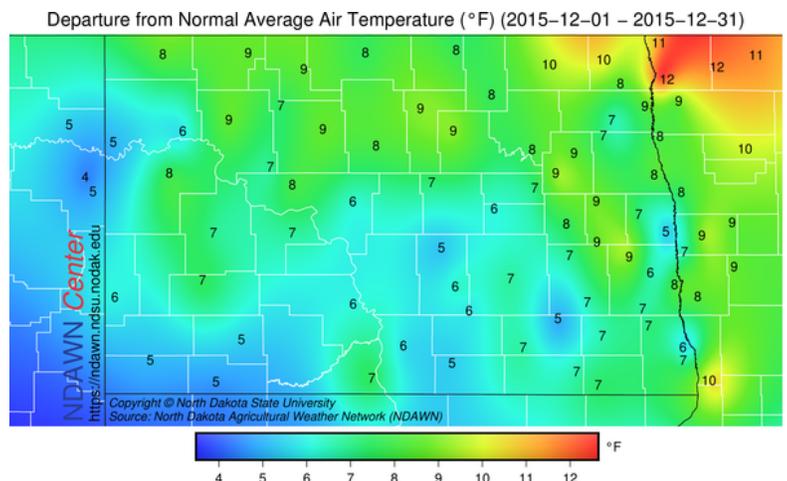


Figure 2. Temperature Departure from Normal in December, 2015 for North Dakota (North Dakota Agricultural Weather Network, NDAWN)