

Climate-Watch, January 1999

Climatic Events of the Month

National Climatic Data Center January 29, 1999



Introduction

1999 started as no stranger to the continuation of new climatic extremes. The month featured crippling ice and snowstorms, state record low temperatures in Illinois, and deadly tornadoes across the South. NCDC is archiving and keeping track of these individual events and will present a chronology of the major events each month in an updated web page that will highlight national and international extremes. The format of the web page will concentrate on "major" climatic events across the U.S. and the globe. Since this is an on-going effort, the data and information will be updated frequently during the month, so check back often for the latest updates. NCDC's scientists will also provide links to other relevant institutions and agencies dealing with natural hazards.

Major weather events covered this month include: Midwest blizzard, eastern U.S. ice storms, new all-time state record low for Illinois, and record deadly tornado outbreaks. At the heart of the Midwest blizzard residents in the Chicago land area experienced 21.6 inches of wind-driven snow early in the month. This total was just shy of the record 23 inch snowstorm back in January 26-27, 1967. This same storm glazed many parts of the east from Georgia to New York state, knocking out power to hundreds of thousands of residences. The weather pattern took on a spring-like flavor later in the month as milder temperatures returned to the lower half of the country. This trend in combination with fast moving storms coming in from the Pacific spawned a record number of January tornadoes. Three significant tornado outbreaks occurred, with a resulting in 19 deaths. The first outbreak occurred on January 2 in southeast Texas and along the western Gulf coast, the second outbreak occurred on January 17 in Tennessee, and the third on January 21-22, again mostly in and

near Arkansas and Tennessee.

Preliminary figures (as of February 1) show January 1999 with 169 reported tornadoes - 1056% of the normal for the month, which is 16 based on the 1953-1998 period. This is the highest number of tornadoes ever reported in the month of January; the second highest January total was 52 back in 1975. Systematic recording and reporting of tornadoes by the National Weather Service (NWS) began in 1916. However, it is impractical to make a comparison of recent tornado data with the early historical records due to population growth, increased alertness to and general interest in these storms, and advances in monitoring and observational techniques.

Special Summaries of Extreme Events During January 1999

[Midwest Climate Center Blizzard of Jan 1-3, 1999 Report](#)

[Gulf Coast Severe Weather Location Map for January 2, 1999](#)

[Gulf Coast Severe Weather Location Map for January 3, 1999](#)

[New Record State Low Temperature for Maine, January 13, 1999 was in Error - Special Update -](#)

[Lower Ohio Valley Severe Weather Location Map for January 18, 1999](#)

[Tornado/Severe Weather Reports for January 21-22, 1999](#)

[Mississippi and Tennessee Valley Severe Weather Location Map for January 22, 1999](#)

[NOAA Special Global Summary for January 1999](#)

Additional Links/Resources

[NCDC Climatic Extremes and Weather Events](#)

[NOAA NWS Office of Meteorology Monthly U.S. Disaster Map](#)

Selected U.S. City and State Extremes

The [Selected U.S. City and State Extremes](#) give a listing of new records that were set chronologically across the U.S. during January 1999.

Citing the Article

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