

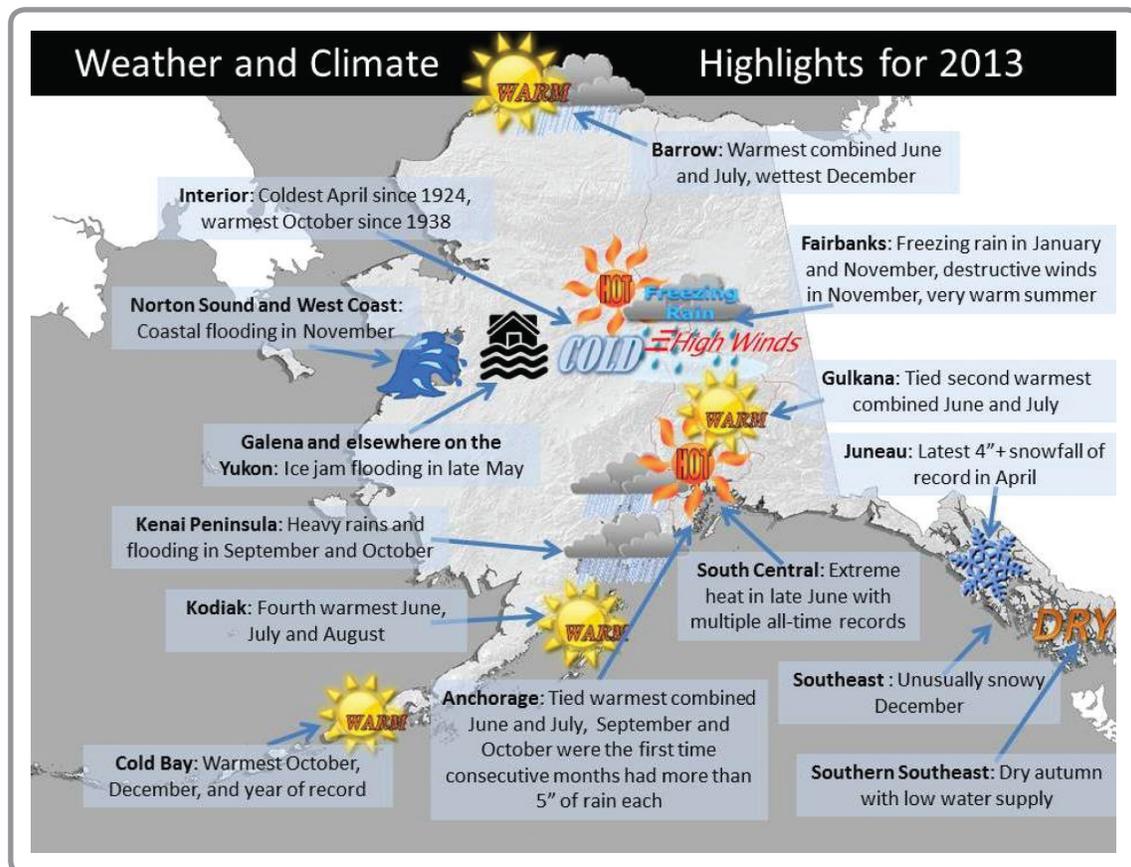
Regional - Significant Events for December 2013–February 2014

Winter 2013–14 was warmer than normal over all of Alaska except for the southern Panhandle. Precipitation was generally near to above normal, but in many areas, more of the precipitation fell as rain than normal, resulting in very low snow cover in many southern areas. Overall, the National Climatic Data Center reported that this was the eighth warmest and 27th wettest December through February on record for Alaska since 1915. Both Barrow and Cold Bay recorded their warmest mid-winter season on record.

January was by far the most unusual month, when a number of locations with long-term climate records recorded the warmest January on record and/or January record high temperatures. The all-time record high temperature for Alaska for January was tied when a climate station near Port Alsworth, in Lake Clark National Park, recorded a high temperature of 62°F on January 27. Overall, this was the third warmest and eighth wettest January since 1915. Schools and businesses were closed for several days in both Anchorage and Fairbanks due to repeated episodes of freezing rain. At Fairbanks, measurable rain fell in three straight winter months, the first time this has occurred in more than a century of weather records. High-elevation rains onto the typically heavy Chugach Mountains snowpack caused a massive avalanche across the Richardson Highway January 24 that closed the only road access into Valdez. It took Alaska Department of Transportation crews until early February to reopen the highway. Southern southeast Alaska, while neither exceptionally warm nor dry for the winter as a whole, saw thin or non-existent higher elevation snowpack, which has the potential to cause problems for hydroelectric power and salmon spawning later this spring and summer.

The mild winter weather and attendant problems were the result of persistent high pressure along the western North American coast and also over the Chukchi Sea, which keep cold air masses from persisting over the state. The frequent flow of Pacific air into Alaska was even warmer than would be typical as sea surface temperatures over the southern Gulf of Alaska and northeast Pacific Ocean were much above normal. The unusually warm northeast Pacific may also have been in part responsible for the persistent high pressure along the coast

Regional - Climate Overview for December 2013–February 2014



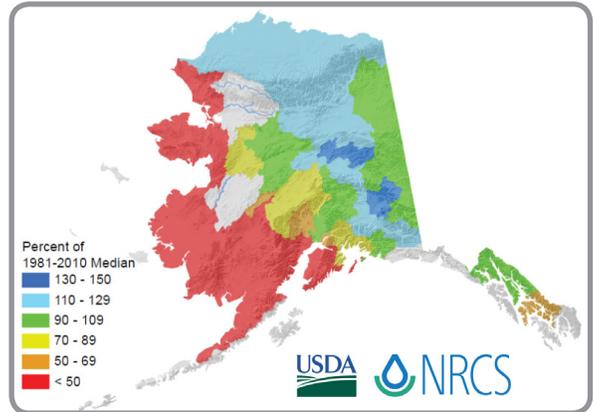
Regional Highlight - Temperatures Above Normal for the Winter

Alaska Seasonal and Subseasonal Anomalies Season: December 2013–February 2014

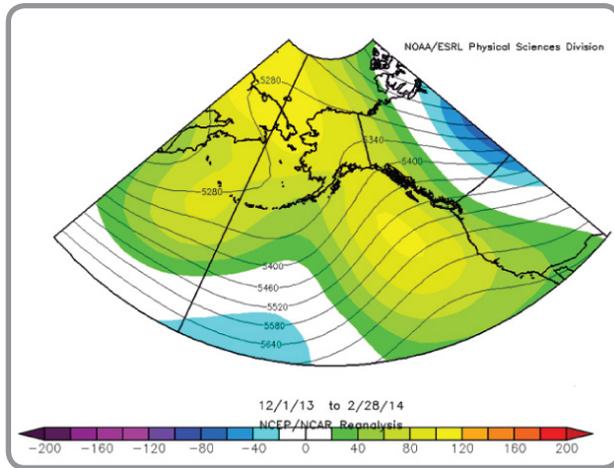
	Temperature (Standardized Anomaly)				Precipitation (1981-2010 Percentile Rank)			
	December	January	February	DJF	December	January	February	DJF
Barrow	1.5	1.5	1.0	2.1	100%	96%	95%	100%
Bettles	-0.7	1.4	-0.1	0.6	18%	91%	14%	57%
Fairbanks	-0.1	1.7	-0.4	0.9	87%	10%	63%	55%
Northway	-0.5	1.8	-1.1	0.4	100%	94%	67%	99%
Nome	0.6	2.1	0.7	2.1	100%	91%	39%	91%
Bethel	0.5	2.5	0.5	2.0	91%	80%	39%	82%
Saint Paul	1.1	1.1	0.2	1.2	79%	100%	39%	91%
King Salmon	0.3	2.3	0.4	1.7	46%	93%	0%	44%
Cold Bay	1.9	2.4	0.4	2.6	59%	80%	80%	86%
McGrath	0.3	2.2	0.2	0.6	75%	77%	14%	57%
Denali NP	-0.8	2.1	-0.7	0.6	23%	78%	51%	50%
Gulkana	-0.7	2.0	-1.9	0.2	80%	100%	76%	98%
Anchorage	-0.9	1.8	-0.3	0.6	75%	94%	48%	90%
Kodiak	0.0	1.5	-0.2	0.6	10%	96%	60%	57%
Yakutat	-0.6	1.4	-1.4	-0.1	34%	92%	19%	41%
Juneau	-0.5	1.5	-1.4	0.0	83%	100%	22%	88%
Annette	-0.4	0.3	-2.1	-1.0	95%	13%	8%	68%

Color fills show temperatures (red, blue) and precipitation (green, orange) that are significantly above or below normal.

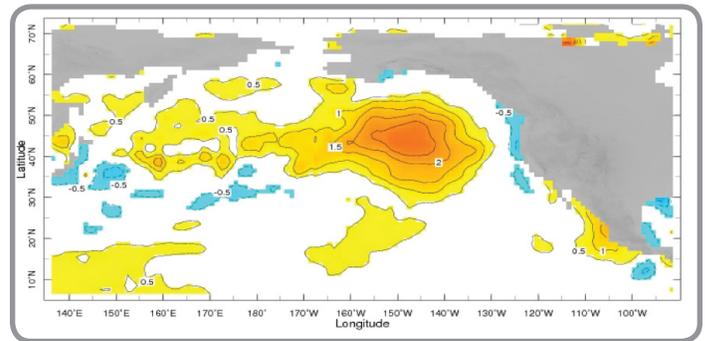
Alaska Snowpack as of March 1, 2014 Based on Snow Water Content



December 2013–February 2014

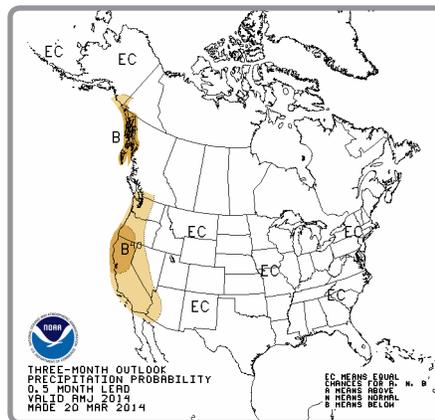
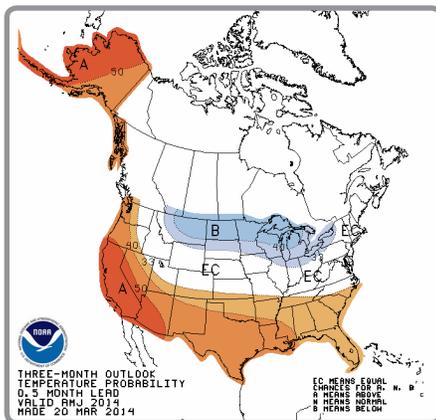


This graphic highlights the upper-level winds (Jet Stream) over Alaska during the December 2013–February 2014 period. The image shows that there was a persistent upper-level ridge of high pressure steering warm storm systems from the south into Alaska.



This graphic highlights the sea surface temperature over the northern Pacific Ocean during the December 2013–February 2014 period. The image shows that there was significant warming in the eastern north Pacific and Gulf of Alaska corresponding to the upper-level ridge.

Regional Outlook for Spring 2014



The outlook by the Climate Prediction Center for April and the April through June season calls for an increased chances of significantly above normal temperatures over much of western mainland Alaska and increased chances below median precipitation over southeast Alaska. This forecast suggests the potential for a severe river ice break-up season is lower than average, but with the potential for an early start to the fire season, especially in areas with far-below-normal snow cover.

Alaska Region Partners

Alaska Center for Climate Assessment and Policy
www.accap.uaf.edu

Alaska Climate Research Center
<http://climate.gi.alaska.edu/>

Alaska Climate Science Center
<http://www.doi.gov/csc/alaska/index.cfm>

NOAA/NWS Weather Forecast Offices in Fairbanks, Anchorage and Juneau

NOAA/NESDIS/NCDC
www.ncdc.noaa.gov

Scenarios Network for Alaska and Arctic Planning
www.snap.uaf.edu