

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA MONTHLY AGROMETEOROLOGICAL BULLETIN

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA METEOROLOGICAL SERVICE CLIMATE SECTION

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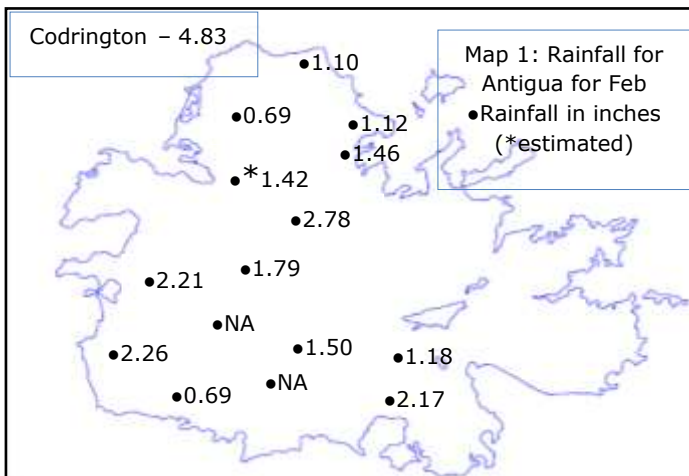
ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Antigua and Barbuda Meteorological Service (ABMS) will be observing [World Meteorological Day](#) (WMD) slated for March 23, this year; the theme for this year is "Climate Knowledge for Climate Action". The ABMS [Climate Section](#) has started to publish a monthly newsletter to highlight recent weather and climate events, and the outlooks for the upcoming months. The newsletter is also consistent with the theme of this year's WMD. We continue to welcome feedbacks on this bulletin and our other products.

WEATHER AND CLIMATE SUMMARY IN BRIEF FOR ANTIGUA – FEBRUARY 2015

February was warm and dry for most of Antigua, with record equalling high night-time [temperature](#). The mean daily minimum temperature for the month was 23.1°C, tying 2013 and 2007 for the record highest. Meanwhile, the mean temperature was 25.5°C; this is warmer than normal, the highest since 2010 and tied with 1981 for the eighth highest on record for February. Further, the absolute maximum was well above normal, ranked at top five for the month. The mean maximum temperature of 28.4°C was near normal but the highest since 2010, and the minimum temperature was 21.0°C.

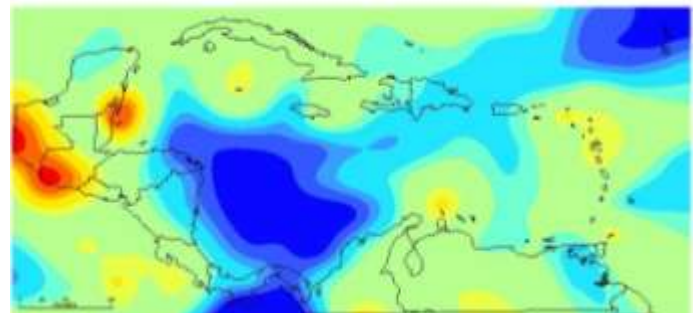
The average [rainfall](#) total for the month was 37.3 mm, below normal but the wettest since 2011. For the month, at the V. C. Bird International Airport, the seven wet days (≥ 1 mm) were near normal. However, for the sixth consecutive year, there has been no heavy rainfall day (≥ 10 mm); this is the record longest streak for the month. Meanwhile, the winter season December to February (DJF), had below normal rainfall – 5.86 inches, and near normal temperature – 25.5°C. See map 1 for rainfall distribution.



WEATHER AND CLIMATE SUMMARY IN BRIEF FOR THE CARIBBEAN – DECEMBER TO FEBRUARY

Apart from Barbados and St. Maarten which were moderately wet and moderately dry respectively, normal to slightly dry conditions predominated in the Eastern Caribbean and Guyana. Conditions in Jamaica ranged from moderately wet in the west to normal in the east, while Grand Cayman was moderately dry. Apart from the eastern extremities of Cuba that were slightly wet, Cuba was normal. Click maps 2 and 3 for larger views ([SPI explanation](#)).

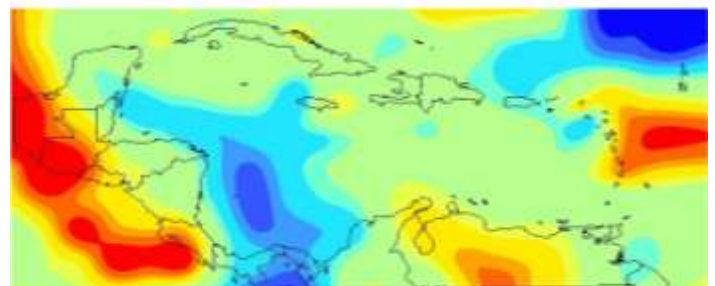
SPI February 2015



[Map 2: Standardised Precipitation Index for February](#)

For the winter season, mixed conditions were experienced in the Eastern Caribbean and Guyana. [Read more...](#)

SPI December 2014 to February 2015



[Map 3: Standardised Precipitation Index for DJF](#)

WEATHER AND CLIMATE OUTLOOKS FOR ANTIGUA**EXPERIMENTAL MONTHLY OUTLOOK – MARCH****Rainfall**

Above normal rainfall is most likely with greater than **2.1 inches**. Probabilistically, there is a

- **45%** chance of above normal rainfall;
- **35%** chance of near normal rainfall and
- **20%** chance of below normal rainfall.

Temperature

Near normal temperature is most likely i.e. **25.4 to 25.7°C**. Probabilistically, there is a

- **35%** chance of above normal temperature;
- **40%** chance of near normal temperature and
- **25%** chance of below normal temperature.

SEASONAL OUTLOOKS – MARCH TO MAY**Rainfall**

Above normal rainfall is most likely i.e. greater than **10.4 inches**. Probabilistically, there is a

- **40%** chance of above normal rainfall;
- **35%** chance of near normal rainfall and
- **25%** chance of below normal rainfall.

Temperature

Near normal temperature is most likely i.e. **26.2 to 26.5°C**. Probabilistically, there is a

- **25%** chance of above normal temperature;
- **40%** chance of near normal temperature and
- **35%** chance of below normal temperature.

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL SUMMARY

The ongoing **drought** has again intensified to moderate levels. The rains of November had reduced it to slight intensity; however, the low rainfall of the past couple of months has resulted in a reintensification of the drought.

The dry conditions are reflected in the overall dwindling of water in the island's surface catchments, including ponds used by farmers. The Antigua Public Utility Authority (APUA) has indicated that two of their surface water catchments, Big Creek and Break Knock 1, have fallen below extraction levels. The status of Potworks Dam, the country's largest surface catchment is conflicting. However, based on levels reported back in

December and below normal rainfall in the area for the past two months, we estimate the Dam to have fallen to around one quarter.

Compared to this time last year, farming conditions appear worse. The period January-February 2015 is the driest since 2001 and the 11th driest on record. The reduced rainfall allowed for land preparations and the easy control of pest and diseases. However, above normal surface winds hampered the spraying of crops. The dry weather would have also had a negative effect on the unwanted Giant African Snail, which has caused some farmers to abandon their farms.

Climate smart agriculture emphasizes the need for water conservation and efficiency. This is especially so in times of rainfall deficits like now. **Water efficiency** of irrigation can be improved by making the right decisions regarding crop selection, irrigation scheduling, irrigation methods and source of water.

Crops harvested during February included pumpkins, carrots, green onions, corns, tomatoes, yam and okras. Crops planted included sweet potatoes, cucumbers, sweep peppers, lettuce and egg plants. Crops in the field include many of the above plus butternut squashes and field corns. Pumpkins and carrots continue to glut the market while egg plants, okras, melons, sweet peppers and butternut squashes are scarce; sweet potatoes and tomatoes are in low supply.



Sweet Potatoes being grown

Credit: Kenrick Francis

The weather outlooks for the next three months call for: above normal rainfall for March and March-May (See inserts on the left). For agricultural and other activities the **7-Day Forecast** and the **Hazardous Weather Outlook** are recommended as useful planning tools.

Acknowledgements

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