

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA MONTHLY AGROMETEOROLOGICAL BULLETIN

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA METEOROLOGICAL SERVICE CLIMATE SECTION

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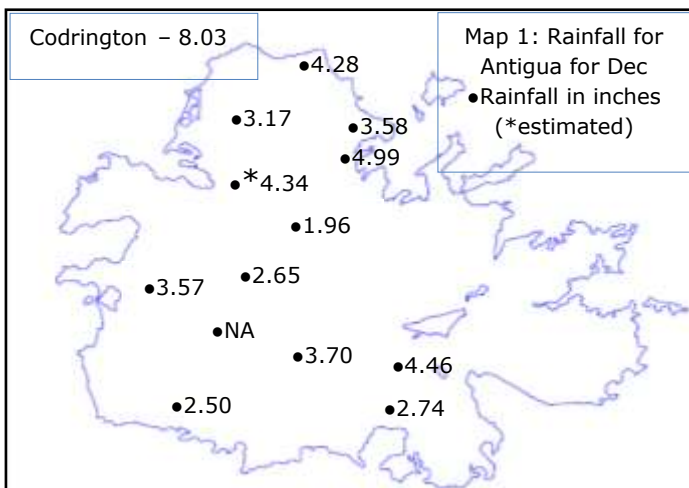
ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Antigua and Barbuda Meteorological Service (ABMS) [Climate Section](#) has been boosted by a graduate from Columbia University's M.A. in [Climate and Society](#). Having someone from this prestigious program will go a long way in the Climate Section meeting its [mission and vision](#). In November/December, ABMS and the Climate Section successfully hosted the first ever [CariCOF](#) to look at climate projections for the Caribbean dry season. Feedbacks on this bulletin are welcome.

WEATHER AND CLIMATE SUMMARY IN BRIEF FOR ANTIGUA – DECEMBER 2014

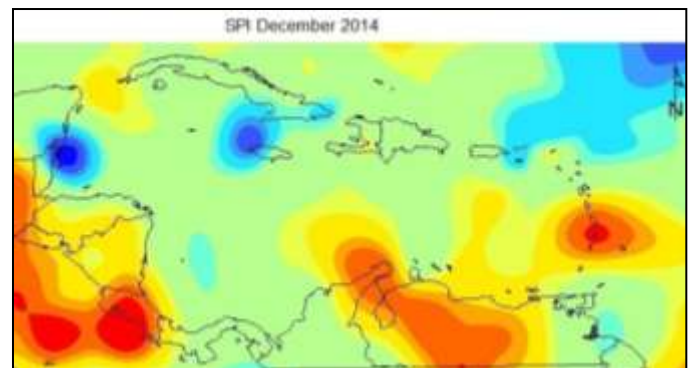
This December was **cooler** than normal with average **rainfall**. The mean temperature for the month was 25.5°C, the coolest in three years. Further, the mean daily maximum temperature, 28.3°C, and the absolute maximum, 29.4°C, were below normal. The mean daily minimum temperature, 23.0°C was near normal. Rainfall for December was 79.5 mm. For the month, at the V. C. Bird International Airport, the number of wet days (≥ 1 mm) and heavy rainfall days (≥ 10 mm) were near normal with 13 and 3 days respectively. The tropical upper level trough system dumped very heavy rain (36.5 mm) on the island on December 4, resulting in this day being the wettest for the month and the third wettest of the year. See map 1 for rainfall distribution across Antigua.

The "season" October to December (OND), had both near normal rainfall – 16.32 inches, and near normal temperature – 26.7°C.



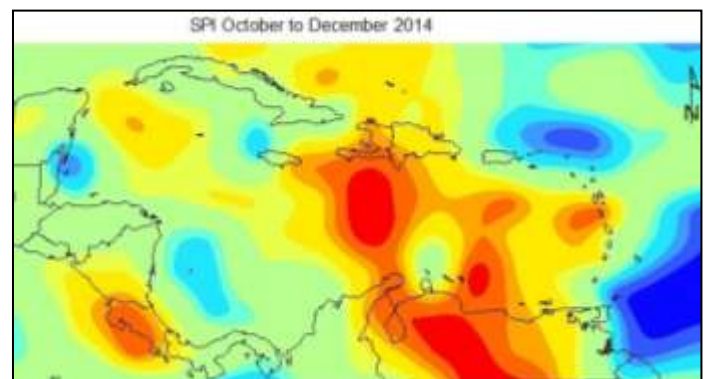
WEATHER AND CLIMATE SUMMARY IN BRIEF FOR THE CARIBBEAN – OCTOBER TO DECEMBER

Near to below normal rainfall prevailed across the Caribbean during December. Parts of the Windward Islands including Martinique, St. Lucia and St. Vincent were very dry. Click map 2 and 3 for larger views ([SPI explanation](#)).



[Map 2. Standardised Precipitation Index for December](#)

Near to below normal rainfall also prevailed across the region during the period October-December (OND). [Read more...](#)



[Map 3. Standardised Precipitation Index for OND](#)

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

Above normal rainfall is most likely with greater than **2.82 inches**. Probabilistically, there is a

- **50%** chance of above normal rainfall;
- **30%** chance of near normal rainfall and
- **20%** chance of below normal rainfall.

Temperature

Above normal temperature is most likely with greater than **25.6°C**. Probabilistically, there is a

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

SEASONAL OUTLOOKS – JANUARY TO MARCH**Rainfall**

Near normal rainfall is most likely i.e. **5.7 to 7.8** inches. Probabilistically, there is a

- **25%** chance of above normal rainfall;
- **45%** chance of near normal rainfall and
- **30%** chance of below normal rainfall.

Temperature

Above normal temperature is most likely with greater than **25.5°C**. Probabilistically, there is a

- **45%** chance of above normal temperature;
- **40%** chance of near normal temperature and
- **15%** chance of below normal temperature.

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL SUMMARY

No rain is bad for farming and too much rain is also bad. We went from extremely low soil moisture levels due to the drought, to extremely high moisture levels in many places due to excessive rainfall over the past two months in relatively short periods of time. This has made for challenging farming conditions on the wet end of the spectrum.

As a result of relatively intense rainfall, farms are now faced with a combination of challenges. These include soil wash, water logged soil and the outbreaks of pests

and diseases. Also, the rains have also caused a surge in weeds and the giant African snail (GAS).

The GAS has infected a number of areas; the most recent is All Saints. The GAS is very destructive to vegetation and continues to cause crop loss. The infestation in All Saints prompted a community meeting at the JT Ambrose School, Dec 22, to look at strategies for GAS eradication. The meeting was lead by one of the country's major farmers, Mr. Purcell, and attended by other stakeholders including Dr. Janil Gore-Francis, head of the Plant Protection Unit.

The drought has significantly eased and is now at slight levels. All of the minor surface water catchments, including ponds used by farmers, are 80-100% full; however, the main catchment, Potworks Reservoir, is only one-third full. Notwithstanding, water is still being rationed, and Ian Lewis – Production Manager of the Antigua water authority categorised the [water situation](#) as still at crisis levels; hence, the need to conserve and use efficiently.

The weather outlooks for the next three months look relatively favourable for agriculture. The projections are for near normal rainfall and above normal temperature for Jan-Mar. However, it is the dry season; thus farmers need to put systems in place to deal with the usually reduced rainfall for this time of the year. (See inserts on the left). For agricultural and other activities the [7-Day Forecast](#) and the [Hazardous Weather Outlook](#) are recommended as useful tools for planning day-to-day activities.

Notwithstanding the challenging, crops planted during December include cucumbers, melons, carrots, onions and sweet peppers. Also planted were field corn, chive and sweep potatoes. Crops harvested included most of what were mentioned above plus yams, herbs and spices. Pumpkins were glutting the market while sweet potatoes are scarce and onions are in poor supply.

Acknowledgements

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