

Central Indiana

October 2020

Climate Summary

Tied for 62nd Coolest on Record at Indianapolis

14th Wettest on Record at Indianapolis

Temperatures

The month started out cool in the wake of a cold front. Highs the first few days of October ranged from the middle 50s to middle 60s with lows dipping down into the mid and upper 30s and providing the first instances of frost for the fall. A few locations fell close to the freezing mark on the morning of the 5th, the coolest morning of the first two weeks of the month. Beginning on the 6th however, an extended period of warm, dry weather commenced that would last through the middle of the month. Highs routinely ranged between the middle 70s into the 80s. The 7th and the 9th would bring the warmest daytime temperatures of October with highs peaking in the middle to upper 80s. Portions of south central Indiana took a run at 90° on the afternoon of the 9th. With a dry airmass in place, lows fell generally into the 40s and 50s most nights through this period.

The passage of a strong cold front early on the morning of the 15th offered a transition to a much cooler weather pattern that would largely take hold of the Ohio Valley for much of the rest of October. The first hard freeze of the fall for many came on the mornings of the 16th and 17th as many locations fell into the middle and upper 20s. Highs were generally in the 50s to low 60s from the 16th through the 21st with some locations struggling to get out of the 40s on the 19th as central Indiana experienced the first widespread, and at times, heavy rainfall for most of the area since the middle of August. A brief, but notable warmup came for the 22nd and 23rd as much of the region enjoyed their last 80° day of the season.

A strong cold front brought another round of rainfall on the afternoon and evening of the 23rd along with a 25 to 30 degree drop. Beginning on the 24th, highs would generally remain below 60° through the rest of the month. Another hard freeze would impact the

entire region on Halloween morning, effectively ending the growing season in southeast portions of central Indiana that had not been impacted by the earlier cold on the 16th and 17th.

Much of the area would see monthly temperatures generally close to average, anywhere between 1° below normal and 2° above normal.

Site	October 2020 Avg Temp	October 2020 Difference from Normal	Highest Temperature	Lowest Temperature
Indianapolis	54.7	-0.3	84 on 7 and 9	31 on 31
Lafayette	54.6	+0.3	85 on 9	29 on 16
Muncie	55.3	+1.5	87 on 9	31 on 31
Terre Haute	55.0	+0.8	88 on 7	27 on 16
Bloomington	56.0	+1.4	89 on 7	29 on 16
Shelbyville	55.9	+1.7	87 on 9	30 on 31
Indy–Eagle Crk.	54.7	-0.1	83 on 7 and 9	30 on 31

At Indianapolis, there were 11 days with above normal average temperatures and 20 days with below average temperatures.

October 2020 was tied for the 62nd coolest in the Indianapolis area since 1871.

Precipitation

After a dry start, October saw significantly more rainfall than previous months as a much more active weather pattern developed for central Indiana. A few moderate to heavy rain events over the second half of the month brought beneficial moisture to central Indiana, and finally brought some improvement to the dry conditions across most of the state.

At the Indianapolis International Airport, the first eleven days of the month had no measurable precipitation, exacerbating drought conditions across much of the state. After a couple of insignificant rains, a cold front moved through central Indiana on the 18th, bringing some widespread rain to the area. This front then stalled near the Ohio River and moved north and south across the area for a few days, serving as a focus for areas of moderate to heavy rain from the 19th through the 21st. Rainfall totals lined up in a southwest to northeast track. Total rainfall amounts during this period were 1 to 2 inches in the far northwest, with 2 to 2.5 inches central, 1.5 to 2 inches south central, and 2 to 2.5 inches far south, with locally higher amounts along the Ohio River.

Another cold front moved through on October 23rd and brought between a quarter inch (west) and three quarters of an inch of rainfall across the region. However, this event had embedded convection which brought locally higher amounts that prompted a few areal flood warnings and a flash flood warning for amounts of one to more than three inches.

On the 29th, moisture from the remnants of Hurricane Zeta made its way north to interact with a cold frontal boundary approaching the state from the west and produced another round of moderate to heavy rainfall across central and southern Indiana. While only a quarter inch or less fell across the northwestern counties, around an inch to 1.5 fell from a Terre Haute to Muncie line, with two to three inches common south of that line. The highest amounts from this event fell in an area around Evansville, with several observations of over four inches around the city and even a couple of water rescues reported in that area of Posey County.

Total rainfall amounts for the month, then, ended up being much lower across the northwestern counties. Northwest portions of Warren, Tippecanoe, and Carroll counties saw around an inch and a half, but amounts increased significantly heading southeast from there. Two to four inches of rain was common in areas such as Lafayette and Kokomo. Four to six inches of rain was common across the rest of the area, with a couple of stripes of 6 to 8 inches as well, especially across the southernmost counties in areas like Vincennes and Seymour. Thus rainfall amounts were over an inch to two inches above normal across much of central Indiana for the month of October, with only the far northwest portions of central Indiana ending the month below normal. At Indianapolis, the total rainfall of 5.35” was the 14th wettest October on record.

Site	October 2020 Precipitation	October 2020 Difference from Normal	Wettest Day	Longest Dry Stretch
Indianapolis	5.35	+2.23	1.18 on 19	7 days 5-11
Lafayette	2.91	+0.02	1.29 on 20	7 days 5-11
Muncie	4.74	+1.82	1.23 on 29	7 days 5-11
Terre Haute	4.92	+1.35	1.01 on 29	7 days 5-11
Bloomington	4.22	+0.69	1.93 on 29	7 days 5-11
Shelbyville	4.00	+0.89	1.37 on 29	7 days 5-11
Indy–Eagle Crk.	5.86	+2.75	1.47 on 20	7 days 5-11

October 2020 was the 14th wettest in the Indianapolis area since weather records began in 1871.

Severe Weather

Strong storms on the morning of the 21st knocked down a few trees over the northern half of central Indiana. Storms produced hail on the afternoon of the 23rd, with up to quarter size hail reported in Hancock and Lawrence Counties. Two construction workers suffered injuries from a lightning strike in Bargersville in Johnson County on the 23rd as well.

For information on severe weather in other areas during October, visit the Storm Prediction Center “Severe Weather Event Summaries” website at <http://www.spc.noaa.gov/climo/online/>.

Miscellaneous

The maximum wind gust at Indianapolis International Airport was 45 mph out of the northwest on the 12th. Fog or haze was reported at Indianapolis on 17 days during the month, with dense fog occurring on the 11th and the 22nd. Thunder was reported on 3 days during October with small hail occurring on the 23rd.

November 2020 Outlook

The official outlook for November 2020 from the Climate Prediction Center indicates a greater chance for above normal temperatures across central Indiana. At Indianapolis, the average temperature for the month is 43.6 degrees. The outlook also calls for an equal chance for near, above or below normal precipitation in November. The average precipitation for November at Indianapolis is 3.70” with 0.7” of snowfall.

Data prepared by the Indianapolis Forecast Office.