IOWA DNR
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

WATER SUMMARY UPDATE

Published Date January 8, 2026 | Issue 175

A review of water resource trends from 2025

After a wetter-than-normal 2024, annual average precipitation for 2025 was slightly below normal, with a preliminary statewide average of 33.60 inches, 1.95 inches below normal. Eastern and southern Iowa experienced the driest conditions, with widespread deficits in the range of six to nine inches. Much of northern Iowa observed wetter conditions, particularly stations in north-central Iowa. The US Drought Monitor showed an easing of drought conditions in the state over the past year, starting with a small area of D2-Severe Drought in northwest Iowa to end 2024. No D3 - Severe Drought existed in the state in 2025. The *Iowa Drought Plan* currently shows dry conditions in eastern Iowa. During 2025, Drought Regions 1 (northwest Iowa), 3 (northeast Iowa), and 5 (southeast Iowa) had been consistently in "Drought Watch," but for five months of this year, all regions experienced normal conditions.

PRECIPITATION AND TEMPERATURE

Based on 153 years of statewide observations, the preliminary annual precipitation for Iowa totaled 33.60 inches, 1.95 inches below normal; this ranks near the 63rd wettest on record; a wetter year occurred in 2024. The statewide average temperature was 49.7 degrees or 1.3 degrees above normal, ranking as the 25th warmest year on record; 2024 was warmer and the 5th warmest.

Winter 2024-2025:

Temperatures for the three winter months of December, January, and February (DJF) averaged 22.6 degrees or 0.2 degrees below normal, while precipitation totaled 2.00 inches, 1.52 inches below normal. Winter 2024-2025 ties 1949 and 1966 as the 77th coldest and ranks as the 18th driest; 2019-2020 was colder, while 2020-2021 was drier. The statewide average snowfall was 8.8 inches, 13.3 inches below normal, making it the 4th least snowy winter in 138 years of records.

Spring 2025:

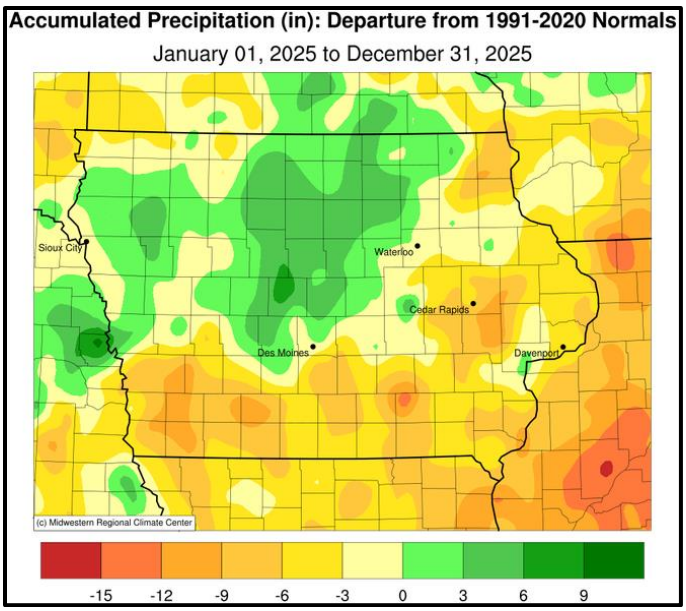
Temperatures for the three spring months of March, April, and May averaged 50.8 degrees or 2.5 degrees above normal. This ranks as the 23rd warmest spring on record. Precipitation totaled 8.55 inches or 1.95 inches below normal, tying 1963 as the 64th driest in 153 years of observations; Spring 2024 was warmer, while 2023 was drier.

Summer 2025:

Temperatures for the three summer months of June, July, and August averaged 72.5 degrees, which is 1.1 degrees above normal. Precipitation totaled 18.16 inches or 4.60 inches above normal. This ties 1899, 1916, 1923, and 1948 as the 61st warmest summer on record. It also ranks as the 6th wettest summer in 153 years of records. Summer 2022 was warmer, while 2014 was wetter and the 4th wettest on record.

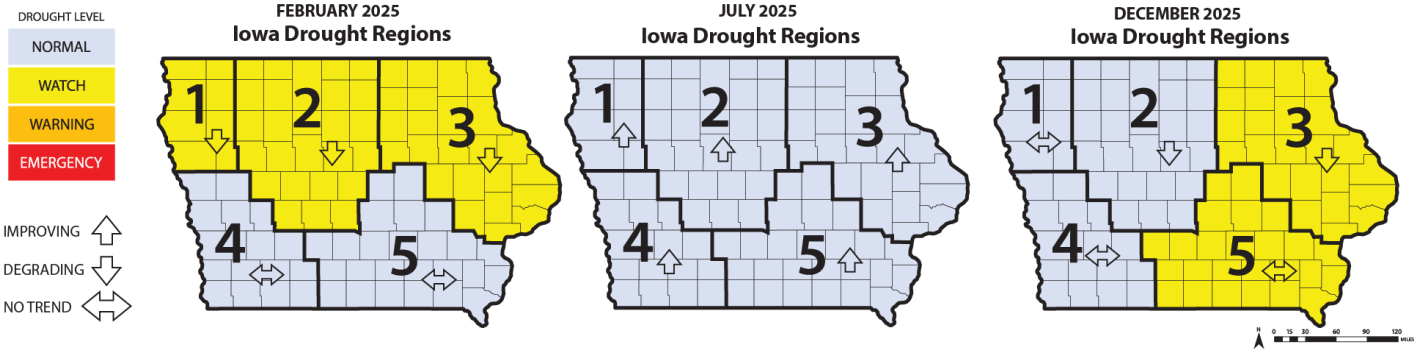
Fall 2025:

Temperatures over the three autumn months (September-October-November) averaged 54.6 degrees or 4.1 degrees above normal, while precipitation totaled 5.13 inches, 2.86 inches below normal. Fall 2025 ties 2024 as the 4th warmest fall in the period of record; it also ranks as the 27th driest fall on record. Fall 2016 was warmer (3rd warmest) while 2022 was drier.

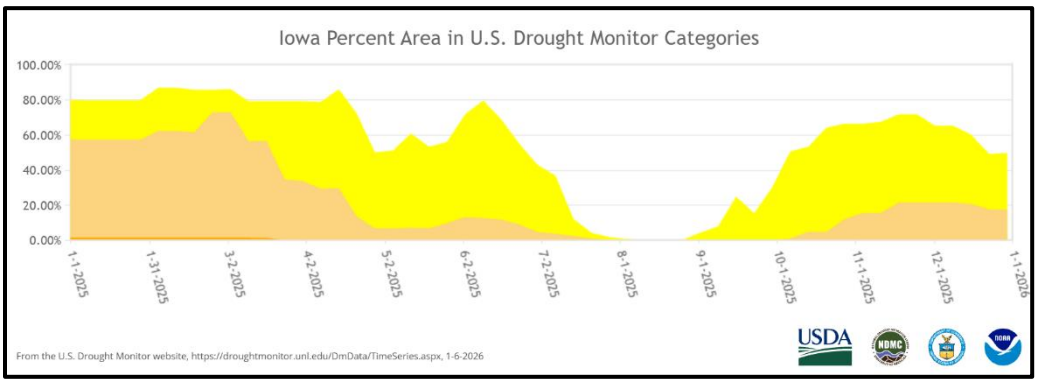


IOWA DROUGHT PLAN FOR 2025

The Iowa Drought Plan (IDP) divides the state into five drought regions, and drought conditions are reported monthly for those regions. IDP categories are Normal, Drought Watch, Drought Warning, and Drought Emergency. Conditions in February 2025 led to Drought Region 1 (northwest Iowa), Region 2 (central Iowa), and Region 3 (northeast Iowa) in Drought Watch, and the remaining regions of the state in normal conditions. Throughout the year, near-average and higher-than-average monthly rainfall totals resulted in the entire state being classified under normal conditions for five months. The fall and early winter months of 2025 were dry, resulting in a drought watch classification for portions of the state to finish out the year.

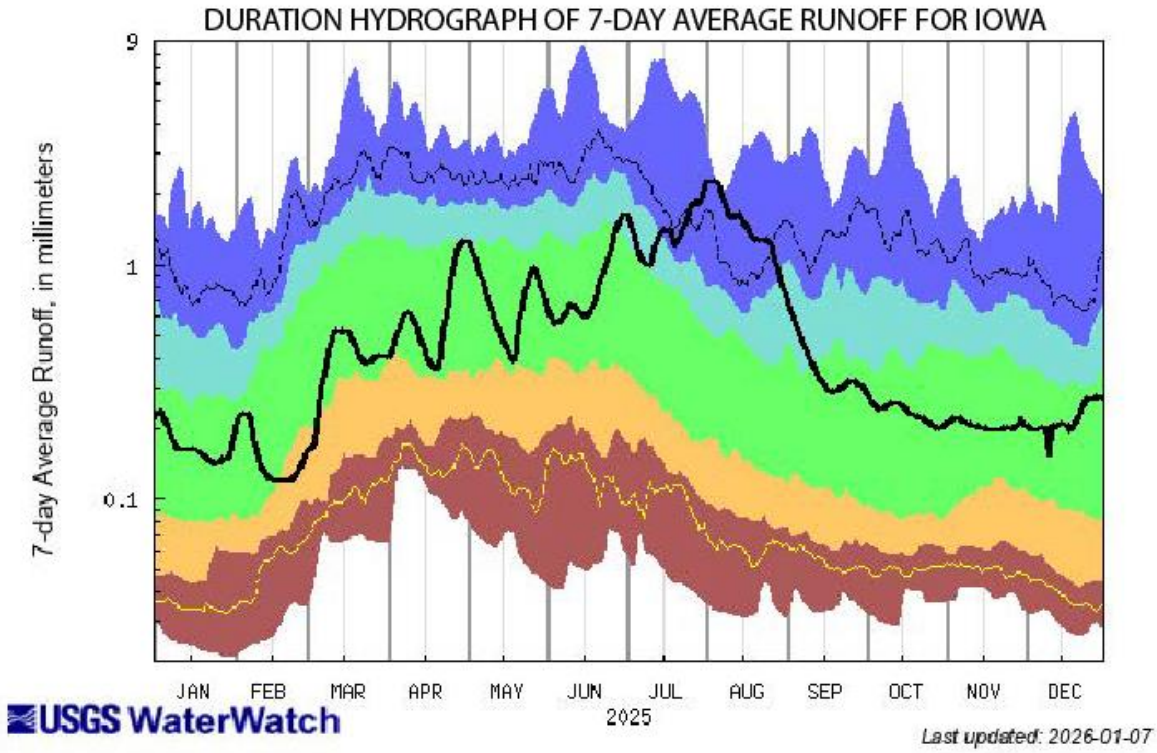


The US Drought Monitor (one of the data sources used in the IDP) shows that Iowa was in drought conditions in early and late 2025, but returned to D0 or no drought conditions over the late summer months. Below is a graph that shows statewide coverage of drought conditions for 2025, starting with much of the entire state in some form of drought or dryness. Then no drought conditions in August, but dryness and drought returned to finish out the year.



2025 Runoff and Streamflow

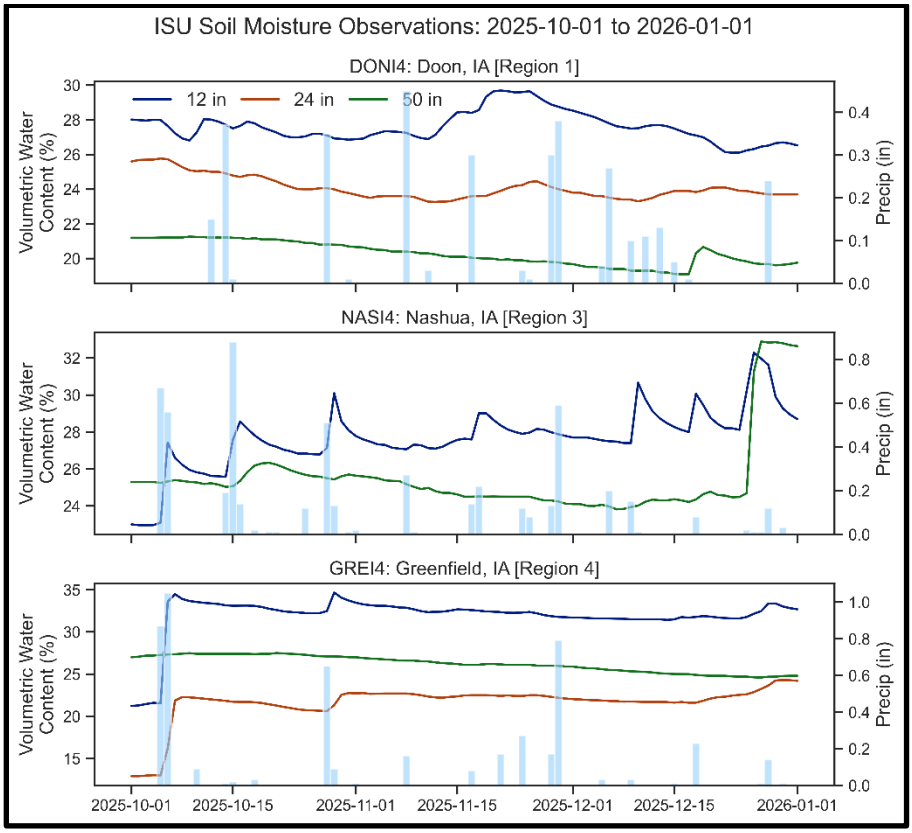
Average streamflow across the state, as shown by the black line in the figure below, started the year in the normal range before increasing into the higher than normal ranges (the blue bands) during July and August. This was driven largely by much-above-normal flows across the northern half of Iowa in both July and August. Average streamflow then decreased during the fall months but remained in the normal range. 2025 ended with statewide average streamflow in the normal range.



Explanation - Percentile classes							
lowest-10th percentile	5	10-24	25-75	76-90	95	90th percentile -highest	Runoff
Much below Normal		Below normal	Normal	Above normal	Much above Normal		

2025 Soil Moisture

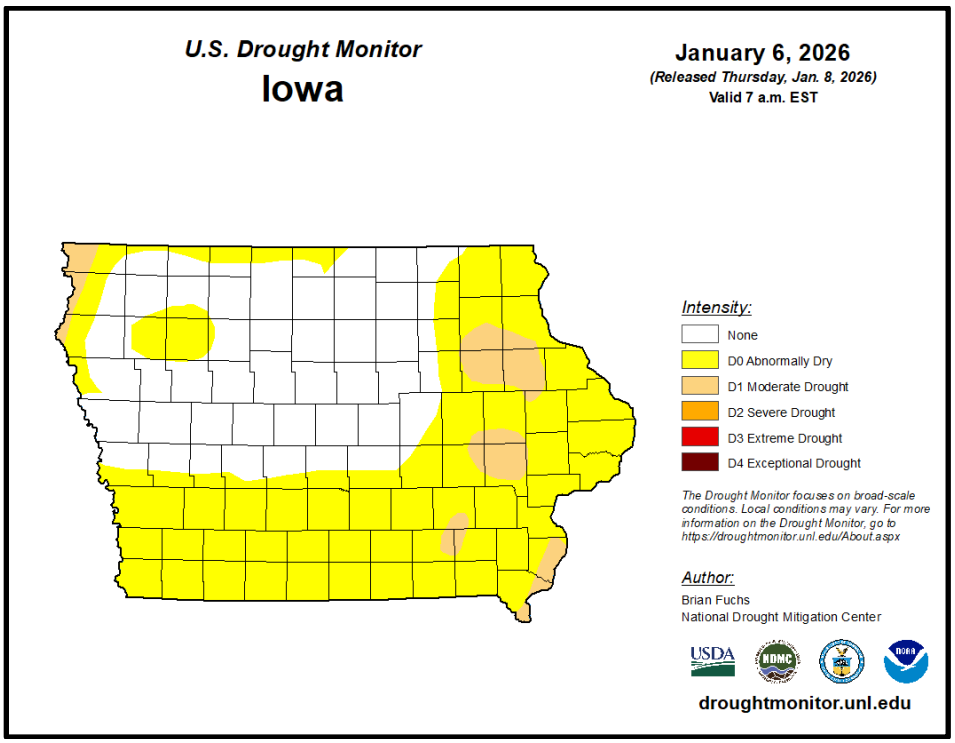
Soil moisture levels dipped in early 2025 and improved after months near-normal and above-normal rainfall in the warmer months. With the dry end to fall 2025, soil moisture conditions degraded slightly, but remained at normal levels through the rest of 2025. Soil moisture levels will be unchanged during the winter months, as soils typically remain frozen and show little improvement or degradation until the spring.



MONTHLY CONDITIONS: DECEMBER 2025

Drought Monitor for December 2025

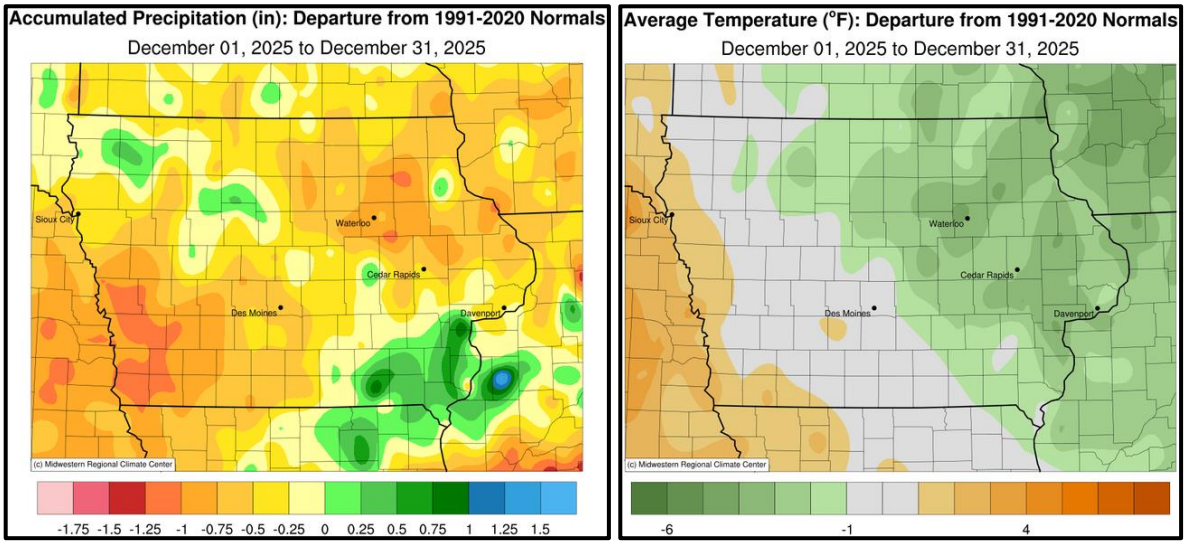
Overall drought and dryness in Iowa improved by the end of December, with nearly half of the state experiencing some level of dryness or drought. The latest US Drought Monitor (USDM), released on January 8, shows even more improved conditions. Areas of D1 - Moderate Drought remained but improved northwest and eastern Iowa, while D0 - Abnormally Dry expanded across the southern third of the state.



Precipitation and Temperature for December 2025

Precipitation for December was 1.00 inches, or 0.37 inches below normal. Much of the northeast and southwest quadrants of Iowa reported precipitation deficits in the 0.50- to 1.00-inch range. Pockets of stations along a northwest-to-southeast swath of Iowa observed slightly above-normal precipitation, with the wettest conditions occurring in the southeast; this swath was collocated with a band of above-normal snow accumulation. The statewide average snowfall was 8.0 inches, or 0.1 inch above normal. Monthly precipitation totals ranged from 0.18 inch in Clarinda to 3.85 inches in Muscatine. An observer in Fort Dodge reported the highest monthly snowfall, totaling 21.0 inches.

Monthly average temperatures varied across Iowa, with below-normal conditions in the state's northeastern half and slightly above-normal temperatures along the Iowa-Nebraska border. Clarinda reported the month's highest temperature of 62 degrees on the 23rd, which was 27 degrees above normal. Battle Creek and Pocahontas reported the month's lowest temperature of -20 degrees on the 14th, an average of 34 degrees below normal. Pocahontas recorded the same overnight low on the 15th.



Streamflow Conditions for December 2025

During December, streamflow levels increased to normal conditions in the Chariton, Fox, and Skunk Rivers. The Boone, East Nishnabotna, and lower portion of the Cedar River increased to above normal conditions. The Blue Earth River increased to much above normal conditions. The Boyer and Winnebago Rivers decreased to normal conditions. The Nodaway River and branches of the One Hundred and Two River in southwest Iowa decreased to below normal conditions. The majority of the state remained in normal streamflow conditions.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For additional information on the information in this Water Summary Update please contact any of the following:

General Information, Jessica Reese McIntyre, Iowa DNR.....Jessica.ReeseMcIntyre@dnr.iowa.gov, 515-725-9547
State Climatologist & Drought Coordinator, Justin Glisan, IDALS.....Justin.Glisan@iowaagriculture.gov, 515-281-8981
Standardized Streamflow Index (SSI), Elliot Anderson, IGS ..... elliot-anderson@uiowa.edu, 319-335-1575
Stream Flow, Padraic O'Shea, USGS ..... poshea@usgs.gov, 319-358-3653
Stream Flow, Mike Anderson, Iowa DNR..... Michael.Anderson@dnr.iowa.gov, 515-725-0336
Soil Moisture, Filipe Quintero Duque, Iowa Flood Center.....felipe-quintero@uiowa.edu, 319-384-1727