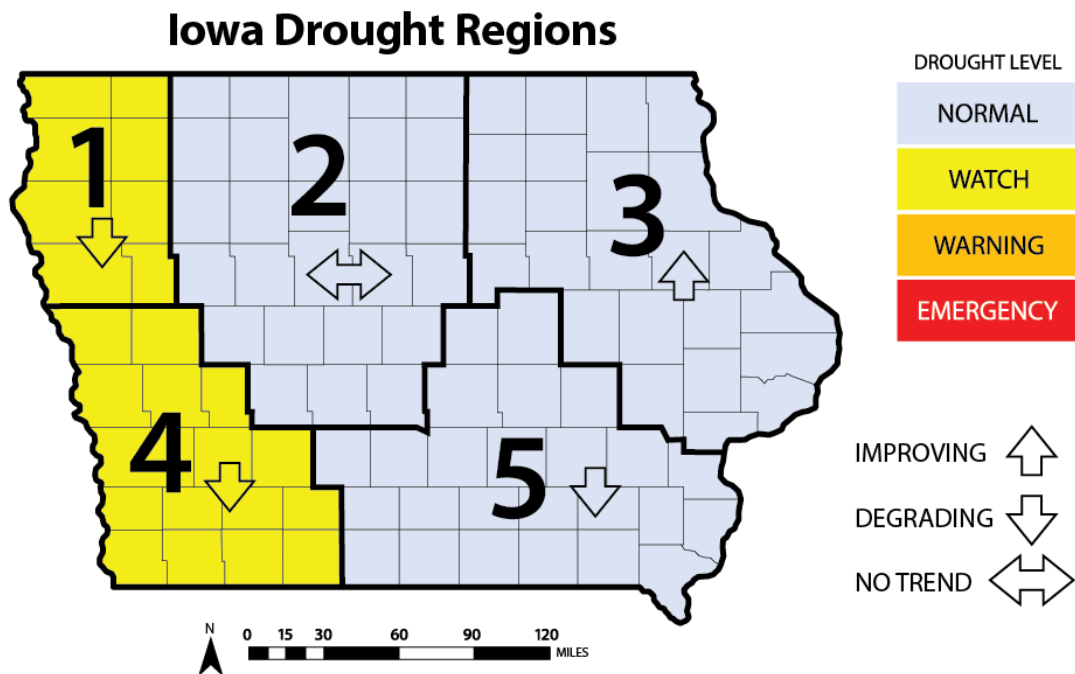


WATER SUMMARY UPDATE

Published Date August 6, 2026 | Issue 182

A snapshot of water resource trends for July 2026

IOWA DROUGHT CONDITIONS



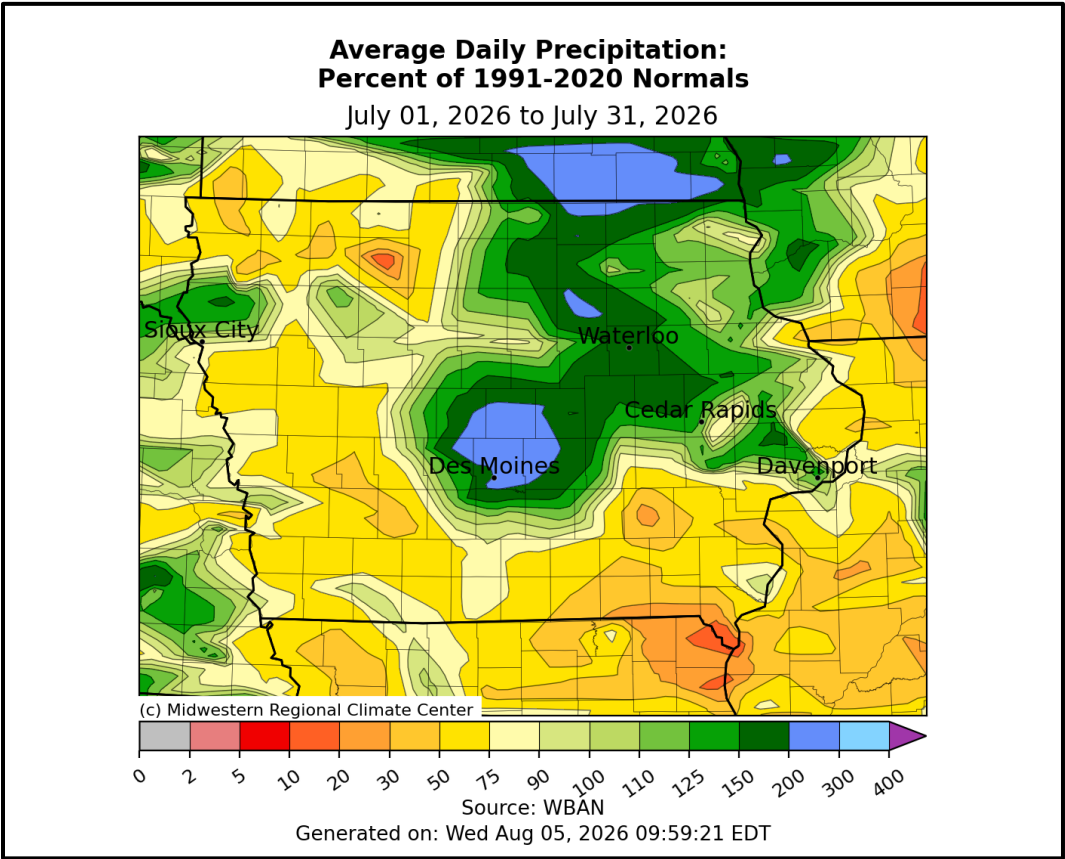
CONDITION SUMMARY - DROUGHT CONTINUES TO EXPAND IN THE NORTH AND WEST IN JULY

July precipitation varied sharply across Iowa, with central and northeastern areas receiving 200 to 300 percent of their normal July precipitation while other regions experienced deficits. As a result, nearly half of the state is now designated as D0 - Abnormally Dry or worse, primarily spanning northern, western, and southeastern portions of the state. In contrast, northeastern and central Iowa maintain normal conditions. The expansion and emergence of D1 - Moderate Drought conditions across northern and western regions during July has kept the northwestern drought watch active and triggered a new watch for southwestern Iowa. The Climate Prediction Center's (CPC) Seasonal Drought Outlook indicates that the existing drought in the northwest will likely persist and expand through October. For August, the statewide outlook indicates an increased chance of above-normal temperatures and equal chances of above-, below-, or near-normal precipitation statewide.

July Precipitation and Temperature

Iowa's preliminary statewide precipitation totaled 4.50 inches, or 0.33 inches above normal. Many of the state's National Weather Service co-op and Community Collaborative Rain, Hail and Snow (CoCoRaHS) stations reported below-average rainfall with general departures in the one to three inch range. However, stations in central to northeast Iowa registered 200-300 percent of normal through July, with totals approaching six inches over the 30-year climatology. Monthly precipitation amounts ranged from 0.21" in Farmington to 15.64" in Ankeny; both gauges are a part of the CoCoRaHS network.

Statewide average temperatures in July were up to five degrees warmer than normal; the overall preliminary statewide average was 76.5 degrees, 3.1 degrees above normal. July 2026 will rank around the 25th warmest in 154 years of statewide records. Little Sioux reported the month’s high temperature of 102 degrees on the 27th, 17 degrees above normal. Spencer Municipal Airport reported the month’s low temperature of 45 degrees on the 23rd, 18 degrees below normal.



Standardized Precipitation Index (SPI)

The SPI is an index based on accumulated precipitation for various time scales. SPI is the most commonly used indicator worldwide for detecting and characterizing meteorological droughts. The SPI indicator measures precipitation differences based on a comparison of observed total precipitation amounts over the period of interest with the long-term historical precipitation record for that period. Droughts are characterized by negative SPI values, while positive SPI values indicate wet periods. The range of SPI values is between -3 and +3, denoting “extremely dry” to “extremely wet”.

Ninety-day SPI values for all drought regions in July (comparing May, June, and July precipitation) range from -0.4 to 1.3, with three of the five values above zero. Drought Region 1 180-day SPI value had the largest decrease, and was the only value below zero.

Drought Region	3-month SPI	6-month SPI	IDP Classification ↑ = improving ↓ = degrading ↔ = no trend
1	-0.4	-0.6	Watch ↓
2	0.0	0.3	Normal ↔
3	1.3	1.7	Normal ↑
4	-0.1	0.1	Watch ↓
5	0.6	1.0	Normal ↓

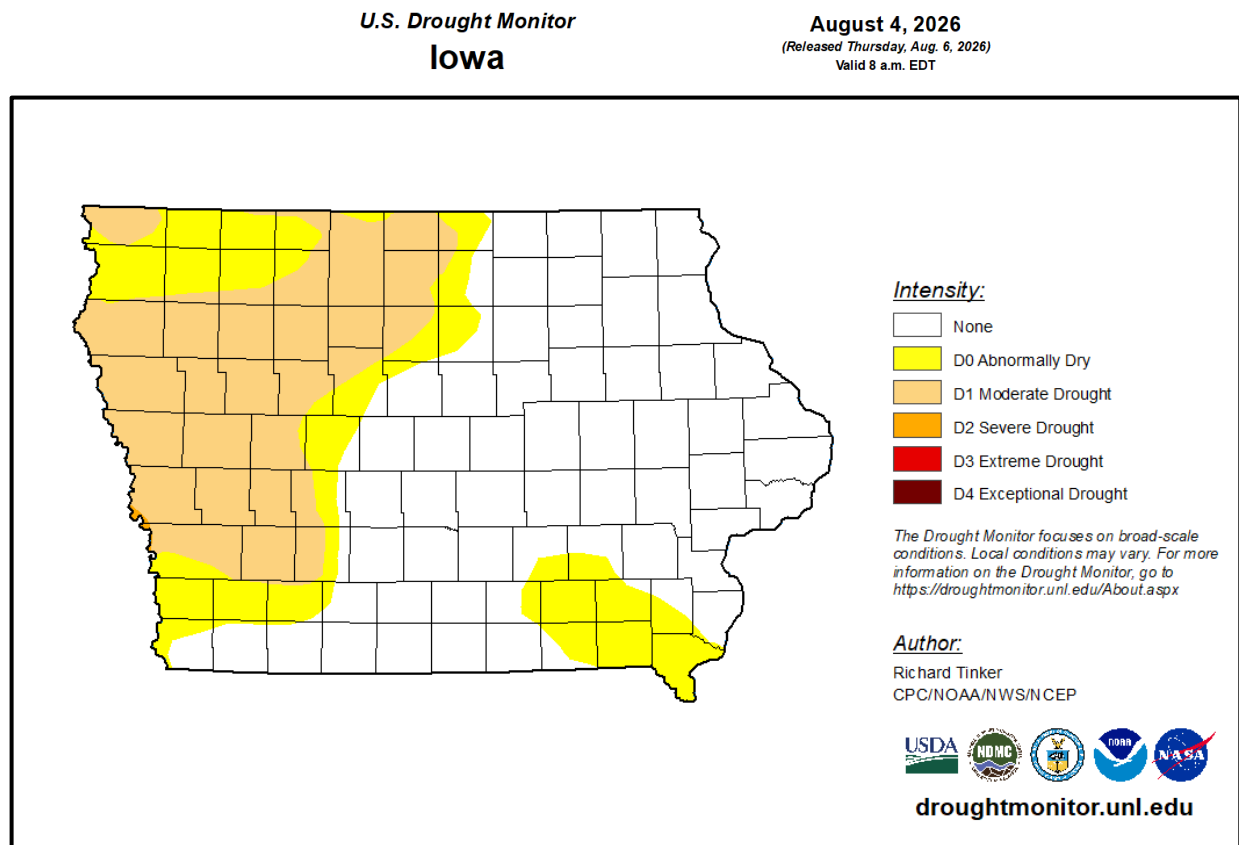
Standardized Streamflow Index (SSI) and Streamflow

SSI is a metric that compares current streamflow against the historical record to determine how far away the current streamflow value is from the river's historical mean observed on the same date. The 30-day SSI values in two of the five drought regions have increased, and two drought regions have decreased. Comparing July to June data, Drought Region 2 demonstrated the greatest 30-day SSI improvement, while Drought Region 4 showed the largest decrease.

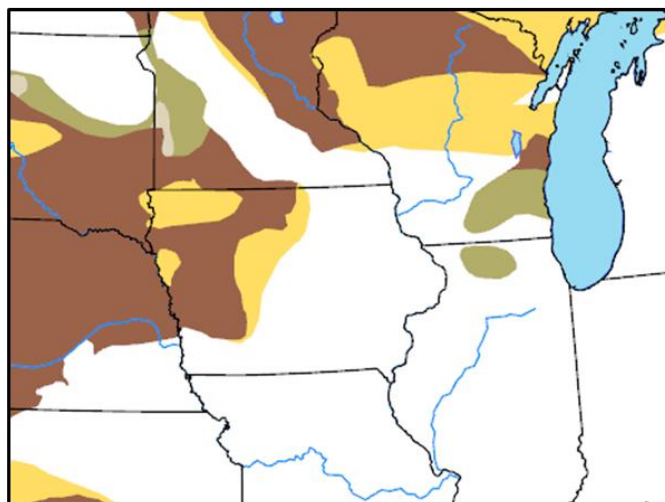
According to the US Geological Survey, streamflow levels in July were largely classified as normal conditions across much of Iowa. Currently, one stream gage is classified as extremely below, and four stream gages are classified as extremely above. Most gages across the state indicate normal, above-normal, much-above, and extremely-above flows. The Rock River gage below Tom Creek at Rock Rapids in northern Iowa is extremely below normal.

US DROUGHT MONITOR AND DROUGHT CONDITIONS

The latest US Drought Monitor (USDM), released on August 6, indicates a continued dry trend across northern and western Iowa. Although central and northeastern Iowa saw stable conditions, southeastern Iowa has developed an area of D0 - Abnormally Dryness. Additionally, the northern and western regions remain categorized under D0 - Abnormally Dry status, with areas of D1 - Moderate Drought either persisting or developing. Currently, nearly 45 percent of the state is experiencing some level of dryness, and nearly 30 percent is designated as some level of drought.

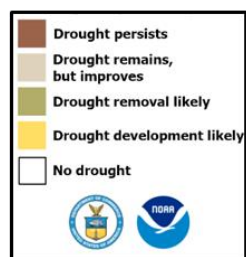


The Seasonal Drought Outlook, released by the CPC on July 31, 2026, valid through October 31, 2026, indicates that much of Iowa is projected to remain drought-free through October. However, drought conditions in the west and northwest are expected to persist and expand to include the whole northwestern quarter of the state. The Seasonal Precipitation and Temperature Outlook offers no clear signal for precipitation and temperature across Iowa. The outlook for August has no clear signal for precipitation, and a chance for above normal temperatures across the state. The Seasonal Drought Outlook considers the impacts of recent precipitation as well as seasonal precipitation outlooks.



U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook Drought Tendency During the Valid Period

Valid for August 1 - October 31, 2026
Released July 31, 2026



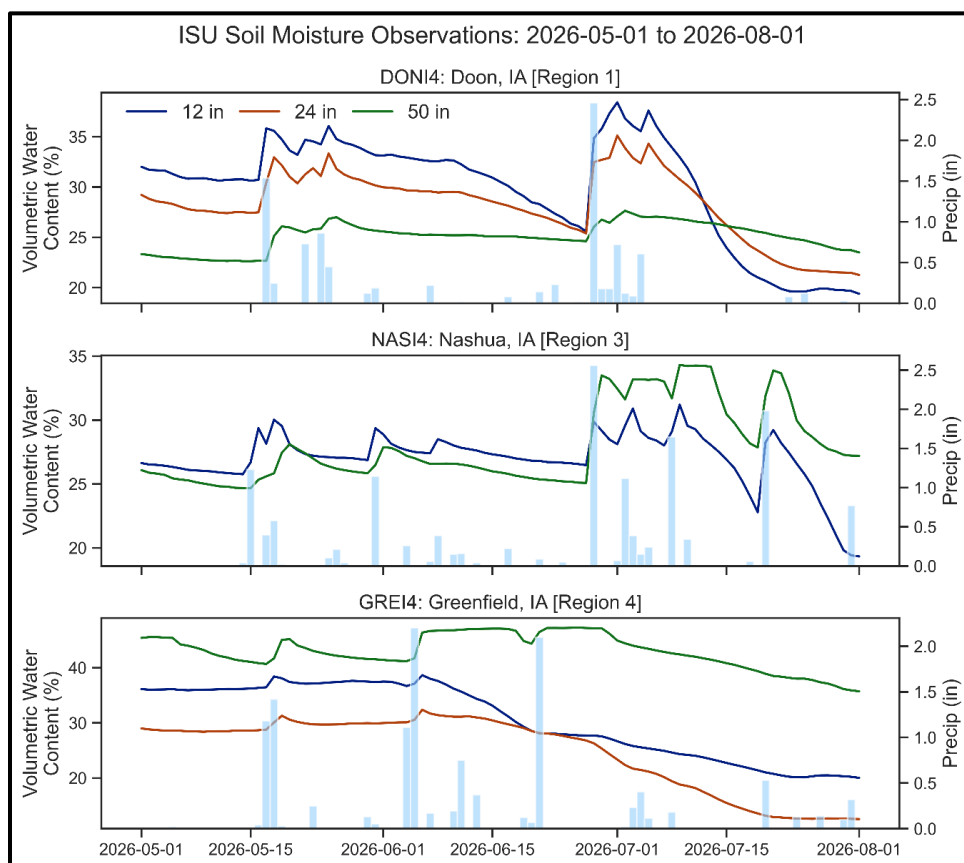
OTHER WATER RESOURCE INFORMATION

Border River Conditions

In their weekly update of Missouri River conditions dated August 4, 2026, the Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) indicates that the volume of water stored in the system of reservoirs is 48.4 Million Acre-Feet (MAF), which is nearly the same volume as last month. The updated annual runoff forecast for the upper Missouri River Basin above Sioux City is 15.4 MAF or 60% of the average annual runoff. The US Army Corps of Engineers reports dry surface soils across the upper Basin, with sizeable sections of Wyoming and Colorado registering in the 1st percentile or lower for moisture content.

July Soil Moisture

Soil moisture in the surface soil has decreased across the state, with saturation ranging between 15 and 40%. Drier conditions are seen in the south. Only areas of central Iowa remain with saturation levels above 50%. At lower layers of soil, saturation in northwestern Iowa ranges between 35 and 45%, whereas in southern and eastern Iowa ranges from 50 to 80%.



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This edition of the Water Summary Update continues to reflect use of the 2023 Iowa Drought Plan (IDP), which was developed as a collaborative effort between the Department of Natural Resources, the Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, and the Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management. The IDP can be seen in its entirety on the DNR’s website: [The Iowa Drought Plan](#).

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 elliott-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 Centerfelipe-quintero@uiowa.edu, 319-384-1727