



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

## NEWS RELEASE



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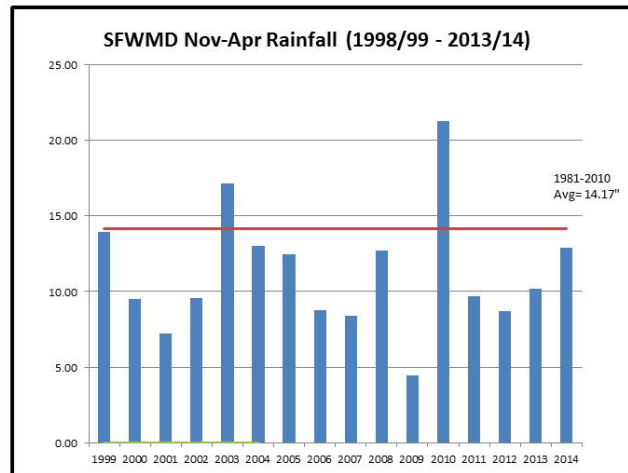
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## South Florida Water Levels Are Well Positioned for the Dry Season

*National Weather Service outlook calls for normal to above-normal rainfall*



*During the past 16 years, November through April produced above-average rainfall twice and near-normal rainfall 5 times. (Click graphic for a larger version.)*

**Miami, FL** — Above-average wet season rainfall across some key areas of South Florida has positioned water levels well at the start of the dry season. The 2014-2015 dry season is forecast to have normal to above-normal rainfall, officials announced today at a joint briefing by the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) and the National Weather Service (NWS).

“Going into the dry season with appropriate water levels provides water managers with greater options for water supply and flood control,” said Susan Sylvester, SFWMD Chief Scientist, Applied Hydraulics Section. “It is important to keep in mind, however,

that South Florida’s weather and water conditions can change rapidly, and we are perpetually preparing for what comes our way.”

### Dry Season Forecast

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s Climate Prediction Center forecast calls for normal to above-normal rainfall conditions.

Among the forecast highlights for the 2014-2015 South Florida dry season:

- A 60-65 percent chance of El Niño conditions developing in the fall and winter. An El Niño, a warming of waters in the equatorial Pacific, can increase the amount of rainfall in South Florida.
- Normal storminess/severe weather with 5-6 events
- Normal freeze of at least one per season

<b><i>South Florida’s Dry Season</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>November – May</i></li><li>• <i>About 18 inches of rain is the average</i></li><li>• <i>May and October are important transition months</i></li><li>• <i>March, April and May have the highest evaporation rates and lowest rainfall</i></li></ul>

### Wet Season Update

A District-wide average of 33.58 inches of rain fell from Orlando to the Florida Keys between May 27 and Oct. 5. This represents 108 percent of average, or 2.45 inches above average. The time period reflects the start and end of the daily sea breeze cycle that characterizes the wet season.

The Lower Kissimmee Basin experienced the largest amount of rainfall above average in the District, with 35.58 inches, representing 129 percent of average, or 7.92 inches above average. This rainfall significantly contributed to the flow of water into Lake Okeechobee.

Rainfall totals included:

- Upper Kissimmee, 39th wettest out of 77 years
- Lower Kissimmee, 22nd wettest out of 77 years
- Lake Okeechobee, 35th wettest out of 77 years

The lake, which stood at 15.90 feet today, received 29.49 inches of rain during the wet season, representing 112 percent of average, or 3.21 inches above average. The District continues to send water south of the lake to help prevent major releases to the South Florida’s coastal estuaries.

Counties along the east coast all experienced above-average rainfall, ranging from 4.02 to 1.11 inches above average, from Martin and St. Lucie counties to eastern Miami-Dade County.

Areas in the Southwest Coast and Caloosahatchee experienced slightly below-average rainfall, with 1.07 and 3.37 inches below average, respectively.

#### **Highlights of South Florida's Rainfall:**

- **Normal:** Florida receives an average of 52 inches of rainfall a year, with 70 percent received during the five-month wet season from approximately June through October.
- **Wet Conditions:** The 2013 wet season produced the wettest start to the wet season since 1968 and the wettest April-through-July period on record in South Florida since 1932.
- **Record Wet Conditions:** Tropical Storm Isaac in late August 2012 proved to be a 1-in-100-year storm event.
- **Record Dry Conditions:** January 2012 was the driest January in the agency's 16-county region since recordkeeping began in 1932.
- **Record Dry Conditions:** The 2011 wet season saw one of its latest starts in 20 years following the driest October-to-mid-June period on record.
- **Record Wet Conditions:** In 2009, the sea breeze cycle ushered in the wet season in May. With 9.04 inches of rain falling across the District, May 2009 became the wettest May on record, according to District records dating back to 1932.

#### **For More Information:**

- [NWS and SFWMD Presentations from Joint Dry Season Briefing \[PDF\]](#)
- [SFWMD Weather/Rainfall Data](#)
- [2014 Wet Season Rainfall](#)
- [National Weather Service Dry Season Forecast](#)
- [Climate Prediction Center Precipitation Forecast](#)

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#### **About the South Florida Water Management District**

*The South Florida Water Management District is a regional, governmental agency that oversees the water resources in the southern half of the state – 16 counties from Orlando to the Keys. It is the oldest and largest of the state's five water management districts. The agency mission is to manage and protect water resources of the region by balancing and improving water quality, flood control, natural systems and water supply. A key initiative is cleanup and restoration of the Everglades.*