

South Carolina 2006 Weather in Review

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January

South Carolina began 2006 with sunny, mild weather. Witherbee warmed to 71 degrees on New Year's Day. A brief invasion of cold air allowed Lake Bowen to record 19 degrees on January 7. On January 11, Orangeburg reported a high temperature of 78 degrees. A cold front raced through the state on January 13 producing an F1 tornado in Clarendon County. More cold air returned on gusting northwest winds January 25. Both Cedar Creek and Cheraw registered subfreezing temperatures of 19 degrees under calm conditions on the morning of January 27. Thunderstorms on January 30 produced hail in Charleston County and winds of 55 mph at James Island. Although temperatures averaged above normal for the month, rainfall was between 50% and 75% of normal.

February

More stormy weather was observed late in the day on February 3. Excessive damage to moored watercraft was the result of 65 mph wind gusts measured at the Charleston Coast Guard Station. Pritchardville measured a storm total rainfall amount of 2.36 inches. Winter weather returned on February 6 with a cold rain and periods of sleet and snow. Snowshowers fell across the Midlands to Myrtle Beach February 9. Pageland and Chesterfield measured a one-inch depth of snow. Charleston's peninsula recorded their first freeze of the year with 32 degrees on February 13. On the same morning, Caesars Head's thermometer read 17 degrees. Mild weather followed until month's end when a sharp cold front dropped south. Cheraw reported 16 degrees on February 27.

March

The first week of March warmed quickly on southerly winds and was colorfully evident by areas of early flowering. Late winter appeared to jump well ahead of the calendar into summer on March 12 with Johnston bordering hot with 88 degrees. The official start of Spring arrived March 20, but patterns had reversed back to mid-winter. Cold rains fell throughout the day and into the morning on March 21. Springfield received 2.75 inches of rain while Caesars Head measured one inch of snow. The first week of Spring 2006 averaged nine degrees below normal. At month's end, below normal rainfall for the year was now entering its fourth month.

April

On April 2, Charleston set a date record of 90 degrees, Givhans reported 92 degrees. On April 3, the collision of dry, cold air with the existing surface warmth produced storms and caused the formation of 1.75-inch diameter hailstones to fall within Greenwood and Lancaster counties on April 3. At 4:00 p.m. April 4, Florence observed a desert-like relative humidity value of 9 %. More severe weather occurred on April 8 with golf ball-sized hail reported in Williamsburg, Charleston, and Berkeley counties. A tornado ran a path from Adams Run to the West Ashley communities causing light property damage

and electrical service failures. Hot weather blanketed the state during mid-month. Pageland's temperatures on April 15 climbed to 95 degrees. Table Rock, usually a temperate site due to its elevation of 1020 feet, reported 93 degrees on the afternoon of April 17. Conway received welcomed relief to their drying soils from 1.75 inch rains in thunderstorms on April 22. A cold front helped initiate thunderstorms on April 26. Charleston's Waterfront Park was hammered with large hail. Within the same event, a brief tornado crossed Kershaw and Williamsburg counties and Kingstree measured 2.91 inches of rain.

May

Strong convective storms produced hail that covered the ground near Buffalo in Union County on May 5. Sites in the Pee Dee benefited from soaking rains of between one and two inches. Violent weather occurred on Mother's Day, May 14. Baseball-sized hail fell on Marion County, hail described as "hens eggs" fell around a small tornado in Colleton County. Another tornado caused moderate property damage in the town of Quinby. On May 16, Beaufort felt like mid-summer under a lengthening day of sun and 95 degrees. Heat driven storms on May 21 produced a wind gust of 71 mph at Columbia AP. During the same series of storm cells, Darlington experienced a heavy rain, totaling 3.10 inches. A 69 mph-wind was recorded in a thunderstorm at Clemson on May 26. Orangeburg neared the century mark with 99 degrees May 27. Fast moving boundaries in May did little to alleviate stress on the state's drying soils.

June

Temperatures on June 11 soared to 101 degrees at both Eutawville and Jamestown. Daily open pan evaporation exceeded one-half inch. The circulation center from Tropical Storm Alberto entered South Carolina near Aiken on Tuesday, June 12. Rainfall amounts from four to six inches fell on the eastern side of its path. A USGS site near Pageland measured a rainfall event total of 6.18 inches. Summer officially began on June 21. Sandy Springs reached 102 degrees on the 22nd. Moist onshore winds on June 23 forced generous upslope rains to fall over western South Carolina and the state's higher elevations. Lake Bowen measured 3.92 inches for the 24-hours ending 7:00 a.m. on June 24. Additional heavy rains developed on June 26 with rates recorded from a USGS gage at 4.08 inches per hour along 12 Mile Creek near Liberty. Caesars Head measured 6.12 inches of rain for the 24-hours ending 7:00 a.m. June 26. Widespread rural flooding closed roadways in Oconee, Pickens, and Greenville counties. Statewide rainfall for June was the state's first month of the year with a surplus amount.

July

The July 4 holiday was hot and dry. A rare cooling airmass settled into South Carolina on July 7 with afternoon temperatures dropping by nearly 20 degrees. Caesars Head observed a morning low temperature of 52 degrees. The thermometer rebounded during the second week of July with the year's hottest weather. Jamestown had 102 degrees on July 15. Thunderstorm cloud tops soared past the 10-mile height on July 24 just before a cloudburst dumped 4.31 inches of rain on Hemingway. High winds on July 29 helped build large waves on Lake Moultrie that damaged watercraft along Bonneau Beach.

August

South Carolina baked the first week of August. Jamestown, in Berkeley County, reported 104 degrees on August 3. Following Johnston's 100-degree temperature on Thursday, August 10, a welcomed Fall-like airmass dropped south for the weekend. At 3:00 p.m. on August 11, Darlington was reporting a seemingly cool, 81 degrees and brisk northeast winds. The morning minimum temperature on Sunday, August 13 fell to 56 degrees at Caesars Head. A tropical disturbance formed August 16 offshore and by August 17 was positioned 70 miles ESE of Charleston. Only a few light showers brushed the coast. Flash flooding made the headlines for the third week of August. On August 21, the National Weather Service at Columbia AP recorded 1.30 inches of rain in 22 minutes. On August 24, the National Weather Service at Charleston AP received 2.09 inches of a 4.54-inch rain event total in just 38 minutes. On the last day of the month, fast moving Tropical Storm Ernesto (Full report: <http://www.dnr.sc.gov/climate/sco/2006tropics/Ernesto.htm>) passed within 75 miles of the Grand Strand beaches. Winds gusted to 46 mph at Myrtle Beach and N. Myrtle Beach filled their rain gage with 7.12 inches in 24 hours.

September

Hot weather moderated early in September. On September 6, Eutawville received 3.78 inches of rain in a thunderstorm. A distant offshore Hurricane Florence sent large breaking waves ashore to beaches along the central and southern coast. Several oceanfront properties were damaged along with noticeable erosion of the shoreline's profile. Soaking rains fell on September 13. Cades measured 3.42 inches for the event. A seasonal change occurred on the September 20 with the arrival of a sharp cold front. At sunrise, September 21, Cheraw felt cold at 43 degrees. Nine days later Cheraw awoke to 39 degrees on September 30.

October

A stretch of hot, dry weather from October 2 through Dillon's 91 degrees on October 5 was replaced by clouds and chilling northeast winds on October 6. Daytime high temperatures struggled to reach 60 degrees on October 7. Another strong cold front raced through the state October 13. On the morning of October 15, Hunts Bridge recorded a sub-freezing 27 degrees. Rural sites from the Midlands westward to the highest elevations witnessed the state's first fall season frost. The third week of October included heavy rains on October 16 and 17 for the Upstate. Keowee Dam received 3.22 inches. Colder air invaded the state on October 23 sending the mercury to 32 degrees or lower at most locations away from the coast. Both Hunts Bridge and Cheraw reported 25 degrees on the morning of October 25. Walterboro registered 32 degrees. A push of warm "Indian Summer" weather ended the month. Pritchardville, in Beaufort County, enjoyed a comfortable 83 degrees on October 31.

November

Eighty-degree temperatures held on for the first day of November just before a freezing airmass invaded the state on November 2. Cedar Creek and Lake Bowen both reported a hard freeze on November 4 with 22 degrees. On the same day, Charleston City's 56-degree high temperature tied a date record for lowest high. Wet weather was observed

along a slow moving boundary on November 7. Galivants Ferry measured 3.14 inches of rain. Stormy weather circulating around a complex area of low pressure covered the state on November 15, 16. Columbia AP received 1.76 inches of rain in one hour. Charleston AP reported winds of 53 mph and a brief tornado did light property damage between Manning and Turbeville. Winter jumped ahead of the calendar on November 20 with snow flurries observed at Table Rock and Caesars Head. Overnight, a coastal cyclone began forming offshore near the Florida-Georgia border. On Tuesday morning, November 21 winds were gusting to 44 mph along the South Carolina beaches. Charleston observed snow with thunder, setting a record for the earliest date of snowfall in their history. The towns of Lodge, Smoaks, and Martin all measured one inch of the rare and accumulating snowfall. The short-lived mixture of snow and sleet turned to heavy rain over the Sandhill communities. Pageland measured 5.67 inches for the event. Just a week later on November 29, Andrews warmed to 81 degrees.

December

Winter cold spread into the state on December 7. Pelion's thermometer dropped to a single digit 9 degrees on December 9, marking the lowest temperature observed in South Carolina for 2006. A slow warming trend followed with Walhalla recording their second warmest day of December in 50 years with 80 degrees on December 18. Welcomed rains soaked central counties on December 22. Edgefield received 3.51 inches of rain for the 24-hours ending at 7:00 a.m. on December 23. Christmas Day was cloudy and wet. Florence set a date record rainfall of 2.20 inches. A few snow flurries were reported in Walhalla on Tuesday, December 26, as colder air mixed with the exiting precipitation. The year ended with milder temperatures and scattered thunderstorms Upstate.