

Caribbean Climate Outlook Newsletter - March to May 2026

For climate information specific to your country, please consult with your national meteorological service.
CariCOF outlooks speak to recent and expected seasonal climate trends across the Caribbean in general.

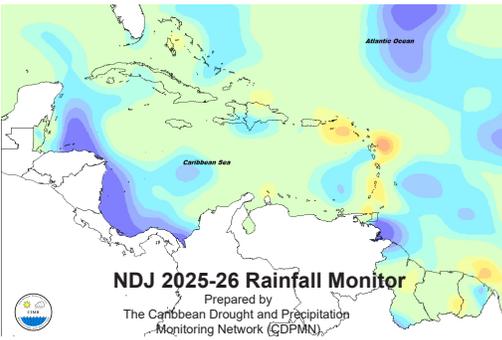
BRIEF SUMMARY: November 2025 to May 2026

November 2025 to January 2026: Though cooling towards December, above-average ocean temperatures in and around the Caribbean Sea still drove above-average air temperature and humidity. Nevertheless, this period recorded nearly no extremely high or low temperatures or rainfall totals. Nevertheless, Belize did get impacted by the passage of stronger than usual cold fronts in January.

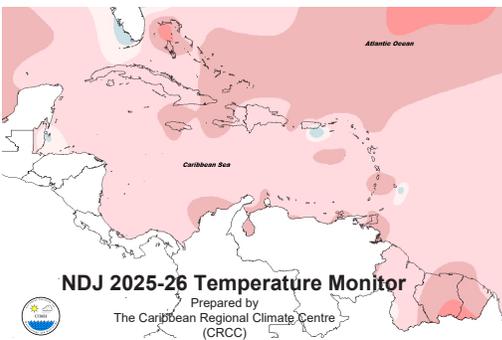
March to May 2026: The second half of the Caribbean Dry Season includes its annual peak in March, but also the transition out of the Cool and into the Heat Season. Continued, unusual warmth in the Tropical North Atlantic Ocean implies: (i) the occurrence severe weather activity as soon as April in southern Belize, the Guianas, the Greater Antilles and mountainous areas of the Lesser Antilles, implying *high* potential for flooding, flash floods, cascading hazards and associated impacts from April or May onwards; (ii) short dry spells peak in frequency, particularly in the ABC Islands and Lesser Antilles; (iii) episodes of heat discomfort may appear as soon as March in inland portions of Belize, the Guianas and Trinidad, or April elsewhere, and become more widespread by May; (iv) rainfall totals *unlikely* to mitigate long-term drought impacts in the ABC Islands, St. Kitts & Nevis and the Windward Islands, with imminent long-term drought forecasted for the end of May in Grenada.

LOOKING BACK:

Nov. - Dec. - Jan. (NDJ) 2025-26 Observations



RAINFALL: Easternmost Guadeloupe very dry; southernmost Trinidad very wet.



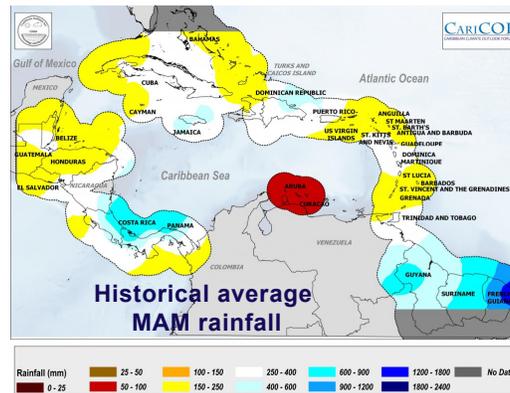
TEMPERATURE: Aruba, N. Bahamas, Barbados, several areas in the Guianas, W Haiti, most of Jamaica, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent, Trinidad close to 1°C warmer than usual; central parts of coastal Belize slightly cooler than usual.

Notable Climate Records in NDJ 2025-26:
WET: No location reported record-high rainfall totals for this period.
DRY: No location reported record-low rainfall totals for this period.
HOT: 1 location in The Bahamas reported record-high mean temperatures.

More at <https://carogenv2.cimh.edu.bb/app/stats/>

WHAT NEXT?

Rainfall patterns March-April-May (MAM)



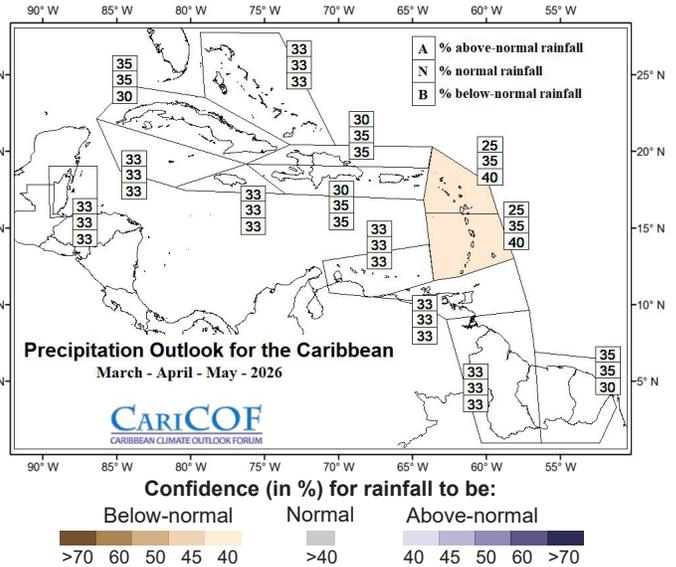
Belize & C'bean Islands north of 16°N:
Mar to Apr - latter part of dry season; limited duration and area of heavy showers.
May - transition to wet season.

C'bean Islands south of 16°N (except ABC Islands):
Mar to May - second half of dry season; limited duration and area of heavy showers; April & May occasionally very wet.

ABC Islands: Mar to May - generally dry.

Guianas: Mar to May - transition to wet season; heavy showers more and more frequent.

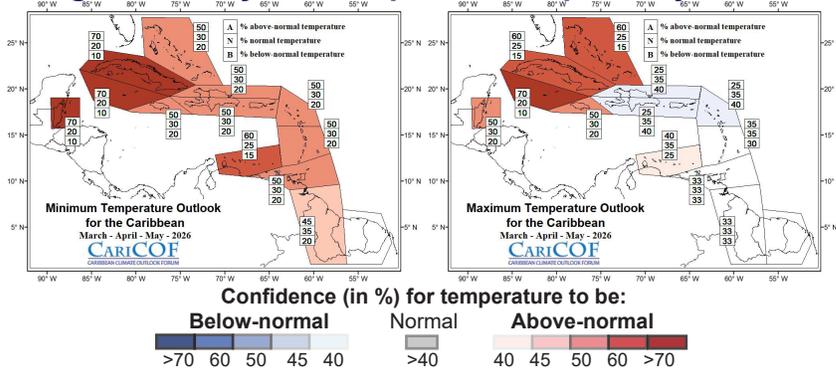
MAM 2026 Rainfall Outlook



Rainfall totals from March to May are *likely* to be the usual or less in the Lesser Antilles (*medium confidence*).

White areas show where the forecast indicates little information on rainfall totals.

Night- and daytime temperatures up to May



MAM night-time and daytime temperatures and humidity will likely be at least as high as usual in Belize, The Bahamas, Cayman Islands, Cuba and Jamaica (medium confidence), with unusually warmer nights also expected for other parts of the region. Episodes of heat stress can develop as early as March in Belize, Guiana and Trinidad, or April elsewhere.

Wet days/spells & flash flood potential in MAM
What usually happens from February to April?

- Number of wet days: roughly 15 to 30 (ABC Is.: 5 to 15; northern Guianas: 20 to 45).
- # of wet spells: up to 2 or 3, of which up to 1 is very wet (northern Guianas: up to 2).
- # of excessively wet days: at least 4 in the Guianas; up to 1 or 2 in The Bahamas, Belize and most areas of the Antilles, none in the ABC Islands.

Forecast and Implications up to May 2026:

- High to extremely high potential for long-term flooding, flash floods and related hazards in The Bahamas, Greater Antilles, Guianas and mountainous areas of the Lesser Antilles.
- Water depletion rates in surface reservoirs and in rivers, possibly slightly slower than usual in the Lesser Antilles.
- Few rain disruptions of outdoor activity, drier surfaces and vegetation, environmental conditions less conducive to moisture-related pests, but heightened wildfire potential.

Drought conditions

Lastest drought situation: Moderate (or worse) short-term drought has developed in easternmost Guadeloupe, St. Croix, St. Kitts, Saint Lucia, Sint Maarten/St-Martin, St. Vincent, and far southeast Suriname; severe (or worse) long-term drought in Aruba, Eastern Cuba, Grenada, Martinique, Saint Lucia, and St. Vincent.

Short-term drought (at the end of Apr. 2026) Short-term drought might possibly develop or continue in the Northern Bahamas.

Long-term drought (at the end of May 2026) Long-term drought is imminent in Grenada, evolving in the ABC islands, Dominica, Martinique and St. Vincent, and might possibly develop or continue in northern parts of the Dominican Republic and the islands of Saint Martin and St. Barts.

BRIEF CLIMATE OUTLOOK - June to August 2026

This period marks the summer portion of the Caribbean Wet Season and Heat Season, as well as the first half of the Atlantic Hurricane Season. The (Sub-)tropical North Atlantic Ocean is forecast to remain unseasonably warm. Unusually high air temperatures will most likely prevail in many locations and the occurrence of significant heat stress is expected to evolve. The risk of severe weather impacts, including flooding, flash floods, and cascading impacts is expected to be higher than usual, amounting to unusually copious wet season rainfall. Warmer than usual ocean temperatures around and east of the Caribbean typically drives an active hurricane season. However, severe weather activity may be more erratic if Saharan dust intrusions into this region are very frequent. For temperature and precipitation outlooks for JJA 2026, please visit rcc.cimh.edu.bb/caricof-climate-outlooks.

What influences the next season?

El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO)

Recent observations: Sea Surface Temperatures (SSTs) in the Eastern Equatorial Pacific are 0.5°C below average, i.e., borderline La Niña.

Model forecast and guidance: The forecast models suggest a return to ENSO neutral conditions in MAM (~90% confidence) and either continued neutral conditions or emerging El Niño conditions by JJA (~40-55% confid. each).

Expected impacts on rainfall and temperatures: El Niño conditions that develop in summer are often associated with reduced heavy shower activity and rainfall totals across the Caribbean, as well as exacerbated heat and humidity, including heat waves.

Climate conditions in the Tropical North Atlantic and Caribbean

Recent observations: SSTs around the Caribbean and in the subtropical North Atlantic are 0.5-1°C warmer than usual.

Expected conditions: Models are forecasting persistently warm SST anomalies of 0.25-1°C above average in MAM and in JJA around the Caribbean region.

Expected impacts: Warm SSTs in and around the Caribbean tend to contribute to higher air temperatures with above-average humidity, seasonal rainfall totals, an increased frequency of extreme rainfall and increased tropical cyclone activity. The likelihood of extreme rainfall is higher than usual, even in the late Dry Season.

Climate outlooks - background

The Caribbean Climate Outlooks are prepared by the Caribbean Climate Outlook Forum (CariCOF). The Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology, in its role as WMO Regional Climate Centre, coordinates the CariCOF process. Contributors to the Outlooks are the Meteorological Services from the region. The Precipitation and Temperature Outlooks are issued in the form of a map, which shows regions where the forecast rainfall or temperatures have the same probabilities to be:

- Above-normal (A) - within the wettest/hottest third of the historical record
- Near-normal (N) - within the middle third of the historical record, i.e. a range called the 'usual'
- Below-normal (B) - within the driest/coldest third of the historical record

CariCOF Outlooks offer consensus-based information averaged across multiple territories. In some cases, individual national results may differ from region wide results. To get information on your specific country context, please consult your National Meteorological and Hydrological Services and/or any national level bulletins they may provide.

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