

# 2023 Year in Review for Central and Southeast Illinois

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While La Niña conditions influenced the winter of 2022-23, a quick switch to El Niño occurred during the second half of the year. Temperatures averaged 1 to 3 degrees above normal for the year as a whole, while precipitation and snowfall were well below normal, especially south of I-72.

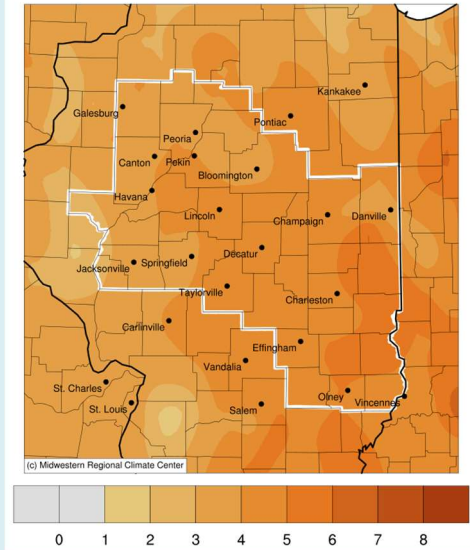
## Winter Season

(December 1, 2022 to February 28, 2023)

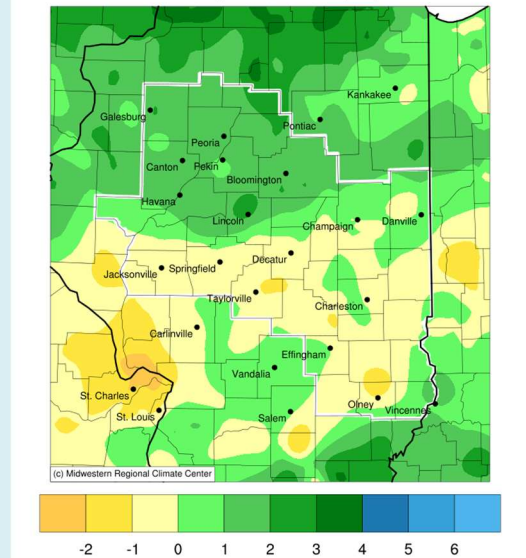
**Temperatures:** Above normal

**Precipitation:** Above normal north of I-72,  
below normal south

Average Temperature (°F): Departure from 1991-2020 Normals  
December 01, 2022 to February 28, 2023



Accumulated Precipitation (in): Departure from 1991-2020 Normals  
December 01, 2022 to February 28, 2023



*This brief tornado occurred in eastern Sangamon County near Illiopolis on January 3<sup>rd</sup>, but caused no damage. Photo by Skip Talbot.*

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## Temperature Highlights:

Aside from the severe cold that occurred just before Christmas, the winter season was highlighted by temperatures well above normal. A cold snap occurred in late January and early February, otherwise most of January and February remained well above normal.

## Weather Highlights:

The winter season was noted for the lack of snow across the area. Most of the region saw less than 10 inches of snow during this period, and in the case of areas south of I-72, less than 5 inches.

An unusually early severe weather outbreak on January 3<sup>rd</sup> resulted in 8 tornadoes across central Illinois, the most to occur in January in this area since January 24, 1967. Four tornadoes occurred in Macon County, two in Sangamon County, and one each in McLean and Logan Counties. The most significant damage was in Maroa, where an EF-1 strength tornado crossed a farmstead along US-51. The season also closed with two tornadoes near Champaign on February 27<sup>th</sup>.

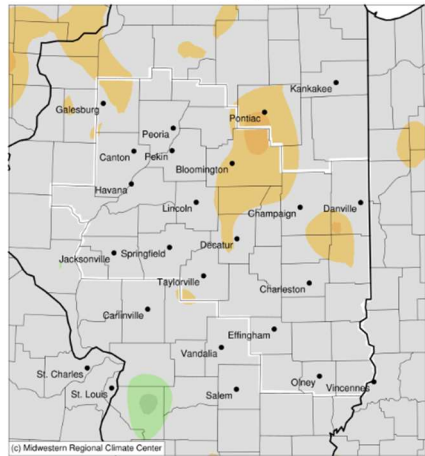
## Spring Season

(March 1 through May 31)

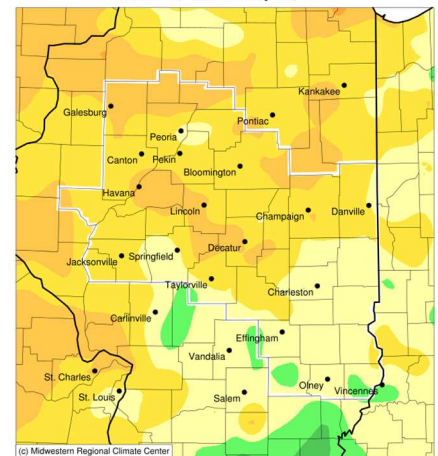
**Temperatures:** Near normal

**Precipitation:** Below normal

Average Temperature (°F): Departure from 1991-2020 Normals  
March 01, 2023 to May 31, 2023



Accumulated Precipitation (in): Departure from 1991-2020 Normals  
March 01, 2023 to May 31, 2023



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*Overhead view of wreckage on I-55 near the Sangamon/Montgomery County line, due to a massive accident caused by a dust storm on May 1. Photo from the Illinois State Police.*

### Temperature Highlights:

Overall, temperatures averaged near normal during the spring across the region. There were several periods during April where highs were well above normal, notably into the 80s in some cases, when normal highs were only in the lower 60s. However, the last freeze of the season didn't occur until late April.

### Weather Highlights:

An unusually intense low pressure area lifted across the lower Ohio Valley on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, setting barometric pressure records in some locations near the Ohio River. The barometric pressure at Lawrenceville bottomed out at 28.83 inches. The strong pressure contrast resulted in [wind gusts of 50 to 75 mph](#) in parts of central Illinois, with the highest gust of 73 mph reported at the Coles County Airport near Mattoon.

A [multi-state tornado outbreak](#) occurred on March 31<sup>st</sup>, with 13 tornadoes in central and southeast Illinois. The strongest of these was an EF-3 tornado that was on the ground for a total of 41 miles in Illinois and Indiana, killing 3 people near Robinson. A few days later, [another long track EF-3 tornado](#) occurred in Fulton County, causing significant damage in Bryant, with the parent storm producing grapefruit size hail near Bernadotte.

On May 1, multiple crashes occurred on I-55 near the Sangamon/Montgomery County line due to a [dust storm](#) reducing visibility to near zero. Illinois State Police reported 72 vehicles involved on both sides of the interstate between mile markers 76 and 78. There were seven fatalities, and 37 people were injured. The dust originated from freshly tilled and planted farm fields, and was kicked up by wind gusts of 35 to 45 mph. Winds increased further during the day, peaking at 54 mph at the Springfield airport at 3:42 pm. Another dust storm occurred the next day in the same area, but the interstate was proactively shut down to prevent a repeat occurrence.

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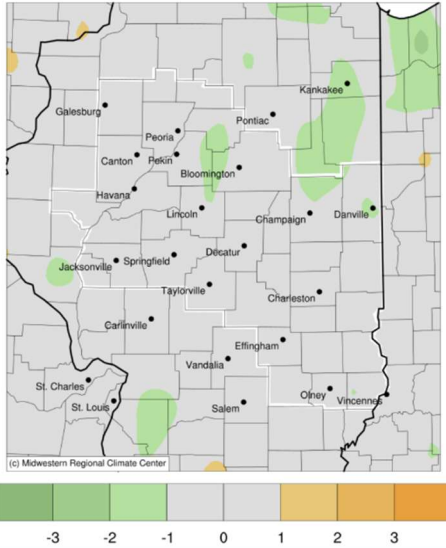
## Summer Season

(June 1 through August 31)

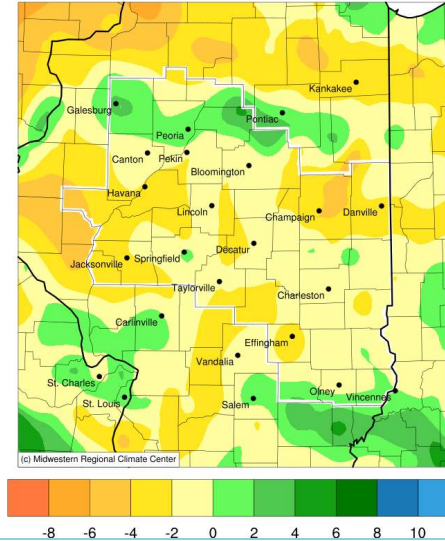
**Temperatures:** Near normal

**Precipitation:** Mostly below normal

Average Temperature (°F): Departure from 1991-2020 Normals  
June 01, 2023 to August 31, 2023



Accumulated Precipitation (in): Departure from 1991-2020 Normals  
June 01, 2023 to August 31, 2023



*Drone footage shows damage to a farm field from a tornado south of Curran on June 29. Photo by Kyle Golden.*

### Temperature Highlights:

Dangerous heat developed during the third week of July, with the heat index in the triple digits for a few days.

A late August heat wave resulted in highs in the 90s from the 20-25<sup>th</sup>. Highs of 100 degrees occurred in several areas from near Jacksonville southeast to Lawrenceville on the 25<sup>th</sup>. The heat was accompanied by intense humidity, which resulted in heat index values of 110 to 120 degrees in much of central Illinois on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. Peoria tied its all-time record high dew point temperature of 83 degrees on that date.

### Weather Highlights:

Smoke from Canadian wildfires was frequently drawn into the Midwest during June and July. Some of the thickest smoke was on June 27-28<sup>th</sup>, with visibility occasionally lower than a mile and air quality considered very unhealthy for the general population.

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Severe thunderstorms in eastern Illinois early on June 29<sup>th</sup> were followed by the [arrival of a derecho](#) midday and early afternoon. The initial storms produced hail as large as 3.25" in Tuscola, and the derecho (which originated across the Plains) produced significant straight-line wind damage and 7 tornadoes. Two of the tornadoes produced measured wind gusts in excess of 100 mph. Straight-line wind damage in Springfield resulted in extensive power outages that lasted for over a week.

A [long track tornado](#) touched down north of Pawnee in Sangamon County on August 6<sup>th</sup>, and was on the ground for over 25 miles before lifting northeast of Taylorville in Christian County. The tornado peaked at EF2 intensity with an estimated wind speed around 125 mph.

Drought conditions intensified during June, with a large part of central Illinois considered to be in severe drought. Several rounds of precipitation in late June and July helped out, with more improvement during August. Daily record rainfall totals occurred on August 5<sup>th</sup> at Peoria (3.29") and at Springfield on August 9<sup>th</sup> (3.64").

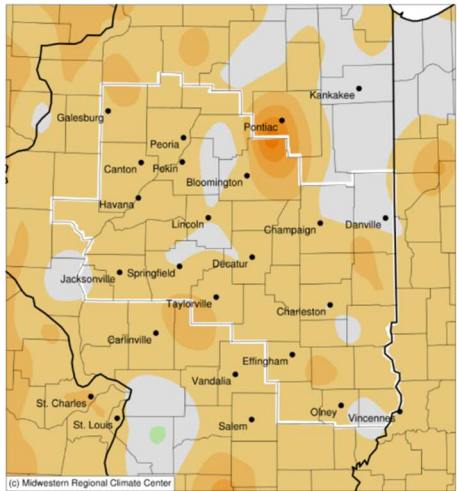
## Autumn Season

(September 1 through November 30)

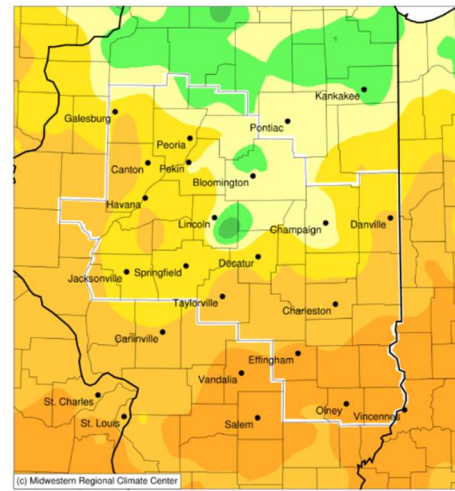
**Temperatures:** Above normal

**Precipitation:** Below normal

Average Temperature (°F): Departure from 1991-2020 Normals  
September 01, 2023 to November 30, 2023



Accumulated Precipitation (in): Departure from 1991-2020 Normals  
September 01, 2023 to November 30, 2023





## 2023 Year in Review for Central and Southeast Illinois

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*A fog bow is observed in rural Fulton County on September 18<sup>th</sup>. Photo by Cory Marshall.*

### **Temperature Highlights:**

Several periods of above normal temperatures were noted from late September into mid October, and again early to mid November. Highs close to 80 degrees occurred as late as November 8<sup>th</sup> south of I-72.

### **Weather Highlights:**

With El Niño strengthening, most locations experienced below normal precipitation. Scattered severe thunderstorms occurred on September 26<sup>th</sup> in areas from near Rushville southeast to Pana, but otherwise severe weather was minimal.

While the first flurries of the season occurred on Halloween, the first measurable snow arrived November 25-26<sup>th</sup> north of I-72. Totals around 4" were reported in Peoria.

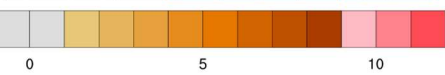
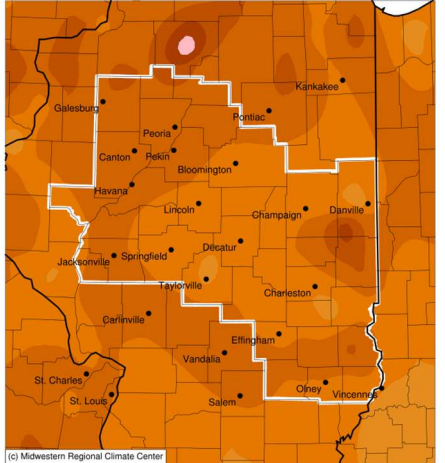
# 2023 Year in Review for Central and Southeast Illinois

## Winter Season to date

(December 1-16)

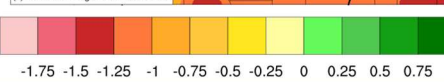
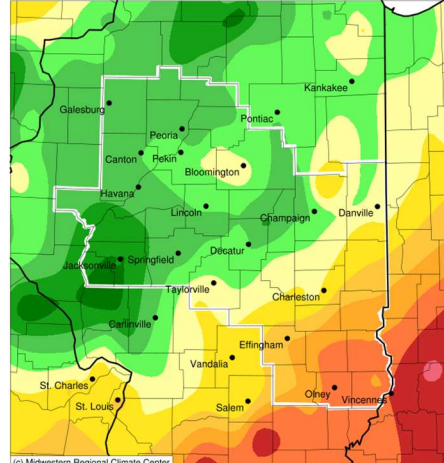
**Temperatures:** Above normal

Average Temperature (°F): Departure from 1991-2020 Normals  
December 01, 2023 to December 16, 2023



**Precipitation:** Above normal northwest, below normal southeast

Accumulated Precipitation (in): Departure from 1991-2020 Normals  
December 01, 2023 to December 16, 2023



## Temperature Highlights:

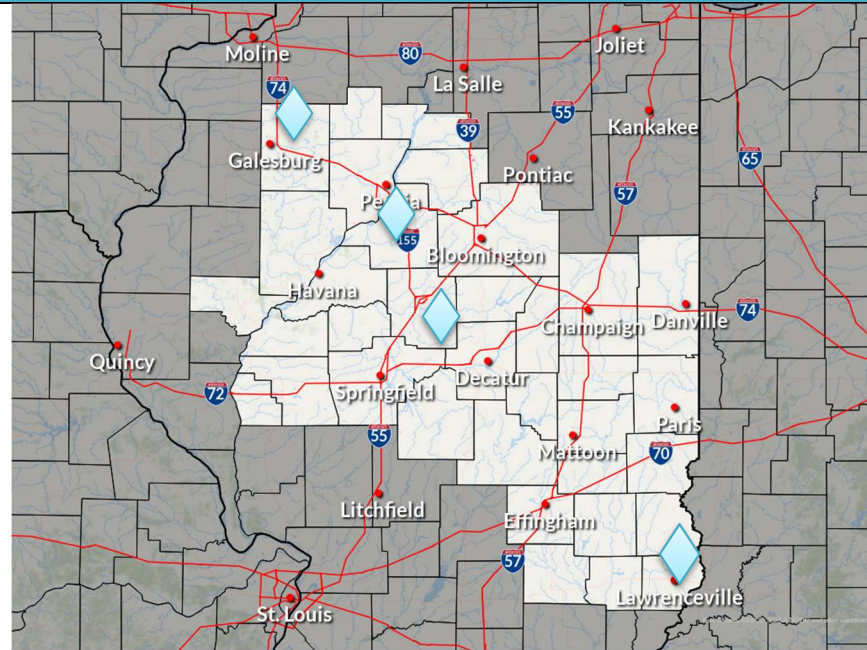
Significantly mild weather started off meteorological winter over the region, with a few days reaching the 50s or 60s. Most of the nation was absent in seeing any Arctic outbreaks.

## Weather Highlights:

No snow fell during the first half of the month. While rainfall trended above normal for areas north of a Springfield to Champaign line, the dry weather persisted to the southeast. By mid month, severe drought conditions were observed near and south of I-70.

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## Preliminary Statistics for the Lincoln NWS Coverage Area:



**Highest Temperature:**  
102°F at Lawrenceville Airport (June 25)

**Lowest Temperature:**  
-8°F at Altona (January 31 & February 1)

**Most Rain in 24 Hours:**  
9.14" at Chestnut (September 22)

**Most Snow in 24 Hours:**  
3.6" at Pekin 4SSE (November 26)

**Most Rain in 1 Month:**  
12.39" at Chestnut (September)

**Most Snow in 1 Month:**  
9.5" at Altona (January)

**Reported Tornadoes: 39**

*By EF Strength:*

- EF0: 4
- EF1: 14
- EF2: 4
- EF3: 2
- 15 of unknown strength

*By County:* Christian 8, Fulton 6, Macon 5, Sangamon 5, Logan 4. Champaign 3, Jasper 2, Morgan 2, Tazewell 2. One each in De Witt, McLean, Scott, and Vermilion, and Woodford Counties.

**Total >39 due to border crossers.**

