

# ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA MONTHLY AGROMETEOROLOGICAL BULLETIN

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA METEOROLOGICAL SERVICE CLIMATE SECTION

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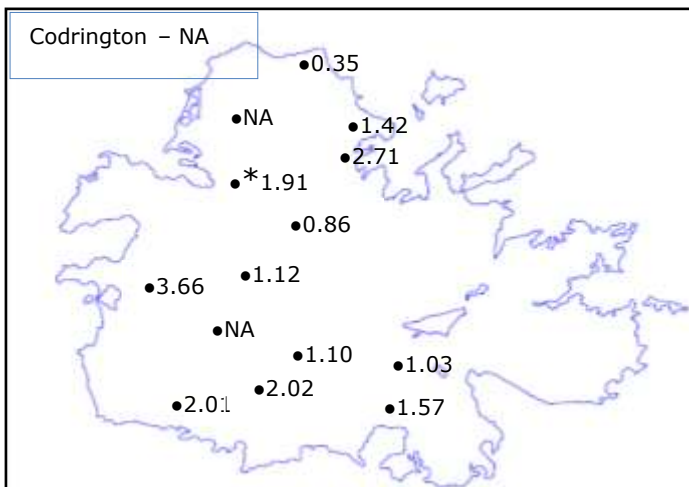
## ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Antigua and Barbuda Meteorological Service (ABMS) will be hosting a WMO workshop to look at the socio-economic benefits of meteorological services and the products they produce. The workshop will be at the City View Hotel. The ABMS [Climate Section](#) has been boosted by a graduate from Columbia University's M.A. in [Climate and Society](#). The increased capacity will go a long way in the Climate Section meeting its [mission and vision](#). Feedbacks on this bulletin are welcome.

## WEATHER AND CLIMATE SUMMARY IN BRIEF FOR ANTIGUA – JANUARY 2015

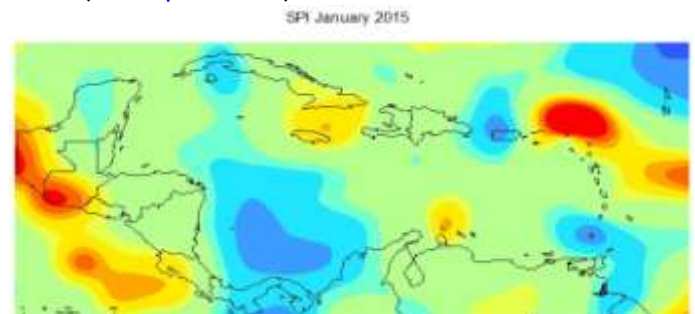
January was extremely dry for many parts of Antigua. The [rainfall](#) total for the month, 1.27 inches, was well below normal and the seventh driest on record. It was also the driest January since 2002. For the month, at the V. C. Bird International Airport, the six wet days ( $\geq 1$  mm) were below normal, and for the second year running, there were no heavy rainfall days ( $\geq 10$  mm). The mean [temperature](#) for January was near normal - 25.5°C. However, it is the highest since 2010. Also, the mean daily maximum temperature, 28.1°C, was near normal and the highest since 2010. Although lower than last January's, the mean daily minimum temperature was well above normal. The absolute minimum temperature of 20.6°C was also above normal; meanwhile, the absolute maximum temperature of 28.7°C was below normal. See map 1 for rainfall distribution across Antigua.

The "season" November to January (NDJ), had both near normal rainfall – 12.55 inches, and near normal temperature – 25.9°C.



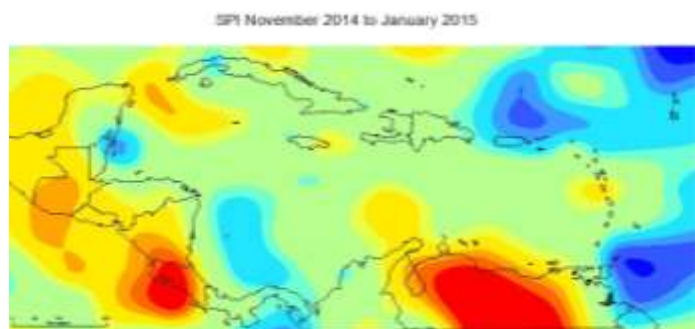
## WEATHER AND CLIMATE SUMMARY IN BRIEF FOR THE CARIBBEAN – NOVEMBER TO JANUARY

Contrasting conditions were experienced between the northern and southern islands of the Eastern Caribbean during January. Trinidad and St. Vincent were mildly wet; Tobago moderately wet; Grenada very wet; Barbados, St. Lucia, Dominica, St. Kitts normal; Anguilla extremely dry; St. Maarten and St. Croix moderately dry. Click maps 2 and 3 for larger views ([SPI explanation](#)).



[Map 2. Standardised Precipitation Index for January](#)

For the period NDJ, apart from in the vicinity of Dominica that was moderately dry, rainfall in the Eastern Caribbean and Guyana was normal to above normal. [Read more...](#)



[Map 3. Standardised Precipitation Index for NDJ](#)

**WEATHER AND CLIMATE OUTLOOKS FOR ANTIGUA****EXPERIMENTAL MONTHLY OUTLOOK – FEBRUARY****Rainfall**

Below normal rainfall is most likely with less than **1.7 inches**. Probabilistically, there is a

- **25%** chance of above normal rainfall;
- **35%** chance of near normal rainfall and
- **40%** chance of below normal rainfall.

**Temperature**

Above normal temperature is most likely i.e. greater than **25.4°C**. Probabilistically, there is a

- **45%** chance of above normal temperature;
- **35%** chance of near normal temperature and
- **20%** chance of below normal temperature.

**SEASONAL OUTLOOKS – FEBRUARY TO APRIL****Rainfall**

Below normal rainfall is most likely i.e. less than **5.8 inches**. Probabilistically, there is a

- **25%** chance of above normal rainfall;
- **35%** chance of near normal rainfall and
- **40%** chance of below normal rainfall.

**Temperature**

Below normal temperature is most likely i.e. less than **25.6°C**. Probabilistically, there is a

- **25%** chance of above normal temperature;
- **35%** chance of near normal temperature and
- **40%** chance of below normal temperature.

**NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL SUMMARY**

The rains of November are becoming a distance memory. Water catchments have again started to trend negatively and so to have soil moisture. However, the drought has remained at slight levels. Perhaps, ironically, the reduced rainfall has allowed for water logged soils to drain and for farmers to get pests and diseases under control. The reduced rainfall also would have had a welcome negative impact on the advancement of the invasive Giant African Snail.

Compared to this time last year, farming conditions are much improved. Surface water catchments are 50-

100% full and water rationing has reduced to minimum levels. This change in fortune in water has resulted in farmers stating to rebound from the crippling impacts to the current drought which was at serious levels during portions of 2014. However, we are far from being “out of the woods” with respect to the ongoing **drought** which could slip back to moderate levels.

Climate smart agriculture emphasizes the need for water conservation and efficiency. This is especially so in times of rainfall deficits like now. **Water efficiency** of irrigation can be improved by making the right decisions regarding crop selection, irrigation scheduling, irrigation methods and source of water.

Crops planted during January included tomatoes, eggplants and butternut squashes. Crops harvested included pumpkins, carrots, sweet potatoes, green onions and sweet peppers. Crops in the field include the above mentioned plus chives, cabbages, thymes and field corns. Pumpkins and carrots are glutting the market while cucumbers, melons, eggplants and yam are scarce; green onions are in low supply.



Cabbage being grown

Credit: Kenrick Francis

The weather outlooks for the next three months are not encouraging. The projections are for below normal rainfall for February and February-April (See inserts on the left). However, it is the dry season; thus farmers need to put systems in place to deal with the usually lower rainfall for this time of the year as compared to the wet season. For agricultural and other activities the **7-Day Forecast** and the **Hazardous Weather Outlook** are recommended as useful tools for planning day-to-day activities.

**Acknowledgements**

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