



Bering Land Bridge N Pres. • Cape Krusenstern NM
Gates of the Arctic NP & Pres. • Kobuk Valley NP • Noatak N Pres.

Spring/Summer 2020

Weather & Climate Summary Bering Land Bridge National Preserve Spring/Summer 2020

Tors near Serpentine Hot Springs, Bering Land Bridge National Preserve. NPS Photo.

Nome Spring/Summer Weather 2020

Spring

Overall, spring was warm and much snowier than normal. The average temperature was 28.1°F, which is 5.6°F above the 1981-2010 normal. Based on the National Weather Service data at the Nome airport, it was the 8th warmest and 3rd wettest spring season with a total of 5.11 inches of rain and melted snow.

It was a warm and snowy March. Even though March started out cool, by mid-month temperatures warmed. The average monthly temperature was ~4°F warmer than normal. The precipitation total (melted snow) was 2.01 inches, normal is 0.65 inches. The warm and wet trend continued into April. April temperatures were 4.3°F warmer than normal, with little diurnal range between the high and low temperatures. It was the wettest April on record for Nome (more on that later). The warmth continued into May and May 2020 went in the record books as the warmest May in 114 years, with a monthly average temperature ~9°F warmer than the 1981-2010 normal. May was relatively dry with 73% normal precipitation for the month. The snow melt-out date at the nearby Johnson's Camp Snotel site was May 9. Snow depth is no longer recorded at the Nome airport.

Summer

It was a warm, dry summer. The average summer temperature was just above normal at 51.4°F. The summer rainfall total was only 57% of normal with a total of 3.62 inches between June 1 and August 31.

June was the warmest month of the summer. The average temperature was 3.7°F warmer than the 1981-2010 normal. It was also the wettest month of the summer with 1.33 inches of rain. July was almost a degree cooler than normal and quite dry. August temperatures warmed back up and the month ended up 1.2°F warmer than normal. The dry spell continued and only

1.09 inches of rain was recorded for August, 34% of normal. See Table 1 and 2; Figure 1 and 2.

Table 1. Nome Spring/Summer 2020 average monthly temperatures compared to the 1981-2010 normal.

Spring/Summer 2020	Average Monthly Temp (°F)	1981-2010 Normal (°F)	Departure from Normal (°F)
March	13.9	10.3	+3.6
April	24.8	20.5	+4.3
May	45.7*	36.8	+8.9
June	51.5	47.8	+3.7
July	51.4	52.2	-0.8
August	51.3	50.1	+1.2

Spring Temperature Departure from normal: +5.6°F; *Record warm.
Summer Temperature Departure from normal: +1.4°F

Table 2. Nome Spring/Summer 2020 monthly precipitation totals compared to normal.

Spring/Summer 2020	Total Monthly Precip. (in.)	1981-2010 Normal (in.)	Departure from Normal (in.)
March	2.01	0.65	+1.36
April	2.47*	0.76	+1.71
May	0.63	0.86	-0.23
June	1.33	0.98	+0.35
July	1.20	2.11	-0.91
August	1.09	3.22	-2.13

Spring Precipitation Departure from normal: +2.84 in. (225% of normal);

*Record wet

Summer Precipitation Departure from normal: -2.69 in. (57% of normal)

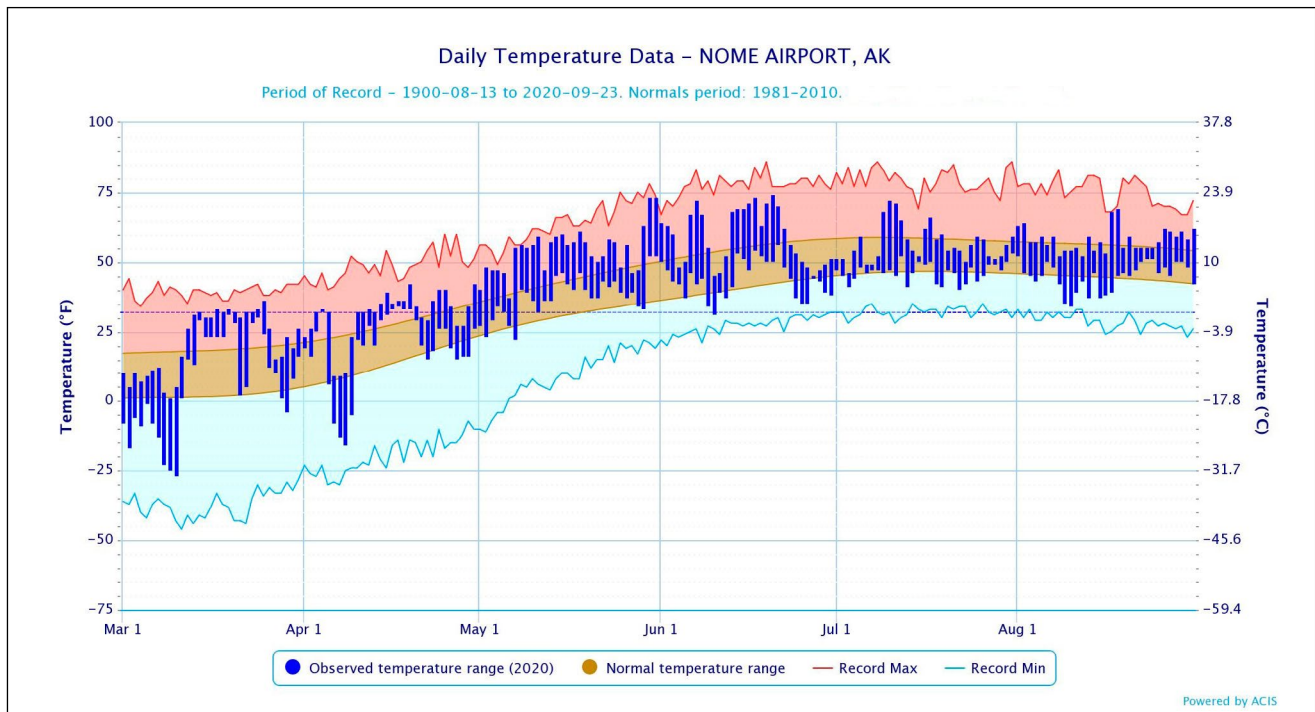


Figure 1. Spring/Summer 2020 daily temperatures showing record maximum (red), record minimum (blue), normal (brown) and observed range (blue bars). Data from: <http://xmacis.rcc-acis.org/>.

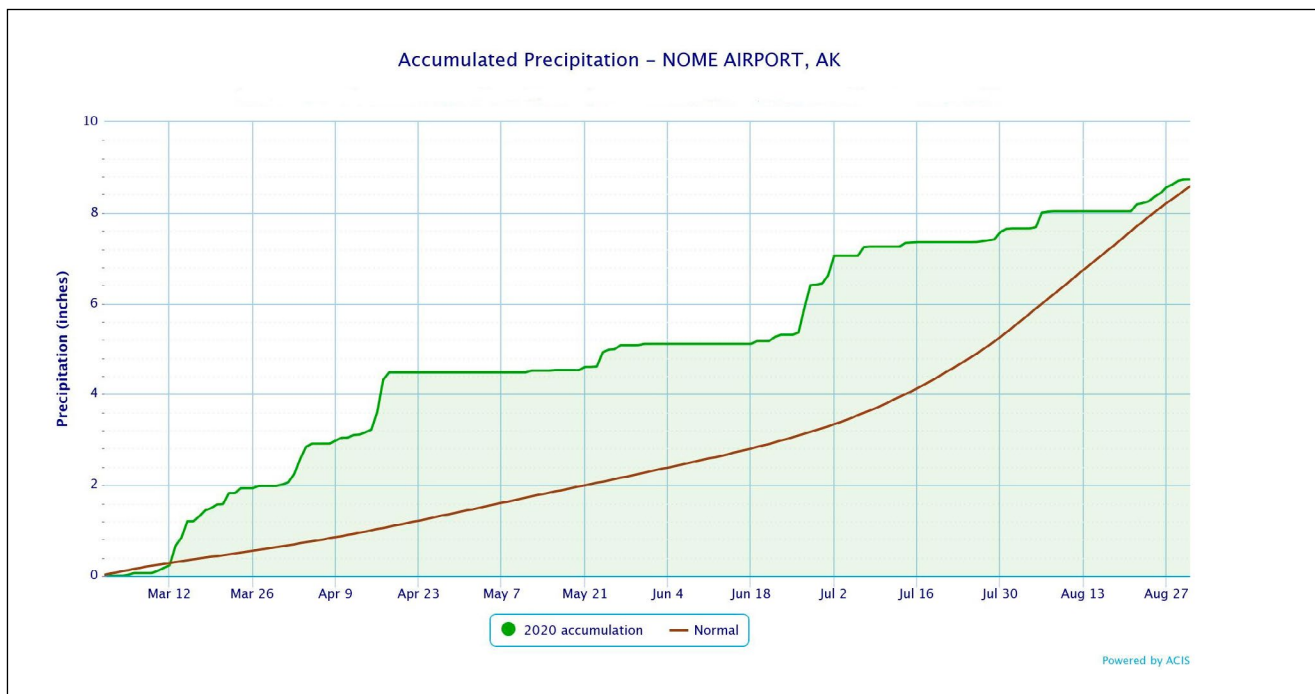


Figure 2. Spring/Summer 2020 accumulated precipitation (green) compared to normal (brown line). Data from: <http://xmacis.rcc-acis.org/>.



Pink wildflowers, Bering Land Bridge National Preserve. NPS Photo.

Record Breaking April Rainfall

It was the wettest April on record for Nome, and with 114 years of data that's saying something! A total of 2.47 inches of melted snow and rain were recorded for the month, which is three times the normal amount. A warm wet storm passed through the region on April 16 and 17 dropping a total of 1.10 inches of RAIN, not snow (Figure 3). According to the National Weather Service, it was the largest rain event so early in the season. The 24-hour daily total of 0.71 inches on April 17, was the highest daily total on record for April.



Figure 3. Rain in Nome April 17, 2020. [Nome, Alaska Webcam](#).

Warmest May in 114 years

It was the warmest May on record in Nome, with records dating back to 1907. Daily temperatures were between 10 and 15 degrees warmer than normal mid-month and ~ 20 degrees warmer than normal the last few days of the month.

The average May temperature at the Devil Mountain climate station in Bering Land Bridge National Preserve was 38.9°F, the warmest May so far and almost six degrees warmer than the 9-year average (2012-2020). Notice on the graph how much warmer the average May temperature has been since 2014 (Figure 4). The Serpentine Hot Springs and Ella Creek climate stations show the same pattern of warming for May over the past nine years.

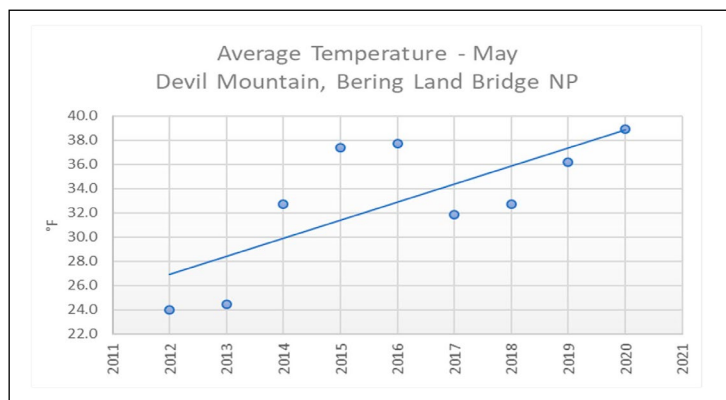


Figure 4. Average May temperatures at the Devil Mountain climate station in BELA 2012-2020.

Wet Spring – Dry Summer

Figure 4 shows the summer (June through August) total precipitation percent of 1981-2010 normal across Alaska, the orange and red dots indicate drier locations. Most of west coast Alaska was much drier than normal this summer, with half as much rain as normal in Kotzebue (Figure 5).

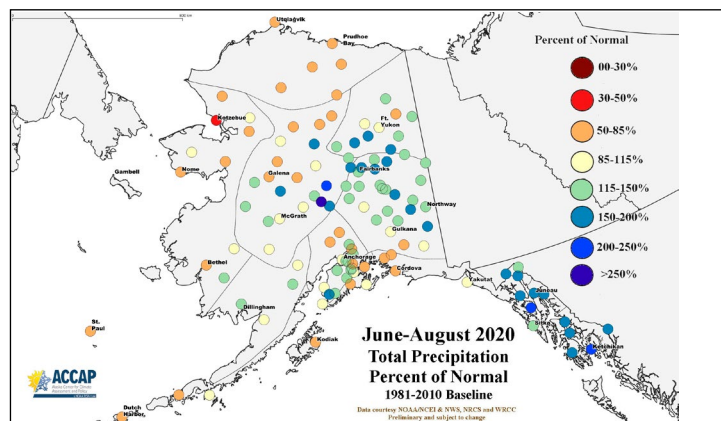


Figure 5. Summer 2020 precipitation across Alaska. Graph courtesy of ACCAP <https://uaf-accap.org/>.

We started measuring summer rainfall at the Serpentine Hot Springs climate station in 2012 (Figure 6). This summer 3.06 inches of rain was recorded from June 1 through August 31, the driest summer to date.



Figure 6. Serpentine climate station rain gauge (top right cylinder) records summer rainfall when temperatures are above freezing.

More Information

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Current Weather in BELA

<https://www.nps.gov/im/arcn/climate.htm>

Data disclaimer: Please note that the near-real time data used to generate these reports is subject to change. QA/QC data from the NPS ARCN climate stations are available at [NPS Data Store](#)

