



Weather & Climate Summary Denali National Park & Preserve Winter 2026

The Alaska Range bathed in January light. NPS photo/Ken Hill

Denali Park Winter 2025-2026

Overall, the winter of 2025-2026 was marked by exceptionally high snowfall and cold temperatures. It was the third snowiest winter on record since 1925, with a total of 90 inches of snow falling between December 1 and February 28. This amount is exceeded only by the winters of 1936-37 (99.5 inches) and 2021-2022 (124 inches). Normal (1991-2020 average) winter snowfall is 32 inches. It was the 9th coldest winter on record, with an average temperature of -3.5°F—9.2°F colder than normal (this excludes the winters of 1923-24 and 1924-25 when the station was located at the confluence of Riley Creek and Hines Creek, a much colder winter site). While temperatures were mostly below average this past winter, including two new record daily lows at the end of February, there were a few brief periods when temperatures rose well above normal.

December

The first three days of December were warm, with daily highs above freezing. However, this warmth ended on December 4th, marking the start of what would become the 10th coldest December since 1925. The average monthly temperature was 15.2°F below normal. Although no daily minimum temperature records were set, the cold persisted throughout the month. It was a snowy December with a total of 23 inches of snow; normal is 12.4 inches. Most of this snow came from two storms: one on December 12th – 13th brought 9.4 inches, while another on December 24th – 25th delivered 10.6 inches. The water equivalent of December's snow was 1.49 inches.

January

The cold, snowy trend continued into January. The first few weeks of January were cold, with daily temperatures averaging 24°F below normal. Mid-month, a warm system moved through, raising daily high temperatures into the upper 30s. The temperature variability was notable, with a 75°F difference between the monthly high and low. Snowfall was abundant

again in January, totaling 21.2 inches—compared to the normal 9.6 inches. The water content of the snow was 1.58 inches, 259% of normal.

February

February saw a mix of temperatures and abundant snow. Temperatures ranged from 40°F on the 6th to a record low of -39°F on the 27th, followed by another record low of -37°F on the 28th. The monthly average temperature was 7.5°F colder than normal. It was the snowiest February on record with a total of 46.1 inches. That is three feet more than normal! Most of that snow fell between February 14th and 24th. There were five days during this period that had 6 -10 inches of snow within a 24-hour period. Peak snow depth this February was 45 inches.

Table 1. Denali Park HQ average monthly temperatures compared to 1991-2020 normal.

Winter 2025-2026	Average Monthly Temp (°F)	1991-2020 Normal (°F)	Departure from Normal (°F)
December	-9.6	5.6	-15.2
January	-2.7	2.2	-4.9
February	1.8	9.3	-7.5

Winter temperature departure from normal: -9.2°F

Table 2. Denali Park HQ monthly snowfall totals compared to normal.

Winter 2025-2026	Total Monthly Snowfall in.	1991-2020 Normal (in.)	Departure from Normal (in.)
December	23.0	12.4	+10.6
January	21.2	9.6	+11.6
February	46.1	9.6	+36.5

Winter snowfall departure from normal: +58.7 in. (286% of normal).

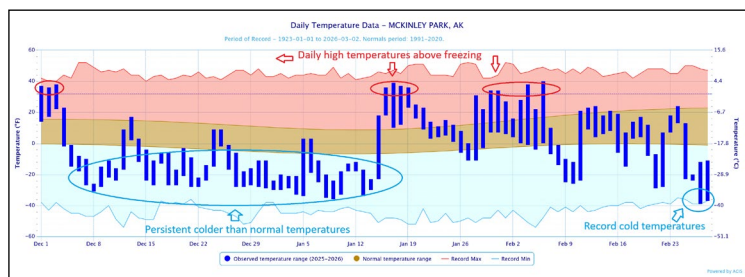


Figure 1. Winter 2025-2026 daily temperatures at Denali Park HQ showing record maximum (red), record minimum (blue), normal (brown) and observed range (blue bars). <http://xmacis.rcc-acis.org/>

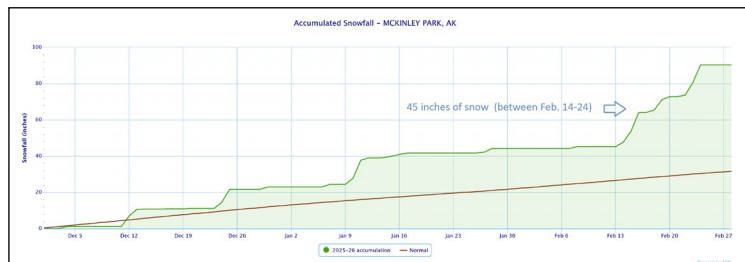


Figure 2. Winter 2025-2026 accumulated snowfall at Denali Park HQ (green) compared to normal (brown line). <http://xmacis.rcc-acis.org/>

Cold Winter in Interior Alaska

Most of the state was colder than normal this winter with the Interior having the coldest departures from normal (pink shading on Figure 3). According to state climate specialist Rick Thoman, February 26-27 were the coldest days so late in winter since 1971 for Alaska as a whole, and included the record cold temperatures at park headquarters.

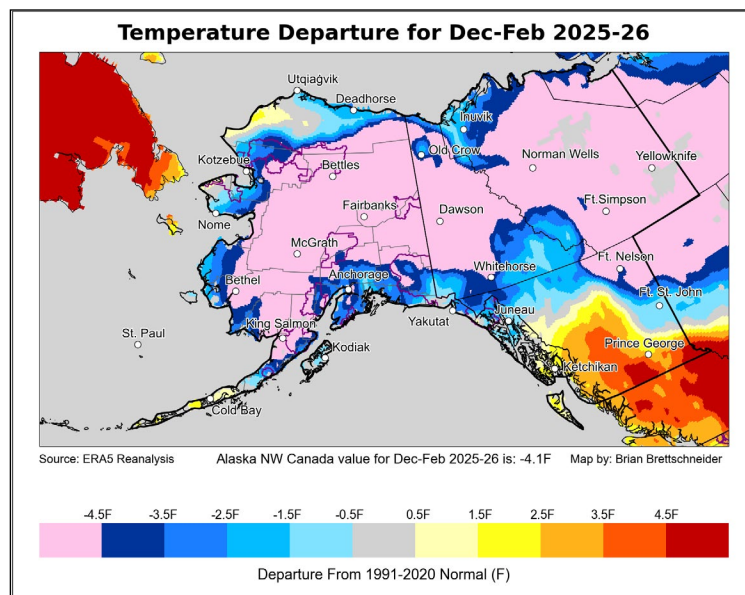


Figure 3. Winter temperature departure from normal for Alaska. Map courtesy of Brian Brettschneider using ERA5 reanalysis data.

Talkeetna Winter

Winter in Talkeetna was cooler and drier than normal. The average temperature from December–February was 11.9°F, which is 4.1°F below normal. Precipitation totaled 3.16 inches, lower than the normal seasonal total of 4.24 inches, or 75% of normal. Most of that fell in January, with 2.57 inches recorded—almost twice as much as normal. Daily snowfall is not measured at the Talkeetna airport, however, nearby

locations reported abundant snowfall in January: Trapper Creek recorded 59 inches, and Amber Lake reported 65 inches. In contrast, December and February were dry, with 16% and 27% of normal precipitation, respectively.

Cold Winter at Toklat

This was an intense winter at Toklat with extreme cold and extreme warmth. It was the coldest winter at Toklat in the past twenty years. The average temperature was just -1.1°F, which is approximately 10°F colder than the site's typical winter average. The coldest stretch occurred from early December through mid-January and returned during the final days of February. However, this intense chill was interrupted by mid-winter warmth. In late January and early February, temperatures climbed into the mid to upper 30s, and on January 19, the temperature reached the upper 40s. Remarkably, twelve days during the winter season recorded high temperatures above 32°F.

Tokositna and Kantishna Snow

This winter it was snowy north of the Alaska Range and relatively dry to the south. The Kantishna Snotel site had a snow depth of 35 inches on February 28th, which is 11 inches above the median (Figure 4), while the Tokositna site on the south side of the Alaska Range had 36 inches, but was well below the median 50 inches. At Park Headquarters the snow depth was 41 inches on February 28 (after peaking at 45 inches on February 24); normal is 29 inches.

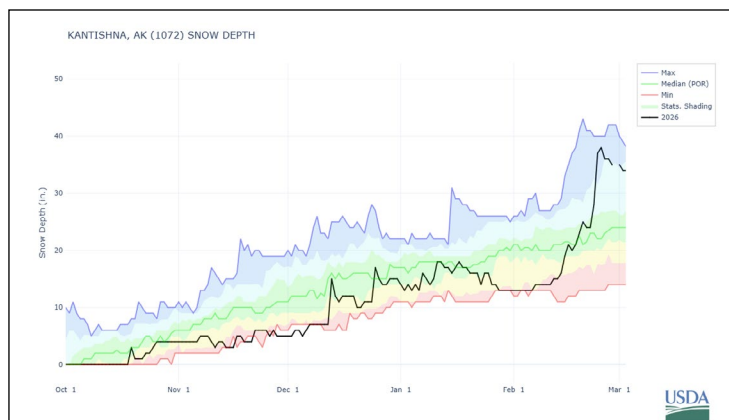


Figure 4. Kantishna snow depth October 2025 - March 2026 (black line). Green shading is normal.



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<https://www.nps.gov/im/cakn/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 CAKN/ARCN climate stations are available at [nps data store](https://www.nps.gov/im/cakn/climate.htm)