



Weather & Climate Summary Western Arctic Parklands Winter 2026



Aniagaaq Ranger Station – Cape Krusenstern National Monument. NPS Photo

Kotzebue Winter Weather 2026

Overall, the winter season in Kotzebue was colder and wetter than normal. The average temperature for the winter season was -2.8°F colder than the 1991-2020 normal. February was the coldest month of the winter compared to normal. Most of the winter's precipitation fell in February, bringing the seasonal total to 2.30 inches (melted snow), which is just above normal (Table 1 and 2, Figures 1 and 2). Daily snowfall is no longer measured in Kotzebue.

December

December was colder and drier than normal. The average monthly temperature was 3.4°F cooler than normal at -1.0°F . A winter storm December 11th-12th brought 0.24 inches of precipitation (melted snow) and high winds with gusts to 51 mph. The National Weather Service issued another blizzard warning on December 23rd that brought 40 mph gusts. Following the storm, temperatures dropped as low as -23°F on December 27th. The total precipitation for December was 0.49 inches, which is 67% of normal.

January

January was warmer and drier than normal. The first half of the month was cooler than normal. The low temperature for the month was -28°F on January 15th. The pattern shifted after that, ushering in the warmest week of the winter between January 17th-24th. The high temperature during this mid-winter warm spell peaked at 30°F on January 18th; the normal high for that date is 4°F . Snowfall was light, with measurable precipitation occurring on only 4 days in January. The monthly precipitation total was 0.28 inches (melted snow), 45% of normal.

February

February was colder and snowier than normal with several

winter storms that rolled through, prompting blizzard warnings from the National Weather Service. First, 0.63 inches of precipitation was recorded from February 11th-14th with wind gusts as high as 49 mph on Valentine's Day. The next storm came through on February 16th-17th, bringing an additional 0.29 inches of precipitation and blizzard conditions. On February 17th the peak wind gust was 61 mph. Another storm system came through February 20th-24th, with daily wind gusts ≥ 40 mph and more snow. Overall, it was the fourth wettest February on record going back to 1931 with a total of 1.53 inches of precipitation (melted snow). The month started out with warmer than normal temperatures for the first week, cooling off around February 8th. The final days of the month were the coldest with a low temperature of -38°F on February 27th.

Table 1. Kotzebue average monthly temperature totals compared to normal.

Winter 2026	Average Monthly Temp ($^{\circ}\text{F}$)	1991-2020 Normal ($^{\circ}\text{F}$)	Departure from Normal ($^{\circ}\text{F}$)
December	-1.0	2.4	-3.4
January	-1.1	-1.9	+0.8
February	-4.4	1.4	-5.8

Winter temperature departure from normal: -2.8°F

Table 2. Kotzebue monthly precipitation totals compared to normal.

Winter 2026	Total Monthly Precip. (in.)	1991-2020 Normal (in.)	Departure from Normal (in.)
December	0.49	0.73	-0.24
January	0.28	0.62	-0.34
February	1.53	0.85	+0.68

Winter precipitation departure from normal: +0.10 in. (105% of normal).

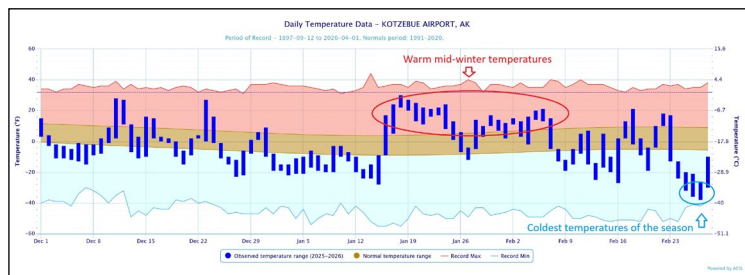


Figure 1. Winter 2026 daily temperatures at Kotzebue showing record maximum (red), record minimum (blue), normal (brown) and observed range (blue bars). <http://xmacis.rcc-acis.org/>

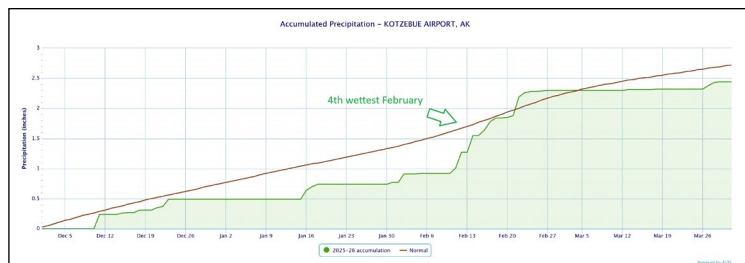


Figure 2. Winter 2026 accumulated precipitation at Kotzebue (green) compared to normal (brown line). <http://xmacis.rcc-acis.org/>

Cold Winter for Most of Alaska

Most of the state was colder than normal this winter including the Western Arctic Parklands, especially eastern Noatak and Kobuk Valley (pink shading on Figure 3). Many of our Arctic Network climate stations (installed in 2011) had more than 10 days where the minimum winter temperatures were the lowest on record. Note that these sites have much shorter records than Kotzebue, yet the number of cold days underscores the chill of this winter compared to the last decade.

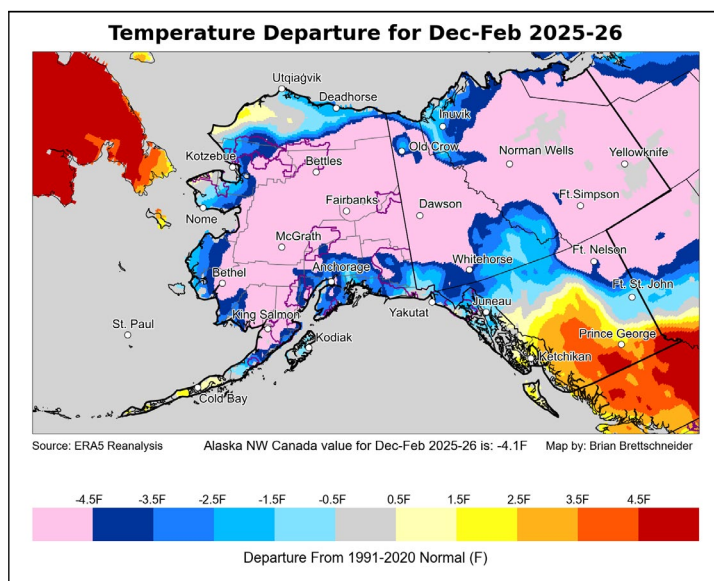


Figure 3. Winter temperature departure from normal for Alaska. Map courtesy of Brian Brettschneider using ERA5 reanalysis data.

Asik Winter Temperatures

We now have 14 years of data from the climate station at Asik above the Agashashok River in Noatak National Preserve. This was the second coldest winter on record behind 2020. This winter the average temperature was 1.4°F, nearly 6°F colder than the site average (Figure 4). Winter temperatures are variable with seasonal average temperatures as cold as 1°F

(2020) and as warm as 14°F (2018). Note that the start of the record for this site coincides with the warmest period on record for Alaska between 2014 and 2019.

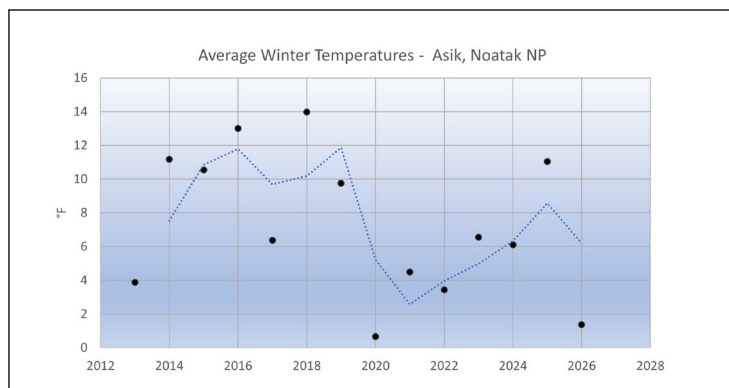


Figure 4. Winter temperatures at Asik climate station in Noatak from 2013-2026.

Daily temperatures during the winter months can also be extremely variable. This winter at Asik, a high temperature of +32°F was recorded on January 20th and a low temperature of -27°F was recorded on February 13th—note that there was missing data at Asik February 23rd-26th, a cold period for many Alaskan sites.

Abundant Snow at Kelly Ranger Station

According to the March 1 Alaska Snow Survey Report issued by the Natural Resources Conservation Service, “stations in the Kotzebue Sound were absolutely hammered with snowfall in February. Kelly Station in Noatak National Preserve gained nearly four inches of snow water equivalent, three times the normal February amount”. Between February 11-24 the snow depth at Kelly increased by 28 inches. The peak snow depth for the season was 43 inches on February 23 – two feet more than the median (Figure 5).

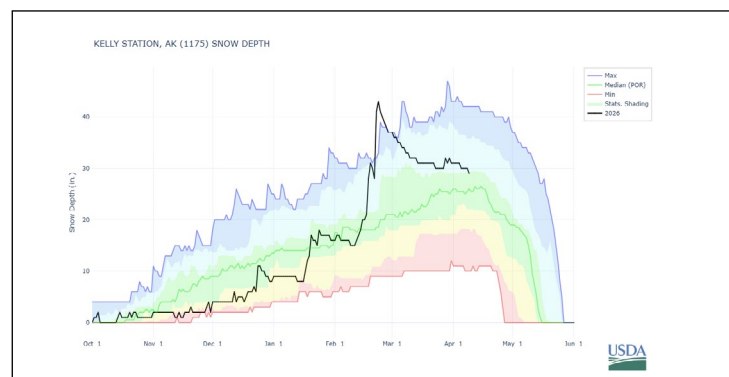


Figure 5. Snow depth for the 2025-2026 season at the Kelly Station Snotel site in Noatak NP. Black line is current year snow depth; green line is the median.

[Click here](#) for current weather in the Western Arctic Parklands

More Information

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<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 CAKN/ARCN climate stations are available at [nps data store](#)