

MAY 2022



WestFAST News

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Chair – Roger Gorke; Federal Liaison Officer – Heather Hofman

Wildfires, severe weather marked April 2022. The U.S. saw near-average temperatures and precipitation

NOAA 5/9/22



Wildfire activity associated with the New Mexico Hermits Peak Fire on the evening of April 29, 2022, off of Highway 518. The fire saw significant growth that day. (Will Harris/Inciweb)

April 2022 was slightly cooler and wetter than normal across the contiguous U.S., according to the [National Centers for Environmental Information](#).

What made the month stand out was an early start to the wildfire season, several tornado outbreaks and a widespread Western drought.

Below are more takeaways from NOAA's latest monthly U.S. climate report: Climate by the numbers

April 2022

The average April temperature across the contiguous U.S. was 50.7 degrees F (0.4 of a degree below the 20th-century average), ranking in the middle third of the 128-year record.

Temperatures from the Northwest to the Great Lakes and into the mid-Mississippi Valley were generally below average, while much of the Southwest, Deep South and portions of the East Coast saw above-average temperatures.

The average precipitation for the month was 2.58 inches — 0.06 of an inch above average — which places the month in the middle third of the historical record.

Above-average precipitation fell across portions of the Northwest, northern Rockies and Plains, Great Lakes and Northeast, while the Southwest and the central and southern Plains saw below-normal precipitation.

Year to date

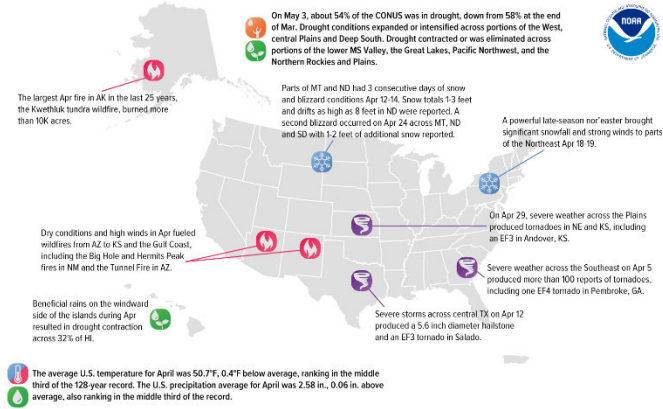
The average U.S. temperature for the year to date (YTD, January through April 2022) was 39.9 degrees F (0.8 of a degree above average), ranking in the warmest third of the climate record.

Temperatures were above average across parts of the West and also along the East Coast, with California seeing its sixth-warmest such YTD on record.

The average precipitation for the first four months of 2022 was 8.25 inches (1.22 inches below

normal), which ranked as the 13th-driest January-through-April YTD on record. California had its driest YTD on record for this four-month period, while Nevada and Utah had their third driest.

U.S. Selected Significant Climate Anomalies and Events for April 2022



A map of the United States plotted with significant climate events that occurred during April 2022. Please see the story below as well as the full climate report highlights at <http://bit.ly/USClimate202204offsite> link. (NOAA NCEI)

Other notable climate events in April

- Wildfire season kicked off early: Dry and windy conditions across the Southwest and Plains contributed to an active start to the wildfire season in April. As of May 3, the largest fire across the U.S., the Hermit's Peak Fire in New Mexico, consumed more than 145,000 acres and was 20% contained. Across all 50 states, 1.1 million acres have burned since January 1— 160% of average for this time of year.
- Tornadoes were numerous: Several tornado outbreaks occurred during April, contributing to an above-average tornado count for the month. A days-long outbreak in early April brought tornadoes and severe weather from the Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas, metro area to the Carolinas. Another outbreak mid-month struck the Great Plains, Midwest and Deep South, with another round of severe thunderstorms and tornadoes raking the central Plains on April 29-30.
- Drought conditions improved overall: According to the May 3 [U.S. Drought Monitor report](#), 53.8% of the contiguous U.S. was in drought, down approximately 4 percentage points from the end of March. Drought conditions expanded or intensified across portions of the West,

central Plains and Deep South. Drought conditions lessened or were eliminated across portions of the lower Mississippi Valley, the Great Lakes, the Northern Rockies and Plains, Pacific Northwest and across portions of Hawaii.

More > [Access NOAA's latest climate report and download the images.](#)

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BLM Announces \$26 Million for Ecosystem Restoration

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding aims to address issues of Climate Change

BLM 5/12/22

WASHINGTON, DC. — Today, the Bureau of Land Management announced project allocations for \$26 million received through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to begin the work of ecosystem restoration following the Department of the Interior's allocation of more than \$68 million for 125 ecosystem restoration projects in over 20 states, Tribes and territories.

The BLM expects to fund dozens of projects across the country in 2022 from the additional dollars. The influx of money will advance several of the Department's restoration goals:

- Advancing partnerships with states and Tribes using Good Neighbor Agreements
- Assessing and eradicating invasive species
- Restoring recreation sites and making them more resilient from erosion and human-caused damage
- Reducing hazards and revegetating impacted mine lands
- Advancing the national revegetation effort and the National Seed Strategy

“Putting people to work on restoration efforts on our public lands will be key to help address the effects of a changing climate and long-term drought,” said BLM Director Tracy Stone-Manning. “We all rely on healthy, functioning ecosystems that

deliver clean air and clean water, support wildlife, sequester carbon, and are less prone to the effects of catastrophic wildfire. These are wise investments for future generations.”

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law was signed by President Biden last November. It represents a once-in-a-generation investment to help local, state, and Tribal communities tackle the climate crisis while creating good-paying jobs, advancing environmental justice, and boosting local economies.

In addition to ecosystem restoration, the law also authorizes BLM to plug and restore orphaned well sites, improve wildland fire fighting, support hazardous fuels reduction, and advance clean energy.

A full list of restoration projects to be funded is available on the Interior Department’s [website](#).

U.S. fish stocks continue era of rebuilding and recovery

New tools and data support fishery management in the face of a changing climate

NOAA 5/12/22

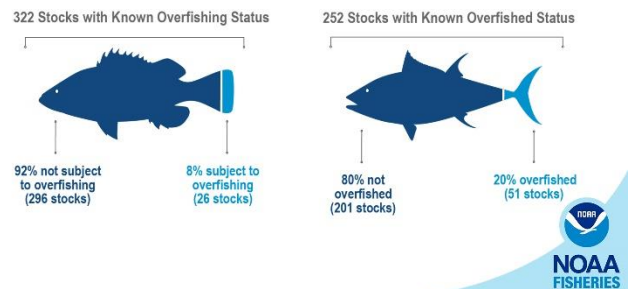


A digital artwork of a school of yellowfin tuna fish in the Atlantic Ocean used on the cover of the 2021 Status of the Stocks Report released by NOAA. (Getty images)

Today, NOAA released the [2021 Status of Stocks](#) report, highlighting the efforts to rebuild and recover U.S. fisheries by providing a snapshot of the more than 460 stocks managed by NOAA Fisheries. In addition, NOAA issued an update to the [Fisheries of the United States](#) report, which provides details about the economic impacts of

fisheries, and tracks annual seafood consumption and the productivity of top fishing ports.

In 2021, U.S. fisheries held steady with more than 90% of stocks not subject to overfishing, and 80% with population sizes sufficient to be considered not overfished. The number of stocks on the overfishing list held steady at 26, and the number of overfished stocks slightly increased to 51, up from 49. Data also reveals that in 2020, seafood landings in the U.S. were down 10% — likely due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic — and overall seafood consumption had slightly decreased from the previous year, to 19 pounds per person.



Of the more than 460 stocks managed by NOAA, 322 have a known overfishing status (296 not subject to overfishing and 26 subject to overfishing) and 252 have a known overfished status (201 not overfished and 51 overfished). (NOAA)

A stock is on the overfishing list when the annual catch rate is too high. A stock is on the overfished list when the population size of a stock is too low, whether because of fishing or other causes.

“NOAA’s annual Status of Stocks report shows that the United States continues to be a global leader in sustainable fisheries management, as we work to understand how climate change is affecting fisheries and the communities that this sector supports,” said Dr. Rick Spinrad, NOAA Administrator. “The report demonstrates that we remain on track to maximize marine fishing opportunities while ensuring long-term ecological and economic sustainability in our changing world.”

This year’s report also featured the first-ever assessment of the [Atlantic blacktip shark](#). NOAA Fisheries determined the stock is not subject to overfishing, not overfished and is above the sustainable level. Assessing stocks for the first time significantly contributes to the science-based information used to set appropriate management measures.

U.S. Commercial Fisheries and the Seafood Industry Landings and Values, 2020

National
Totals



8.4

billion pounds
-10% from 2019

\$4.8

billion
-15% from 2019



U.S. fishermen at ports in the 50 states landed 8.4 billion pounds valued at \$4.8 billion in 2020. (NOAA)

“Maintaining sustainable fisheries contributes significantly to the U.S. economy and helps meet the growing challenge of increasing our nation’s seafood supply,” said Janet Coit, NOAA Fisheries Assistant Administrator. “This year, improved methodologies, updated stock assessments and innovative tools and approaches provided new information to inform fisheries management in the face of climate change.”

For the first time, [Fisheries of the United States](#) data is now available via a [new interactive web portal](#), which includes a detailed historic record of economic analysis of seafood consumption, landings totals and imports and exports of fishery products in the U.S. This portal will allow for more frequent updates throughout the year to improve data sharing and collaboration.

In April, NOAA Fisheries also shared a [new tool](#) to better track the location and movement of marine fish and invertebrate species in U.S. waters, which may be shifting in response to changing ocean conditions. This resource facilitates decision-making about fishery management and science, and increases overall knowledge of species distributions for stock assessments.

Sustainable U.S. fisheries play an important role in the nation’s economy, providing opportunities for commercial, recreational and subsistence fishing, and sustainable seafood for consumers. By ending overfishing and rebuilding stocks, NOAA Fisheries strengthens the value of U.S. fisheries to the economy, communities and marine ecosystems.

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Reclamation selects 22 projects to receive \$17.3 million to improve water efficiency in West

The 22 projects support \$89.1 million in projects in California, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, Oklahoma, Texas, Utah, Washington and Wyoming

BOR 5/16/22



The selected projects will help improve water use efficiency and other benefits that will help enhance water supply sustainability in the West.

WASHINGTON – The Bureau of Reclamation selected 22 projects to share \$17.3 million in WaterSMART Water and Energy Efficiency Grants.

These competitive projects improve water use efficiency, increase renewable energy production, reduce the risk of water conflicts, and provide other benefits that will enhance water supply sustainability in the Western United States.

"The projects announced today are an example of the Biden-Harris administration's actions to help ensure we are using as many tools as possible to build resiliency and respond to the ongoing drought," said **Assistant Secretary for Water and Science Tanya Trujillo**. "The funding for these projects is an example of how the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is supporting the Department of the Interior’s work to address the impacts of climate change by helping water districts become more efficient in water delivery."

"Conserving water is saving energy and helping Western communities become more resilient to drought," said **Acting Commissioner David Palumbo**. "Water and Energy Efficiency Grants

provide communities with the necessary, cost-shared funding to modernize their existing infrastructure and conserve water for their communities and the environment."

The selected projects include:

- Lining and piping canals.
- Installing and upgrading water meters and timers.
- Installing solar to reduce power demand.
- Adding automated gate controls.

The projects will be completed in two or three years, depending on the funding received. To view all the selected projects, please visit www.usbr.gov/watersmart/weeg/.

The Bard Water District, located in southern California near the Arizona border, will line a 1/2 mile section of the currently earthen upper Mohave Canal with concrete. The project is expected to result in annual water savings of 498 acre-feet, which is currently lost to seepage, evapotranspiration, and operational losses. Conserved water will remain in the Lower Colorado River System and can be used by other water users during drought years and in times of shortage, including the Quechan Indian Reservation. The project will also allow farmers to continue to work with the Natural Resources Conservation Service's Environmental Quality Incentives Program to improve irrigation systems. The project will receive \$484,340 with a total project cost of \$968,680.

The Quincy-Columbia Basin Irrigation District in central Washington will line 2,500 feet of the earthen West Canal. The project will help address regional water reliability concerns, including drought, groundwater issues, and improved stream flows to assist salmon recovery. The project will receive \$300,000 with a total project cost of \$750,000.

The Lower Republican Natural Resources District in southern Nebraska will install near real-time telemetry equipment on 1,057 irrigation flow meters and other water management sensors for improved on-farm water management and reporting. In addition, the district will install eight solar-powered weather stations to collect evapotranspiration data to inform irrigation scheduling in the area. The

project will receive \$2,000,000 with a total project cost of \$4,360,858.

This funding supplements the investments from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which contains \$400 million over five years for WaterSMART grants, including drought resiliency projects. In 2022, Reclamation is making \$160 million available and will release other funding opportunities this spring. To learn more about how Reclamation implements the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, please visit www.usbr.gov/bil.

For more than 100 years, Reclamation and its partners have developed sustainable water and power solutions for the West. This funding opportunity is part of the Department of the Interior's WaterSMART Program, which focuses on collaborative efforts to plan and implement actions to increase water supply reliability, including investments to modernize infrastructure. Find out more information on [Reclamation's WaterSMART program webpage](#). [Water and Energy Efficiency Grants](#)

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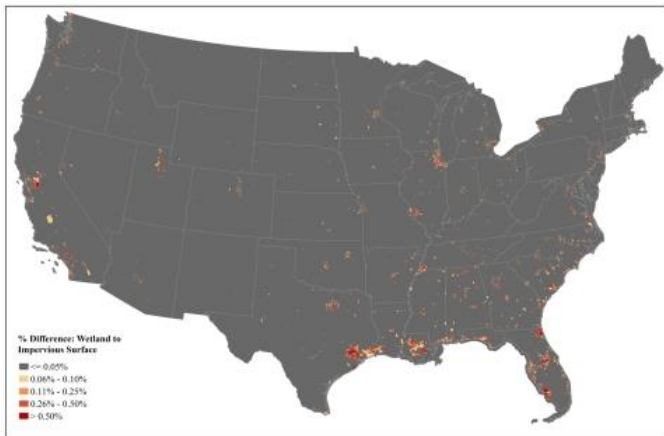
New National Wetlands Inventory Product Line Supports Strategic Decision Making

FWS 5/27/2022

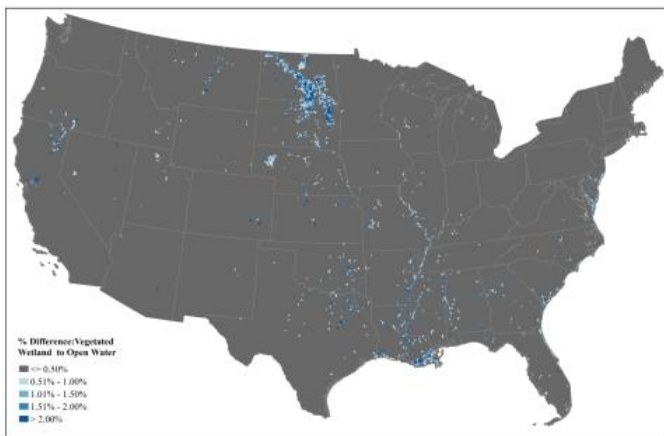
The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) Program provides users with information on wetland and deepwater habitat location, extent, type and change to promote the understanding and conservation of America's wetlands. The NWI Geospatial Dataset, commonly known as NWI maps, supports a wide array of applications, including climate change resilience, infrastructure planning, habitat and species conservation, energy production and clean drinking water provision. The American public frequently relies on the dataset, as illustrated by nearly a million website views and 40,000 dataset downloads annually, but resources have not been available to regularly update the entire dataset.

To address this challenge the NWI Program is working with partners to leverage the best of different datasets and techniques, thus enhancing dataset utility and production efficiency. One example of this is NWI's newly developed Difference Product Line, which provides information on where land cover change is most likely to have occurred since NWI data production.

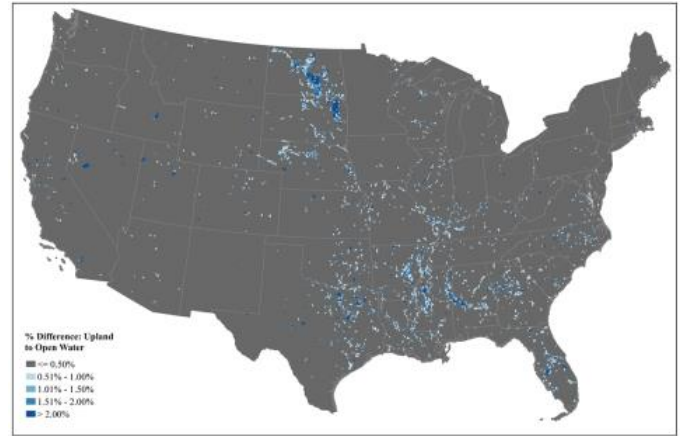
This product line: 1) supports effective investment in the Geospatial Dataset by allowing stakeholders to strategically target geographies in greatest need of updates; 2) empowers dataset users to make critical decisions regarding dataset suitability; and 3) enables more effective coordination with the NWI Program.



Wetland to Impervious Surface Difference Product for census tracts in the Contiguous U.S. Census tracts with $\le 0.05\%$ of wetland to impervious surface difference, calculated by area, are displayed in gray, while those that have greater than half a percent difference are displayed in dark red.

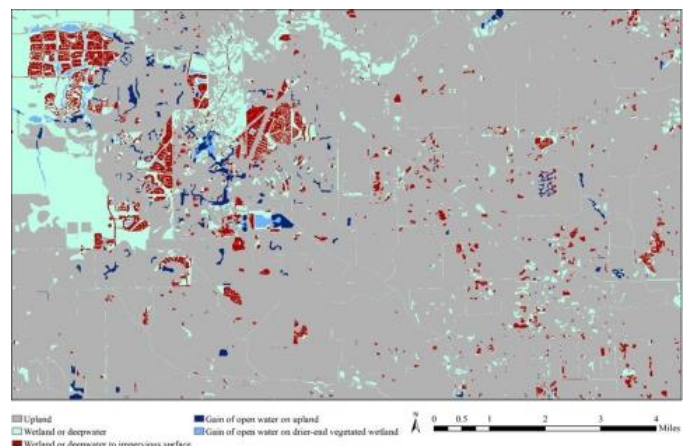


Upland to Open Water Difference Product for HUC12 watersheds in the contiguous U.S. Watersheds with $\le 0.5\%$ of upland to open water difference, calculated by area, are displayed in gray, while those that have greater than 2% difference are displayed in dark blue.



Vegetated Wetland to Open Water Difference Product for HUC12 watersheds in the contiguous U.S. Watersheds with $\le 0.5\%$ of vegetated wetland to open water difference, calculated by area, are displayed in gray, while those that have greater than 2% of difference are displayed in dark blue.

Difference Products were created, in partnership with the University of Maryland, by comparing the NWI Geospatial Dataset with other federal land cover products to identify areas where wetland or deepwater habitats are likely to have been gained or lost since Geospatial Dataset production. More specifically, areas are identified where the following changes are likely: 1) wetland or deepwater habitat lost to impervious surface; 2) vegetated wetland changed to open water; and 3) open water gained on upland.



Raster Difference Product for an area near Houston, Texas. Mapped classes highlight areas that have likely experienced land cover change since National Wetlands Inventory Geospatial Dataset production, including loss of wetlands or deepwater to impervious surface (red), gain of open water on upland (dark blue), and gain of open water on drier-end vegetated wetland (light blue).

In celebration of American Wetlands Month NWI is providing early access to this information for watersheds or census tracts throughout the contiguous U.S. Since these data highlight differences, mostly land cover change, relative to dataset production date the products should not be used to indicate wetland loss/gain trends at the national scale. Instead, they can be used to identify

geographies that could be prioritized for NWI Geospatial Dataset updates, or to inform data use decisions. The products and related information can be accessed below.

Upcoming Meetings and Webinars

WestFAST Webinars: WestFAST is hosting a series of webinars to discuss the importance of water resources and community engagement related to wildfire prevention, reduction, recovery, and rehabilitation

[2022 WSWC Summer Meetings – Polson, MT – KwaTaqNuk Resort-Casino, Aug 02 - 05 2022](#)

[Save the Date! 2022 National Water Use Data Workshop in Salt Lake City, Aug 16 - 18 2022](#)

Other Federal News

[BOR 5/2/22. Reclamation announces 2023 funding opportunity for Water and Energy Efficiency Grants](#)

[USDA 5/3/22. USDA Accepts 2 Million Acres in Offers Through Conservation Reserve Program General Signup](#)

[DOI 5/4/22. Biden-Harris Administration Announces Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Investments for Irrigation and Power Projects Across Indian Country](#)

[NOAA 5/5/22. Secretary of Commerce allocates \\$144 million for fishery disasters](#)

[DOI 5/9/22. Biden-Harris Administration Announces Over \\$240 Million from Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to Repair Aging Water Infrastructure](#)

[BOR 5/11/22. Reclamation selects phase I winners of river modeling prize competition](#)

[DOI 5/12/22. Biden-Harris Administration Announces More than \\$68 Million from Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to Conserve and Strengthen Ecosystems and Economies](#)

[EPA 5/13/22. EPA Announces Additional \\$1.9 Billion in State Revolving Loan Funds for Water Infrastructure Upgrades](#)

[NOAA 5/13/22. April 2022 tied as Earth's fifth-warmest](#)

[EPA 5/18/22. EPA Selects Recipients for \\$21.7 Million in Technical Assistance Grants to Support Clean, Safe Water for Rural Communities](#)

[USFS 5/20/22. Statement of Forest Service Chief Randy Moore Announcing Pause of Prescribed Fire Operations on National Forest System Lands](#)

[USDA 5/26/22. Deadline for USDA's Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities Second Funding Pool is June 10](#)

[USDA 5/26/22. USDA to Allow Producers to Request Voluntary Termination of Conservation Reserve Program Contract](#)

[FWS 5/24/22. Pacific Northwest Fish Passage Projects Get Big Boost with Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Funding](#)

[FWS 5/25/22. Songbirds, Shorebirds and Other Migratory Birds to Benefit from More Than \\$21 Million in Funding Throughout the Americas](#)

[EPA 5/26/2022. EPA Announces Federal Working Group to Strengthen Coordination on Water Reuse and Integrated Water Resources Management Approaches](#)

[FWS 5/26/22. National Fish Hatchery System: By The Numbers \(2021\)](#)

The Western States Federal Agency Support Team (WestFAST) is a collaboration between 13 Federal agencies with water management responsibilities in the West. WestFAST was established to support the Western States Water Council (WSWC), and the Western Governors Association in coordinating Federal efforts regarding water resources.