



## MEDIA ADVISORY

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
May 26, 2016

### **2015-2016 Wet Season Rainfall Summary for Hawaii**

Summary of October 2015 through April 2016 wet season

- Started the wet season with no drought or abnormally dry areas in Hawaii.
  - First time in the history of the U.S. Drought Monitor which started in 2000.
- Strong El Nino in place prior to wet season.
  - One of the strongest El Nino events in the last 50 years.
- Wet season forecast issued in October 2015 called for significantly below average rainfall, especially from December 2015 through April 2016.
  - Consistent with prior strong El Nino events.
- Early wet season was rainy through mid-December.
- El Nino type winter weather pattern established itself after mid-December.
  - Driest January on record at 17 sites.
  - Several additional sites had their driest months in 20 to 30+ years.
  - Moderate drought developed in early January, then spread and intensified through April.
    - Extreme drought over portions of leeward Big Island by early April.
  - Weak cold fronts brought localized wet conditions to north-facing slopes.
  - Windward slopes have improved recently.

Wet season statistics

- Overall: 5<sup>th</sup> driest wet season in the last 30 years (average rankings from 7 sites)
- Kauai
  - Most rain totals in the range of 50 to 80% of average.
  - Lihue Airport: 12.37 inches, 2<sup>nd</sup> driest Oct – Apr in the last 30 years
  - March 24-25 heavy rain event accounted for a significant fraction of the wet season rainfall for several leeward sites.
    - Hanapepe: 4.96 out of 11.46 inches occurred in just 24 hours.
- Oahu
  - Leeward totals < 50% of average. Windward totals 50 to 90% of average.
  - Honolulu Airport: 6.21 inches, ranked 5<sup>th</sup> driest.
- Maui County
  - Windward totals near to above average due to wet fall and early spring.
  - Other site totals mostly < 50% of average.
  - Ulupalakua: 7.27 inches, 3<sup>rd</sup> driest wet season.
- Big Island
  - Windward sites near average due to wet fall 2015.
  - Leeward sites mostly < 50% of average.
  - Kahua Ranch and Kealakekua, driest January on record.



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**2015-2016 Wet Season Rainfall Summary for Hawaii - cont'd**

Dry season (May through September) outlook

- NOAA Climate Prediction Center's forecast probabilities favor above normal precipitation during the latter half of the dry season.
- Wet conditions will mainly affect the windward slopes and possibly the Kona slopes on the Big Island.
- Leeward areas (other than Kona) forecasted to be dry.
  - Expecting an expansion of existing drought or the development of new leeward drought areas.
  - Brush fire season expected to be more active than normal.
  - Burned acreage in 2016 is already more than double the 2015 total.

On the Web:

El Nino Wet Season Rainfall in Hawaii – Updated for 2015-2016 Wet Season :  
<http://arcg.is/1EpyyPy>

Wet Season Maps

Kauai: [http://www.prh.noaa.gov/hnl/hydro/pages/kauai\\_1516\\_hooilo.gif](http://www.prh.noaa.gov/hnl/hydro/pages/kauai_1516_hooilo.gif)

Oahu: [http://www.prh.noaa.gov/hnl/hydro/pages/oahu\\_1516\\_hooilo.gif](http://www.prh.noaa.gov/hnl/hydro/pages/oahu_1516_hooilo.gif)

Molokai/Lanai: [http://www.prh.noaa.gov/hnl/hydro/pages/molan\\_1516\\_hooilo.gif](http://www.prh.noaa.gov/hnl/hydro/pages/molan_1516_hooilo.gif)

Maui: [http://www.prh.noaa.gov/hnl/hydro/pages/maui\\_1516\\_hooilo.gif](http://www.prh.noaa.gov/hnl/hydro/pages/maui_1516_hooilo.gif)

Big Island: [http://www.prh.noaa.gov/hnl/hydro/pages/bigis\\_1516\\_hooilo.gif](http://www.prh.noaa.gov/hnl/hydro/pages/bigis_1516_hooilo.gif)

NOAA National Weather Service Honolulu HI: <http://www.weather.gov/hawaii/>

NOAA Climate Prediction Center: <http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/>

U.S. Drought Monitor: <http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>