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May Weather Unusually Cold And Wet In Seacoast

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June 1, 2005

DURHAM, N.H. – This was the fourth wettest May on record in Durham and the first ever with 11 days of consecutive precipitation (May 21-31), according to state climatologist David Brown at the University of New Hampshire. And if it felt unseasonably cold, that's because the average daily high temperatures for May were the coldest since at least 1931.

Brown says there are several reasons for this unusual weather, including a Nor'easter event May 22-26, and persistent low pressure in northern New England and off the Atlantic Coast. In addition, the weather "could be linked to strongly negative conditions of the North Atlantic Oscillation (NAO) during the last half of May." The NAO is a measure of the relative strength of high and low pressure centers in the northern Atlantic Ocean, and can influence the path of storms across New England.

The following data were collected unofficially at the UNH weather station and based on comparison to 1931-2004 climate records for Durham:

Precipitation:

- * **4th wettest May on record** in Durham (6.94" unofficially at UNH weather station), behind only 1945 (7.10"), 1984 (9.53"), and 1954 (12.00").
- * 18 days of precipitation is tied for second **most on record**, along with 1945 and 1990 and just behind 1984 (19 days).
- * **First May on record** with 11 days of consecutive precipitation (May 21-31).

Temperature:

- * Average daily high temperatures for May were **coldest on record** (59.2 F unofficially at UNH weather station).
- * Overall average temperatures for May were **second coldest on record** (50.7 F unofficially at UNH weather station), behind only 1967 (48.9 F).

Brown is recognized as the New Hampshire state climatologist by the American Association of State Climatologists and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. He can be reached at (603) 862-7052 or david.brown@unh.edu.

