

January 2013 Weather Summary

The New Year brought a change in winter weather as the cold, dry conditions experienced in early winter shifted to warmer, wetter conditions at the end of December and lasted throughout most of January. January's slightly warmer than normal temperatures and precipitation combined to result in a continuous receipt of wet snow, sleet and rain for most of the month. A short respite arrived with high pressure during the last week of the month when temperatures plummeted and precipitation ceased. Despite above average monthly precipitation, the warmer conditions in January prevented the accumulation of any fluffy snow and, instead, the month ended with Kenai Fjords blanketed in an average depth, wet snowpack. Snow Course measurements conducted at Exit Glacier at the end of January confirm this: the January 2013 snowpack was about average for the last four years although it was 22.5 inches shallower than the January 2012 snowpack (38.5 in and 61 in, respectively). The ratio of snow depth to water content resulted in an 8% denser snowpack this year than last (33% density on February 1, 2013 vs. 25% density on February 1, 2012). To learn more about how this winter's snow depth and snow water equivalent at Exit Glacier compare to previous winters, see the charts at the end of this summary.

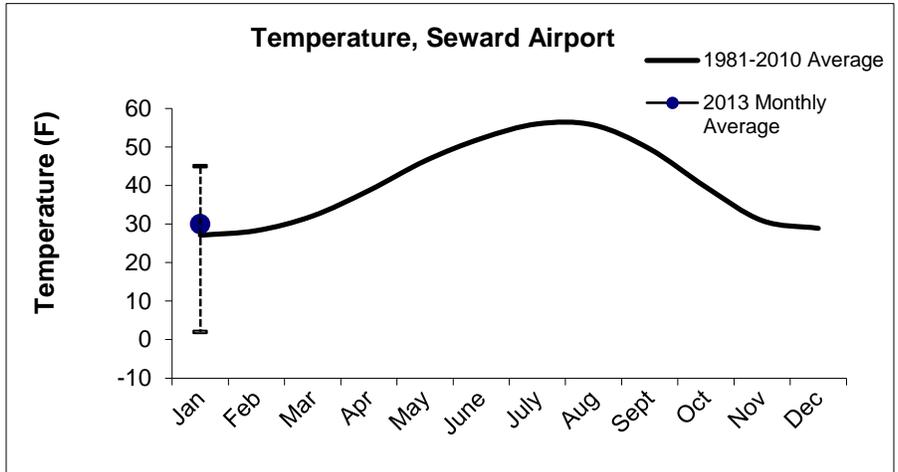
As recorded at the Seward airport, total precipitation for the month was 8.88 inches (110% of normal), .81 inches above the 30-year average (1981-2010) for the month. The monthly average temperature for January was 30.0 degrees F; 2.9 degrees F above the 30-year average. January 26th was the windiest day of the month reported at the Seward airport with sustained winds of 22.4 mph and a 5-second wind gust of 53 mph.

Also of note:

- The [National Weather Service Climate Prediction Center's](#) three month weather outlook (February-March-April) favors below normal temperatures and normal precipitation for the Kenai Fjords area.
- A recent National Park Service study of vegetation patterns published in [Ecological Monographs](#) indicates that climate change may lead to an increase in abundance and distribution of white spruce in interior Alaska as the tree species expands into areas that are newly thawed.
- To find out which Alaska town has the most snow so far this year, check out the current edition of the [Alaska Snow Survey Report](#) and learn more about the 2012-2013 winter snowpack and how it compares to past winters.
- The variability of weather conditions in Alaska can make travel and outdoor recreation tricky to plan. Before you set out, you can see for yourself what the weather is doing by checking out one of the [FAA Weather Cameras](#), distributed around the state and updated every ten minutes.
- NOAA's Earth System Research Laboratory has a cool (or maybe it's hot) running [30-day temperature anomaly map](#) to show how current temperatures compare to the average.
- Speaking of anomalies, the Economist reports on the [hottest places on Earth](#).
- The winter 2012-2013 issue of the [Alaska Climate Dispatch](#) provides a recap of "notable weather systems" of 2012 including the early-fall storms of September and the late-fall cold, dry spell experienced on the Kenai Peninsula and across Alaska.
- The Arctic Oscillation (AO) has switched to a negative state. Read more at the [National Snow & Ice Data Center](#) to learn about the AO and how it affects sea ice extent and weather.
- NOAA climate services portal serves as a single point-of-entry for NOAA's extensive climate information, data, products, services, and the climate science magazine [ClimateWatch](#).

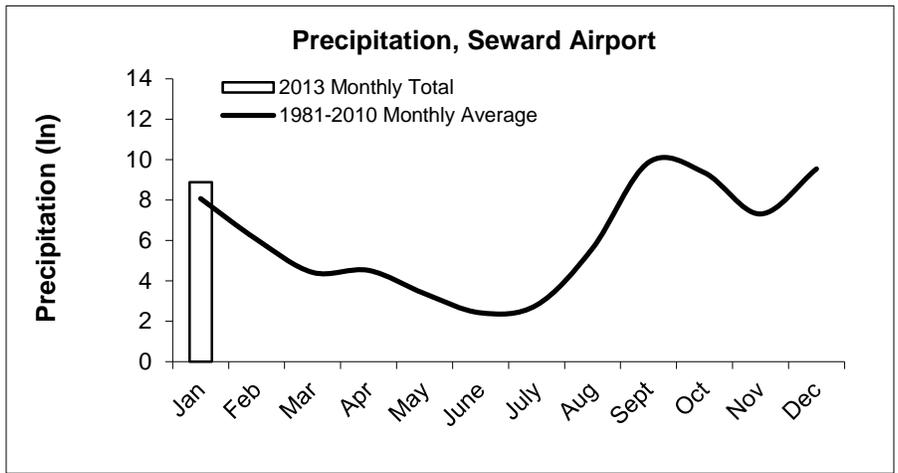
Read more to find out about the local climate for January 2013

Seward Airport Temperature, January 2013 (station 26438)



Monthly and 30-year average temperature (F) at Seward airport. The range of maximum and minimum daily temperatures for each month are shown with a dashed vertical line.

Seward Airport Precipitation, January 2013 (station 26438)

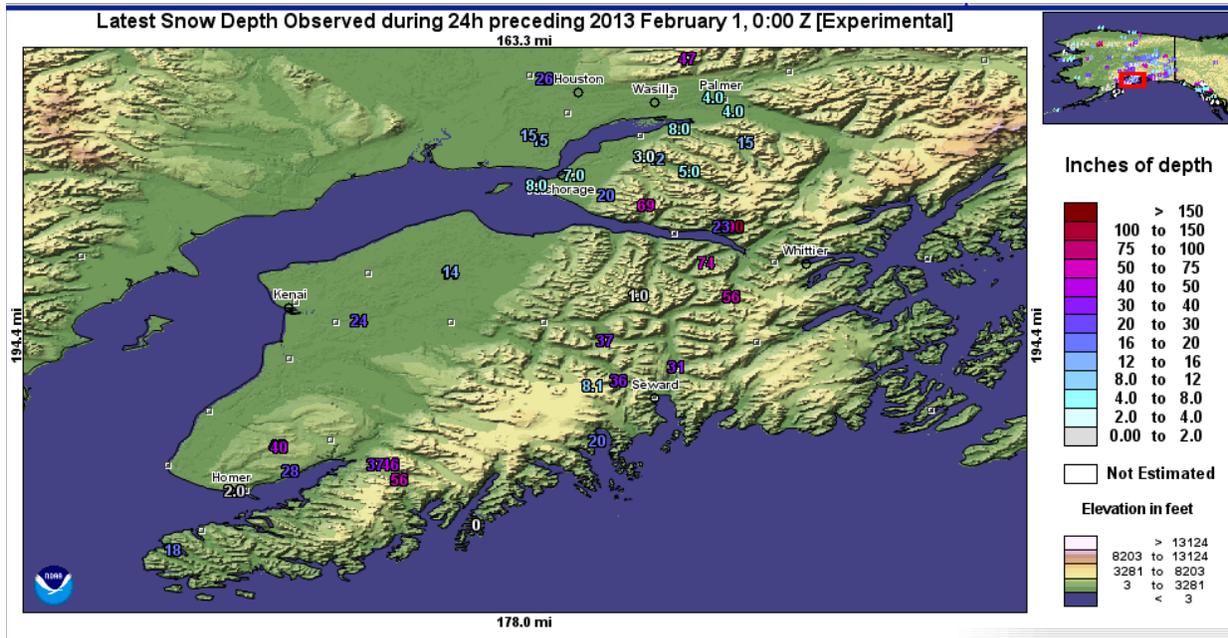


Monthly and 30-year average precipitation (inches) at Seward airport.

Rivers

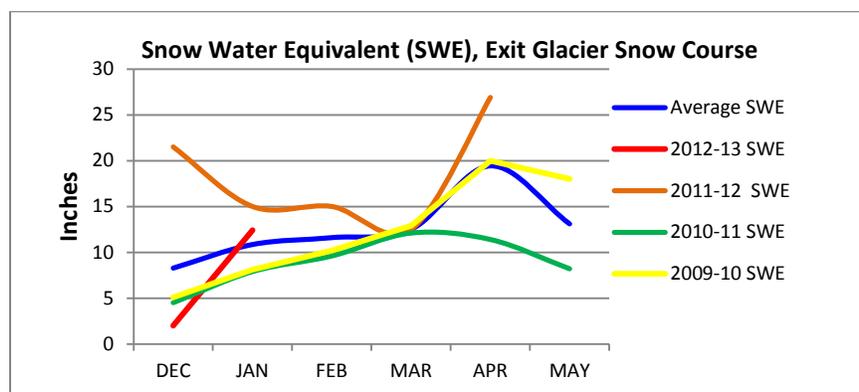
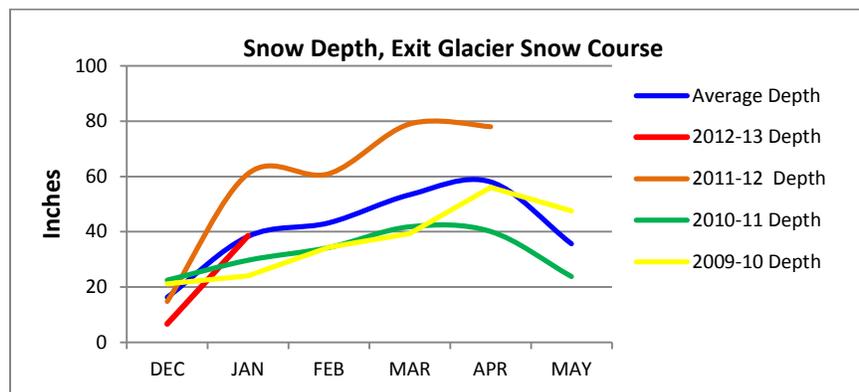
Resurrection River at Exit Glacier Bridge is monitored by the Alaska-Pacific River Forecast Center: <http://water.weather.gov/ahps2/index.php?wfo=pafc>. Resurrection River is currently below the flood action stage. **Exit Creek** water level (stage height) data is not collected in the winter.

Snow & Ice



Snow depths reported across southcentral Alaska on Feb. 1st: at the [National Operational Hydrologic Remote Sensing Center Interactive Snow Information](http://www.nohr.noaa.gov/interactive-snow-information/) site. Snow is monitored by the Natural Resources Conservation Service: <http://www.ambcs.org/> with most measurements and reporting taking place December to May.

Based on Snow Course measurements, snow depth at Exit Glacier on January 30th was 38.5 inches, 22.5 inches less than this time last year, but average for the last four years. Snow water equivalent of this snow pack was 12.4 inches, only 2.6 inches less than the same time last year.



Weather Station data (map of [some] stations [Western Region Climate Center](#) or [MesoWest](#))

[Seward Airport](#)
[Grouse Crk Divide](#)
[Exit Glacier SNOTEL](#)
[McArthur Pass](#)
[Pilot Rock](#)

[Seward Hwy MP#12](#)
[Exit Glacier](#)
[Harding Icefield](#)
[Nuka Glacier](#)
[Buoy 76-Cape Cleare](#)

[Pedersen Lagoon](#)

Weather Forecasts

[Seward Summary](#)
[Marine Forecast](#)
[Surface Map](#)

[Graphical Forecast](#)
[4-8 Day Forecast](#)