

Eastern Cape Forecasting Desk

Port Elizabeth Weather Office

South African Weather Service:

Tel: 041 5810 403 / 5811 476

3 September 2026

SEASONAL OUTLOOK FOR THE EASTERN CAPE: September 2026 to January 2027

Overview

The El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO), which is currently in an El Niño state, has strengthened and current predictions indicate that it will continue strengthening towards a very strong El Niño state within the next couple of months and last at least until the end of the 2026/27 summer season. The typical signs that El Niño will affect South Africa are starting to materialise over the Pacific Ocean and it is expected that South Africa will experience the typical impacts of dryer and warmer conditions during this coming summer.

Predictions indicate that during spring favourable rainfall conditions over the eastern coastal areas as well as the eastern interior could still be expected. However, moving towards early summer, significant areas are expected to receive below-normal rainfall, especially the central interior and the far north-east. Even though there are indications that the eastern parts of South Africa can expect above-normal rainfall during early summer, caution is advised for the potential change in the forecast due to the developing El Niño.

Minimum and maximum temperatures are largely expected to be above-normal for most parts of South Africa during the spring and early summer seasons.

The SAWS will continue to monitor the weather and climate conditions and provide updates on any future assessments that may provide more clarity on the current expectations for the coming season.

LOCAL Overview

The prediction indicates above-normal rainfall over the eastern and coastal parts of the Eastern Cape during spring (September to November). Moving into early summer, however, below-normal rainfall is expected over the central interior of the country, including parts of the Eastern Cape, as a strong El Niño is anticipated to develop. Users are therefore advised to watch the later part of the forecast period closely as El Niño frequently goes hand in hand with drought.

Eastern Cape Dam Levels (Latest weekly data — 31 August 2026)

Dam	River	This Week %	Last Week %	Last Year %
Belfort Dam	Mafube River	86.5	86.5	100.0
Bridle Drift Dam	Buffalo River	94.3	94.8	97.0
Darlington Dam	Sondags River	46.5	48.0	40.6

Climate information: Seasonal prediction

Dam	River	This Week %	Last Week %	Last Year %
Elands Drift Dam	Great Fish River	54.9	95.5	66.1
Groendal Dam	Swartkops River	100.6	100.7	92.8
Impofu Dam	Krom River	99.9	100.4	49.4
Katrivier Dam	Kat River	100.3	100.3	100.0
Kommandodrift Dam	Tarka River	99.1	99.7	83.5
Kouga Dam	Kouga River	100.3	100.4	74.1
Kromrivier Dam	Krom River	100.5	100.5	74.3
Loerie Dam	Loeriespruit River	73.9	75.2	82.3
Lubisi Dam	Indwe River	66.2	66.5	43.3
Nahoon Dam	Nahoon River	88.3	89.3	92.0
Ncora Dam	Tsomo River	95.7	96.0	98.6
Mthatha Dam	(often listed as Umtata Dam)	97.2	97.6	99.3
Waterdown Dam	Klipplaat River	100.1	100.3	100.3
Wriggleswade Dam	Kubisi River	100.0	100.2	100.1
Xonxa Dam	White Kei River	99.9	100.0	98.3

* Gariep dam is at 99.9%

Winterberg and surrounding areas

There is little to no skill in the forecast from Sep to Oct, the anticipated strong El Niño may bring below-normal rainfall during early summer.

Gamtoos / Kouga Region / Nelson Mandela Bay Metro

There is little to no skill in the forecast from Sep to Oct, the anticipated strong El Niño may bring below-normal rainfall during early summer.

Gariep Dam (Nooitgedacht System)

There is little to no skill in the forecast from Sep to Oct, the anticipated strong El Niño may bring below-normal rainfall during early summer.

Klein Karoo (Small Karoo- Steytlerville/Jansenville and surrounds)

There is little to no skill in the forecast from Sep to Oct, the anticipated strong El Niño may bring below-normal rainfall during early summer.

WATER AND ENERGY

The favourable rainfall conditions forecast over the eastern coastal areas and the eastern interior during the September-October-November season are likely to boost surface runoff into dams and reservoirs, possibly improving water storage capacity and availability for household, industrial, and agricultural use. However, intense rainfall may overwhelm stormwater and sewage systems,

Climate information: Seasonal prediction

resulting in flash floods and flooding in areas prone to floods, including low-lying bridges. In addition, the anticipated below-normal rainfall conditions during early summer, coupled with the expected above-normal temperatures, are likely to increase water loss, adding pressure on water-scarce regions over the central interior and the far north-east parts of the country. Furthermore, the expected countrywide above-normal minimum and maximum temperatures are likely to increase demand for space cooling during the forecast period. Decision-makers should note these possible outcomes and communicate with affected businesses and communities.

Health Sector

The forecast of generally drier and warmer conditions during the 2026/27 summer season is likely to place additional pressure on water availability, hygiene and sanitation, particularly over the central interior and far north-east, where below-normal rainfall is expected during early summer. The anticipated El Niño conditions may further intensify water scarcity and related sanitation challenges.

Above-normal minimum and maximum temperatures across most of South Africa during spring and early summer are likely to increase the risk of heat stress, dehydration and other heat-related illnesses. Children, older persons, outdoor workers and people with existing health conditions may be particularly vulnerable to prolonged exposure to high temperatures.

Favourable rainfall predicted over the eastern coastal areas and eastern interior during spring, together with the possibility of above-normal rainfall over eastern South Africa during early summer, may result in localised rainfall-related health risks. Where heavy rainfall or flooding occurs, poor drainage and overstretched sanitation infrastructure may increase the risk of water contamination, waterborne diseases, vector-borne diseases and flood-related injuries.

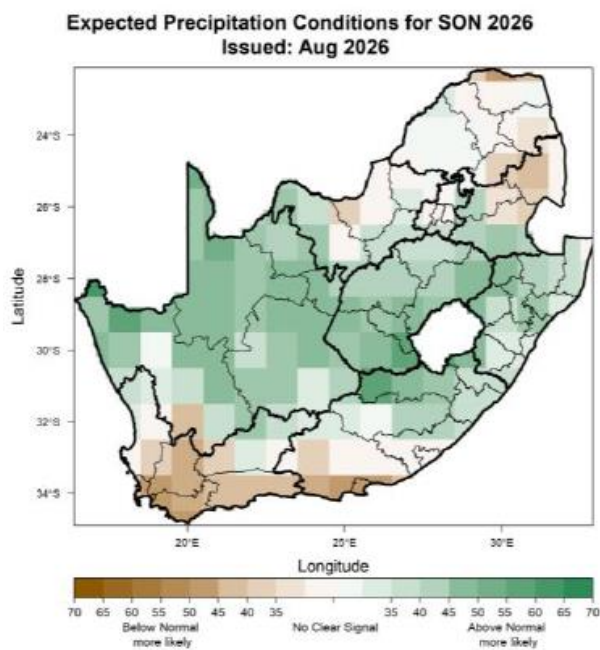
However, the rainfall outlook may change as El Niño continues to develop. Health authorities are encouraged to monitor rainfall and temperature conditions closely, strengthen preparedness for heat, drought and localised flooding, and communicate regularly with affected communities. Public guidance should emphasise adequate hydration, heat and sun protection, responsible water use, safe water and sanitation practices, and adherence to updated official weather and health advisories. Continued monitoring and localised communication will be essential for translating seasonal forecasts into timely public health action.

Agriculture Sector

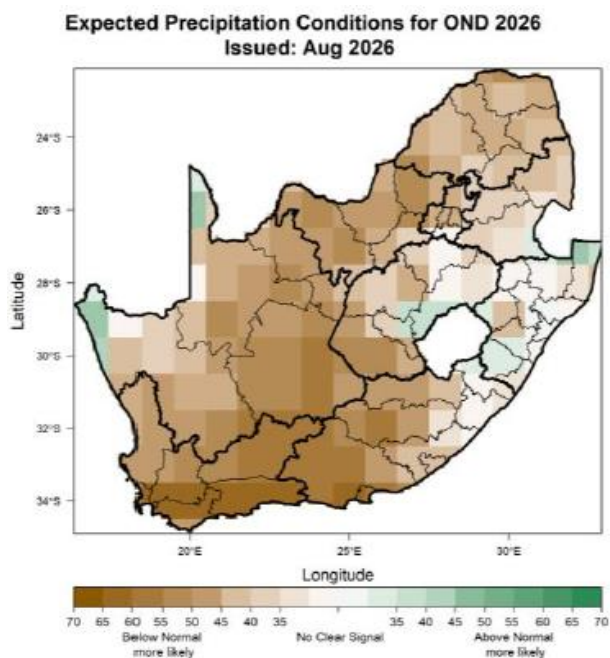
The forecasts indicate that above-normal rainfall is expected over the eastern coastal areas and the eastern interior regions during spring, as well as the eastern parts during early summer. These above-normal rainfall forecasts will likely have a positive impact on crop and livestock production. However, the onset of the summer season is indicating most parts of the summer rainfall regions experiencing below-normal rainfall due to the anticipated strong El Niño in the early summer. Below-normal rainfall is predicted over the central interior (parts of North West, Free State, Eastern Cape, and Northern Cape) and north-east areas of the country (Limpopo and parts of KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga) during early summer season. Therefore, the relevant decision-makers are encouraged to advise farmers in these regions to practice soil and water conservation, proper water harvesting and storage, and other appropriate farming practices.

Eastern Cape Rainfall outlook

RAINFALL FORECAST MAPS



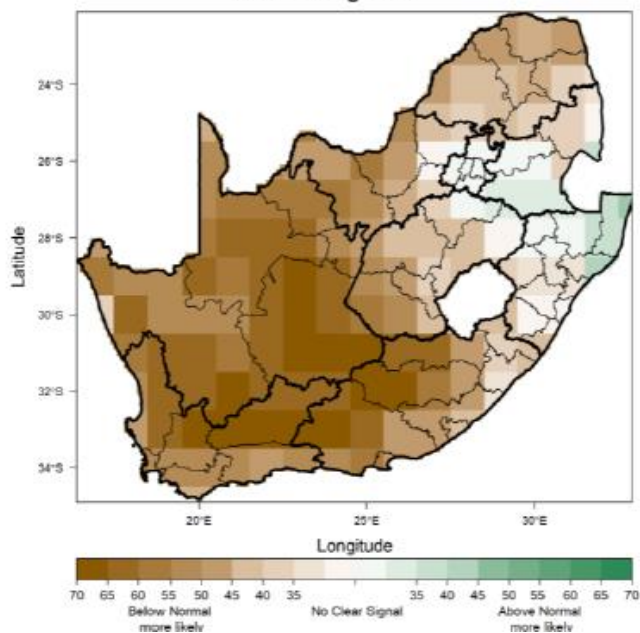
September–October–November 2026: Little to no skill in the forecast, and would not trust this.



October–November–December 2026: Little to no skill in the forecast, and would not trust this.

Climate information: Seasonal prediction

Expected Precipitation Conditions for NDJ 2026
Issued: Aug 2026

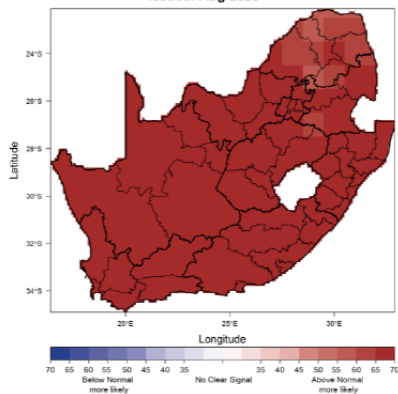


November 2026–January 2027: High likelihood of below-normal precipitation.

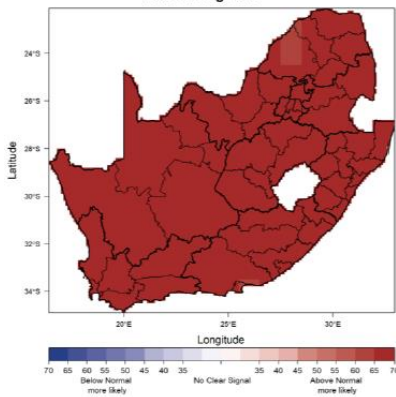
Day & Night Temperatures

Day time temperatures

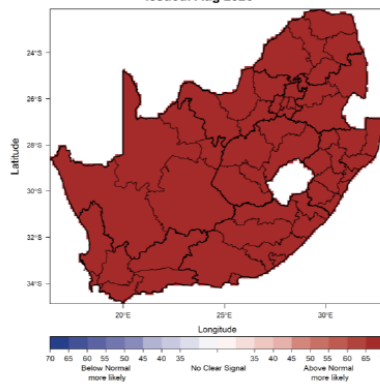
Expected Max Temp Conditions for SON 2026
Issued: Aug 2026



Expected Max Temp Conditions for OND 2026
Issued: Aug 2026

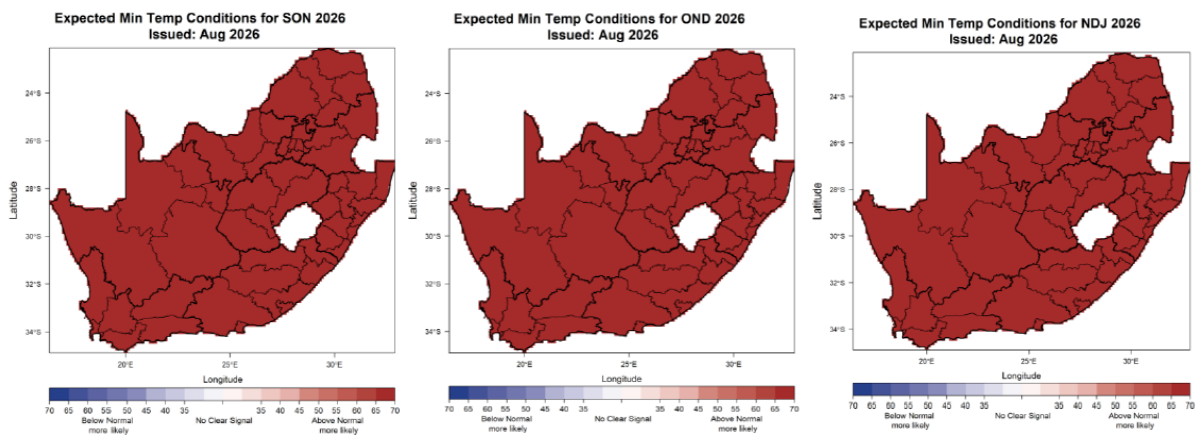


Expected Min Temp Conditions for SON 2026
Issued: Aug 2026



Climate information: Seasonal prediction

Overnight Temperatures



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