

May/June 2016



# Environmental Update



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And the rest of the  
Southeast District:

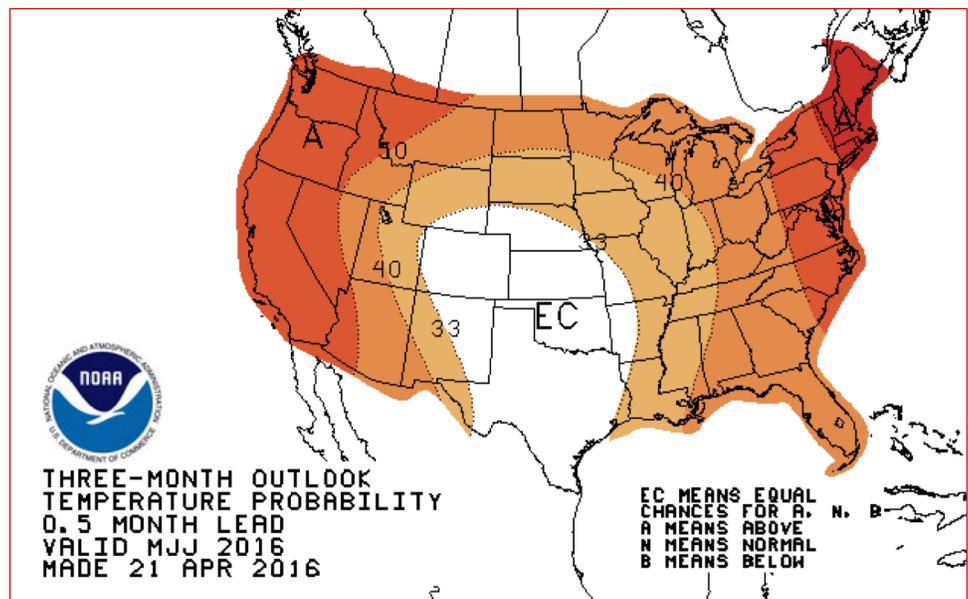
<http://southeast.ces.ncsu.edu/>

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First a wet winter, next a hot summer ...

Wet conditions for much of December, January, and February were followed by a warm and dry March. To continue the weather rollercoaster, we then had significant freezes in early April. The prediction for May, June, and July has an increased probability of warmer than average temperatures for eastern NC, as shown in the graph below.



Source:

[http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/predictions/long\\_range/seasonal.php?lead=1](http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/predictions/long_range/seasonal.php?lead=1)

According to the NC State Climate Office [blog](#), a dry month or two in the spring may come before an emerging drought by the summer. The memorable [2007-08 drought](#) followed a waning wintertime El Niño event and a warm, dry March. Déjà vu anyone? Let's hope not!



This mature turtle was a recent visitor to our office pond. After searching several references, we think she is an **Eastern River Cooter**. Her shell was roughly 12" in length.

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## Spring leads to...pond calls!

The warming weather has led to several pond calls. Here are some of the weeds seen so far this year:

**Pithophora.** This is a mat-forming filamentous algae. If you grab a handful and squeeze out the excess water, the algae feels like green steel wool. On sunny days, air bubbles can be trapped in the mats. At night, large blooms of the algae can remove the oxygen from a pond.

**Proliferating spikerush.** This submersed aquatic plant is often described by pond owners as “like green fishing line”. A “wad of weed”, like in the photo below, can make identification difficult. Fortunately, some key characteristics can still be observed.



**Duckweed.** Duckweed is a very small (1/8” long) green floating plant with pale green oval leaves. When picked up, one or two roughly inch-long fine roots may be observed.

**Alligatorweed.** It’s blooming already, which greatly helps property owners with the identification. The plant has a hollow stem, opposite leaves, and a white clover-like flower. It propagates by fragmentation, so **don’t** take a weedwhacker to it!!



For any aquatic plant, control information cannot be given without proper identification. Send good, clear photos to [diana\\_rashash@ncsu.edu](mailto:diana_rashash@ncsu.edu). Appointments for a pond visit can also be made, schedule permitting.

### Don’t forget ...

Help save paper, postage, and your tax dollars! This newsletter and the annual reader survey are available online at:

<https://onslow.ces.ncsu.edu/environmental-update-newsletter/>