

# Hatchery rainfall makes 2018 a record year

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WALHALLA — Last year was a record-breaking year for rainfall in the state of South Carolina, according to preliminary data from the Walhalla State Fish Hatchery.

South Carolina State Climatology Office data shows a 39-year state record was broken as the hatchery recorded 123.45 inches of rain in 2018. The Jocassee

8 WNW National Weather Service Cooperative Weather Station at the hatchery is where the preliminary record is being reported.

South Carolina rainfall records are based on the highest rainfall reported in the state.

Should preliminary results be verified, the Walhalla State Fish Hatchery record would surpass the previous record of 119.16 inches set at Hogback Mountain near Landrum in 1979.

“The Upstate did have above-normal rainfall for the year, and that was not just from one specific event, but an overall pattern of above-normal rainfall that year,” South Carolina State Climatology Office assistant climatologist Melissa Griffin said. “We did have a bunch of stations with above-normal rainfall for the Upstate. It’s not abnormal when you compare it to other stations, because it was just a wet year in the Upstate.”

Griffin provided data showing that rainfall totals were above the mean in nine of 12 months in 2018, with December totaling 17.25 inches, more than double the mean of 8.14.

March, June and September were the only months below the mean average.

Rainfall was also “excessive” in July, August and November, according to state climatologist Hope

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## RAINFALL: Record verification delayed

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Mizzell. She said in a South Carolina Department of Natural Resources news release that U.S. Geological Service automated rain gauges used at Slicking Mountain and Caesars Head provided data and were “relatively close in proximity and in value, which supports that the 123.45 inches is a valid measurement.”

From 1990 to 2018, the average rainfall per year was 85.76 inches at the Walhalla State Fish Hatchery.

Scott Stephens, a meteorologist for the National Centers for Environmental Information in Asheville, N.C., said the government shutdown will make the record verification process slightly longer.

“We’re still digging out from the shutdown, and we’re still about a month away from that being verified,” Stephens said. “It has to go through the State Climate Extremes

Committee, which is here, Hope Mizzell, the officiating National Weather Service office, which would be in Greer, as well as the Southeast Regional Climate Center. Once those members vote on it and accept it, then it would officially be a new record. It’s just got to go through instrumentation checks and et cetera, and that just takes some time.”

Griffin also said the process could be a long one, but it will be worth it from a historical perspective.

“This is not a quick process because you go through the data for quality control to make sure the data is accurate, but it is a really interesting process from the climatological perspective,” she said. “To go back and look at the history of the station and the state to make that verification that this would be the new rainfall record is interesting.”



FILE  
The Walhalla State Fish Hatchery recorded 123.45 inches of rain in 2018.