

Nevada weather

By Jeff Underwood

- 1.** There are locations in Nevada where two points separated by very little distance receive vastly different amounts of precipitation. For example Mt. Rose and Reno in northern Nevada are separated by less than 20 miles. Mt. Rose however receives more than 25 inches of precipitation (rainfall equivalent) per year compared to Reno at less than seven inches.
- 2.** Nevada is a great place to observe dust devils — tightly swirling winds created by extreme surface heating. During the summer months across Nevada, soil temperatures can rise well above 120 degrees Fahrenheit while the air above the soil is cooler (90-100F). This difference in temperature can spawn a dust devil that can produce wind speeds of more than 60 mph.
- 3.** Many places in Nevada experience daily temperature ranges that are nearly unbelievable to observers in other regions of the country. For example, a normal July day in Washington, D.C., features a high temperature at 89F with a low of 71F, a daily range of 18F. Compare this to Elko, where a normal July day will see a high temperature of 91F and a low of 48F, a range of 43F.
- 4.** Northern Nevada is the best location in North America to observe stationary lenticularis clouds (inset). These lens-shaped clouds form on the downwind side of the Sierra Nevada. Often lenticular clouds form in rows with a single, large lens-shaped cloud followed by many smaller stationary clouds. Since this formation of gleaming, saucer-like clouds lingers in the same location for long periods, many UFO and flying saucer reports have in fact turned out to be stationary lenticularis clouds.
- 5.** Nevada is the driest state in the nation. When averaging precipitation totals from all of the reporting stations across the state, Nevada's statewide average is around seven inches per year.
- 6.** According to the U.S. Historical Climatology Network, Nevada has the fewest weather observation stations of any state. Nevada does, however, have three National Weather Service forecast offices (Reno, Elko and Las Vegas) and is one of 36 states to have an Association of American State Climatologist-recognized state climate office.
- 7.** Although it is the driest state in the country, many parts of Nevada are prone to flooding. The Truckee, Carson and Humboldt rivers flood during heavy winter season rainfall or rain-on-snow episodes. Washes, roadways and streets in the southern portion of the state are at risk for flash flooding during summer thunderstorms.
- 8.** During the heatwave of 2005, on July 19, the city of Las Vegas set two temperature records. The first was a new record high temperature of 117F. The second was a record for the highest nighttime low temperature, 96F. It was so hot that afternoon many aircraft at McCarran International Airport could not depart because the extremely hot air was not dense enough to allow for liftoff.
- 9.** During a period from March 1928 through January 1929, the town of Mina went 312 consecutive days without recording a drop of rainfall.
- 10.** Drought and wildfire are the most costly weather-related hazards facing the state. In 1994 wildfire and drought cost the state in excess of \$1 billion.

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