

# The Catch

## COCORAHS -- LATE OCTOBER UPDATE

FORT COLLINS, CO —Tuesday, October 25, 2011

Dear rain gauge caregivers:

A few CoCoRaHS updates as we get close to the end of October.

### **First, a couple of "Thank you's" are in order**

A fine group of Alabama CoCoRaHS volunteers showed up in Birmingham on Saturday October 15th, many wearing their CoCoRaHS t-shirts and CoCoRaHS good spirits. We participated together in the first-ever Alabama WeatherFest. It was great fun, perfect weather, many activities and we got to tally the scores of hundreds of kids and dozens of adults who played our "squeeze out the cloud (sponge)" CoCoRaHS rain gauge competition at the McWane Science Center. It was so good to get to meet some of you there and I was amazed that some of you drove more than 2 hours to get there. Many thanks! It was also great to meet a number of CoCoRaHS volunteers and volunteer leaders at the annual meeting of the National Weather Association that ran from October 16–20. I wasn't able to stay the whole week but it was a rich conference with remarkable presentations on the severe weather of this past year.

Speaking of rain gauge games, Super Science Saturday will be held this Saturday (October 29th) from 10 AM to 4 PM at the National Center for Atmospheric Science Mesa Lab. So if you happen to be in Colorado this weekend, head to Boulder and follow Table Mesa Drive as far west as it goes and it will take you to NCAR. Noah, from our staff, will be there with a different rain gauge game -- that involves squirt guns. It will be a hit, for sure. If you would like to volunteer to help with the CoCoRaHS game and exhibit for an hour or two, please RSVP to Noah Newman <nnewman@atmos.colostate.edu>

Next, a big thank you to our volunteers in extreme southern Florida. In a five day period, Oct 15–20, our 7 observers on the Florida Keys got

more rain gauge practice than they had all summer. Total rainfall for the week ranged from around 14" at Key West to a whopping 21.78" on Big Coppitt Key.

Since then, there has been a lull in storm activity across the country. The CoCoRaHS "Rain Days Report"

<http://www.cocorahs.org/ViewData/RainyDaysReport.aspx> makes it easy to quickly check how many stations reported, how many had rain and snow, and what the average and maximum precipitation amount was across the country. Today the average nationwide precipitation total was just 0.02" compared to 0.30" on October 20th. Anything over 0.20" is a fairly wet day and less than 0.04" is a fairly dry day -- when combining data from every CoCoRaHS volunteer nationally.

The heaviest rain reported anywhere in the U.S. this morning, based on CoCoRaHS rain gauge reports, was only 0.74". That occurred on the big island of Hawaii. The next wettest areas were extreme northern Wyoming and southern Montana, but most daily totals were less than a half inch -- a far cry from the heavy rains that fell somewhere in the U.S. most every day since last spring. It has been many months since the last time the largest daily precipitation report for a given date was less than 1". But the lull is soon ending. In fact, as I look at the window, the lull has ended.

Here in Colorado, the clouds are lowering, the temperature is dropping, and a light rain has begun to fall. I just went to [www.weather.gov](http://www.weather.gov) to check the latest forecast and forecast discussion. Alas, the National Weather Service is calling for 8 - 16" of snow by this time tomorrow evening our area and even more in some other areas not far from here. Wait a minute -- did I really say that? That's a lot of snow for October. We only got 24" the entire winter last year. (New York City and parts of New Jersey got that much in less than 24 hours just after Christmas 2010.)

So all of you Colorado and southern Wyoming volunteers -- remove your funnels and inner cylinders, review your snow measurement instructions, and prepare for action. Many other areas east of the Rockies may be seeing rain in the next few days. We'll be looking forward to your reports.

## **2011 Water Year Summary -- last call**

The 2011 Water Year Summaries and our new Water Year graphs are a big hit. Click to view water year (October 1, 2010 - September 30, 2011)

summary reports for any CoCoRaHS station in the country.

<http://www.cocorahs.org/WaterYearSummary/> To see your own station's summary, just click "My Account" and you'll get a notification with links to all the reports and graphs for your station for both water year 2010 and 2011.

This is the last call for reviewing your data and making sure that all entries are complete and correct. Julian will rerun all station data on October 31, and we'll then post the final results. After the final summaries are processed, we will compile results. We'll post a special summary highlighting the wettest and the driest and most average parts of the country and find out how many volunteers reported every single day. By the way, some of you helped us find a little glitch on our new graphs. The monthly precipitation graph was only displaying precipitation totals from daily reports and was not including multiday reports. That should now be corrected when we rerun the program.

### **An Aggressive Goose**

Attrition (fox, dogs, etc.) has gradually culled our flock of domestic geese to three. But they seem to be a tough lot, and none too pleasant to be around. They typically mellow out in fall before getting really nasty late winter and spring. Almost every time I go out to feed our chickens (that will be interesting tomorrow if we get a foot of snow), the big male manages to circle behind me when I'm not paying attention and strikes a mighty blow to my backside. He even did a face-to-face attack leaping over the water bucket and nailed me in the chest. I can usually get a good neck grip before the beak bites down. I keep asking my wife, "Now why is it we have these geese?" Her answer -- not satisfactory -- "They're pretty".

### **Conclusion**

Thanks for being a part of CoCoRaHS, and welcome to all you newcomers who have signed up during the past few weeks. Have a great autumn.

Sincerely

*Nolan Doesken*  
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