

# Mississippi River flooding in May

The fourth highest river stage on record occurred at Cape Girardeau. Widespread flooding of farmland occurred. Rural areas not protected by levees or floodwalls were inundated. Flash flooding preceding the river flooding took one life near Marble Hill, Missouri.



**ILLINOIS, South**

**ILZ087-090>094**

**Gallatin - Pope - Hardin - Alexander - Pulaski - Massac**

01	0001CST	0	0	762K	Flood
31	2359CST				

The Ohio River was above flood stage for virtually the entire month from Grand Chain to the confluence of the Mississippi River at Cairo. Major flooding occurred from Grand Chain to Cairo, where flooding was the worst since the Flood of 1997. The severity of the flooding in this area was due partly to very high levels on the Mississippi River, which caused water to back into the already swollen Ohio River. The crest at Cairo was 55.0 feet, which is the 7th highest on record. The community of Urbandale, just upriver from Cairo, was almost completely flooded. Despite levy protection there, flooding occurred either due to the failure of pumps or the failure of a gate in the levy. Most of the residents evacuated their homes, and about 25 homes were flooded. Many of those that were affected had been flooded in recent years and were generally low dollar-value buildings. Flooding of farmland was extensive, and farmers were forced to delay the planting of crops. Corn is normally planted by mid May. In the Cairo area, property not protected by levees was inundated. Upriver from Grand Chain, including Metropolis and Shawneetown, the flooding was generally moderate. The crest at Shawneetown was 45.4 feet, well above the 33-foot flood stage. Brookport crested about 10 feet above flood stage, and Golconda crested about 5 feet over flood stage. The main consequence was numerous flooded secondary roads, especially in Gallatin County. There was extensive flooding of farmland and parks near the river, and at least one mobile home was evacuated.

**ILZ081-084**

**Franklin - Jackson**

01	0001CST	0	0	18K	Flood
31	2359CST				

Moderate flooding of the Big Muddy River occurred. The river was above flood stage at Murphysboro for the entire month. A crest of 33.5 feet occurred on May 18, which was almost 18 feet above flood stage. Parks, woodlands, and fields in the Murphysboro area were flooded. Some access roads were inundated. Few structures were flooded, partly due to extensive buyout programs that have reduced the population in the flood plain. At Plumfield, the river crested at 27.2 feet on May 17, well above the 20-foot flood stage there. A secondary road near the river was heavily damaged. Little other damage was noted in Franklin County.

**ILZ078-083**

**Wabash - White**

01	0001CST	0	0	158K	Flood
30	1800CST				

The Wabash River was above flood stage for nearly the entire month at both Mt. Carmel and New Harmony. Major flooding occurred at Mount Carmel, where the river crested at 32.4 feet on May 17. Flood stage there is 19 feet. Most roads along the river or near the river were impassible. Close to 6,000 acres of farmland were flooded when a major agricultural levy, the Calvin Bottoms Levy, was breached. Since most crops had not been planted due to excessive rainfall in April, crop losses were negligible. Major planting delays were caused by the prolonged moist spell. The Wabash River was more than 3 miles wide at I-64. Mobile homes were moved, and installation of flood gates was necessary. Few homes were flooded, but water reached the floors of several trailers. High water backed up into Bon Pas Creek.

**ILZ084-088-092**

**Jackson - Union - Alexander**

08	1700CST	0	0	1.5M	Flood
31	1900CST				

Major flooding of the Mississippi River occurred. The river rose above flood stage at Thebes on May 8, then reached its crest of 44.3 feet on May 18. Flood stage at Thebes is 33 feet. This resulted in extensive flooding of farmland and threats to some developments. Backwater from the Mississippi threatened dozens of homes in the Horseshoe Lake area, including the Miller City and Olive Branch communities. These communities are between Cairo and East Cape Girardeau. As was the case in the floods of 1993 and 1995, emergency measures were taken to reinforce and build up levees around Olive Branch and Miller City. The levees held up, but structures not protected by levees were flooded. About 30 families evacuated due to flooding of their residences, mainly in the Miller City and McClure areas. At Thebes, the town's riverfront park was flooded, and a house and a church were flooded. Elsewhere, from Jackson County to Cairo, secondary roads near the river were closed, and parks and farmland were underwater.

**KENTUCKY, Southwest**

**KYZ004>005-007-010-014- Ballard - Mcracken - Livingston - Crittenden - Union - Henderson - Daviess  
018>019**

**01 0001CST 0 0 10K Flood**  
**29 0900CST**

Minor to moderate flooding of the Ohio River occurred. At Uniontown, the river was above flood stage nearly all month. Downriver at Smithland and Paducah, the flooding occurred during the mid and latter part of the month. The dates of the highest river crests were: May 23 at Uniontown, May 19 at Paducah, and May 18 and 24 at Smithland. The highest crest levels were 43 to 45 feet at all three gage sites. Flood stages are as follows: 37 feet at Uniontown, 40 feet at Smithland, and 39 feet at Paducah. Flooding of agricultural areas was rather extensive, which delayed the planting of crops for many farmers. Corn is normally planted by mid May. At Paducah, portions of the riverfront city park were flooded. In rural areas without levy protection, a number of roads near the river were closed. A cross-river ferry based in Crittenden County ceased operations due to high water. Few structures were flooded. Those that were flooded were low dollar-value structures that normally flood every few years.

**Carlisle County  
Bardwell**

**02 0725CST 0 0 Hail(0.75)**

**KYZ001>004**

**Fulton - Hickman - Carlisle - Ballard**

**08 1400CST 0 0 Flood**  
**31 2359CST**

Major flooding of the Mississippi River occurred. The river rose above flood stage at New Madrid, Missouri on May 9 and crested about 9 feet above flood stage on May 20. A section of U.S. Highway 51 was flooded near Wickliffe. Farmland was flooded, delaying spring planting season. A ferry from Columbus, KY to Dorena, Missouri ceased operations due to the high water

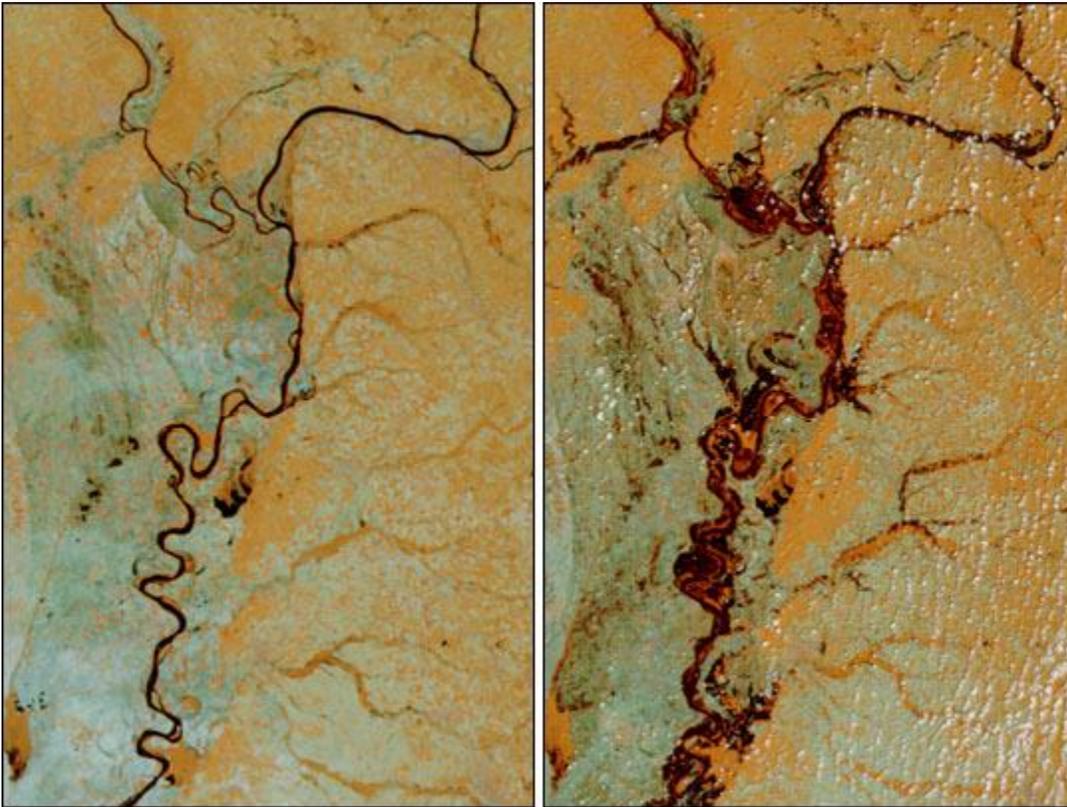
**MOZ076-087-111>112-114 Perry - Cape Girardeau - Scott - Mississippi - New Madrid**

**08 1600CST 0 0 195K Flood**  
**31 2359CST**

Major flooding of the Mississippi River occurred. The crest at Cape Girardeau, which was 45.7 feet, was the 4th highest on record and almost 14 feet above flood stage. The record crest of 48.5 feet occurred in August of 1993. At New Madrid, the crest was 42.6 feet, well above the flood stage of 34 feet. In areas with no levy protection, a small number of homes and other buildings were flooded. Only eight houses in Cape Girardeau were flooded, mainly in the Red Star neighborhood. Some other houses in the Scott County community of Commerce were flooded. Property damage was minimized by recent flood mitigation projects, such as buyouts to reduce the number of people living in flood plains. As was the case in 1993 and 1995, a makeshift levy was constructed on state highways near Dutchtown. This protected the community of Dutchtown from water backing up a diversion channel that goes to the Mississippi River. Diversion Channel flooding isolated the community of Allenville. Highways 25 and 74 were a couple of the major roads closed. Dozens of smaller roads near the river were closed from Perry County to New Madrid County. Extensive flooding of farmland occurred, with around 100,000 acres flooded. Spring planting season was delayed indefinitely.

# False color satellite imagery

Courtesy of the Moderate-resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer (MODIS), flying on-board NASA's Terra spacecraft



April 25, 2002

May 18, 2002

Greenish gray colors represents non forested, agricultural lands

Black or deep brown is water

Orange-tan shades are a mixture of forests and agricultural lands

Pinkish-white patches are clouds

*SOURCE: <http://epod.usra.edu/blog/2002/05/2002-mississippi-flooding.html>*