

UNUSUAL WARMTH

January 1998 will be most remembered by its extreme warm spell during the first third of the month and the lack of snowfall. Generally this was the warmest January since 1990 and the second warmest since 1950 while it was one of the "snow-less" Januarys on record.

The month began with an arctic air covering the area. This air mass moved out quickly and was replaced by a blocking ridge of high pressure which blocked all frontal movements through the area until the 9th. During this period temperatures averaged well above normal and on the 7th and 8th the minimum temperature failed to fall below 60 degrees at some stations, while northern New England and Eastern Canada had their worst ice storm in history. For the balance of the month the zonal upper air winds prevented any intrusions of arctic air or moist Gulf of Mexico air.

EXTREME REPORTED BY

ACON OBSERVERS

MAXIMUM TEMPERATURE

Bear 6 WSW DE	73
Jug Bay Wetlands	72

MINIMUM TEMPERATURE

Smithsburg	0
Parkton 5 SW	3

WARMEST AVG. TEMP.

Baltimore 2 SE	44.7
Indian Head	43.0

COLDEST AVG. TEMP.

Union Mills 2 SE	38.0
Owings Mills 2 SE	38.5

MAXIMUM PRECIPITATION

Whaleysville	9.75
Hollywood	8.08

MINIMUM PRECIPITATION

Rockville Mont College	4.75
Bear 6 WSW DE	4.88

MAXIMUM SNOW

Smithsburg	5.6
Manchester 1 SW	4.6

Stormy 2nd Half of the Month

Liquid precipitation averaged above to well above normal, while frozen precipitation was sparse. Central Maryland received the most precipitation and also the most snow.

Precipitation wise two-thirds of the rainfall fell during two events. The first one on the 23rd was caused when a low pressure area moved north, west of the Appalachians Mountains while it dragged its cold front eastwards. Rainfall totals of upwards of 3" were observed.

The most powerful storm of the month was a northeaster which hit the area on the 28th. It moved northeastward along the south-east coast on the 27th till it was off the VA/MD coast on the 28th before it moved out to sea. This storm was

much stronger than expected. Along with its 80+ MPH wind gusts and the Lunar high tide, it caused heavy damage to the DE/MD beaches and protective dunes, the worst since 1992. Flooding also occurred along the back bays and rivers emptying into them.

Snowfall was almost non-existent this month. Eastern portions received very little snow while Washington and Carroll Counties in MD received the most due to elevation. Higher elevations west of Baltimore and Washington reported that some of the precipitation events began as freezing rain. The worst freezing rain event was in Carroll County on the 28th at elevations above over 800 feet where glaze of 1/2" thick with icicles of 3" long were observed.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
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OBSERVER COMMENTS FOR JANUARY 1998

Dan Hanson of Baltimore 4 SW and Millersville 1 SE

January 1998 started on a cold and breezy note with the coldest temperatures of the season. However, the cold snap was limited to one day only as highs reached the upper 50's on the 2nd. The warm conditions intensified and continued for NE straight week with highs well into the 60's and lows in the 40s and 50s. Dew points rose to near 60 by the 6th giving an almost summer time fee. Although 7 days saw snowfall, or sleet, than a 1/4" fell.

Al Kreinik of Parkton 5 SW

1st- Record low temp of 3, old 4 in 1955
4th- Record max temp of 70 set for January.

Marty Sharrow of Owings Mills

An incredibly mild spell during the early part of the month typified this "El Nino" January.

Herb Close of Manchester 1 SW

6th - 66 deg tied Jan max temp.
8th - 60 deg New Jan max min temp.
28th - Second worst ice storm in 9 years of living here. 38" - 1/2" glaze with 2"-3" icicles

Ralph Hartsock of Westminster 4 SSE

10th - Cut grass - 6 to 8" high

Bobby Miller of Millers 4 ENE

2nd warmest January and wettest on record (1983-1998).

1st - 7 set a new daily minimum temp. record.
6th - 67 set new January max. temp. record
7th & 8th - 59 new Jan max min temp. record
7th & 8th - Heavy fog

28th - Moderate freezing rain at time, mostly during the daylight hours. Glaze 1/4 to 1/2" thick mostly on trees, some on grass.

Marty Brumback of Indian Head

Snow-less January. Temps and precipitation averaged well above normal. Fog was observed on 9 separate occasions.

Rob Cohen of Potomac 4 N

Warmest January on record. Old record was 40.3 set in 1990.

Paul Schlosser of Kingsville 1 S

Absurdly mild. Warmest Jan ever, (my records)

Stan Rossen of Glenmont 1 NNE

Kevin Shaw of Gaithersburg 2 WNW

Gary Gallaher of Bear 6 WSW

Warmest January on record (1096-1986, 1991-date). Old record 36.9 set in 1975.

8th - New daily record, and also tied January maximum temperature.

23rd- 2.33" set new January daily precip record

Bill Hudelson of South Bowie

23rd - Heavy morning rain 2.08"

28th - Heavy night and daytime rain 3.08"

Floyd Abell of Hollywood

Station record precipitation of 8.08" set. Believed to be the wettest January in this area since 1937.

Greg Keefer of Hagerstown 1 E

8th - Record High for today. It was 66 at midnight and that had already broken the record for today which was 64 in 1907. The temp went up to 67 around 5 am. Strong winds and heavy downpours this morning 5-7am. Winds gusts from the SSE to 31 mph. Periods of rain throughout the day .87". High of 68 this afternoon. Ominous sky 3:30-4pm.

9th - 6th day in a row with 60 degree temps. Thunderstorms 3-3:30am with some rather intense lightning, and 8:30-9:30am with pea size hail.

29th - Black ice from left over moisture that froze and fog caused very dangerous driving conditions this morning. Became much warmer with a high of 56 today.

Jan was the 3rd wettest on record and the 5th warmest. The warmest is 42.9 set in 1932.

Jim Vaughn of Smithsburg

8th - 58 deg min tied Jan max min set 1/15/95

9th - Two thunderstorms

28th - Northeaster with rain, sleet, and small stream flooding.

Kenny Boggs of Whaleyville

28th - Strong Northeaster, heavy rain, very windy all day. Some wind damage and some roads closed.

Gary Gallaher

MD/DE ACON Data Collector and Report Writer