

HEAVY WET SNOW / WINDS


 Atlantic Coast Observers Network
 MARYLAND / DELAWARE CHAPTER


A sharp cold front moved through the area during the afternoon and evening of the 3rd. It brought with it thunderstorms. Hail was reported by ACON observer **Jim Vaughn of Smithsburg 3NE**. Temperatures before the frontal passage was generally in the 60's but a few low 70's around and SE of Washington DC. By mid morning of the 4th upwards of a half a foot of snow had fallen. Carroll County received the heaviest amounts. **Herb Close of Manchester 1S**, who lost power for 19 hours, reported 6.5", **Bobby Miller of Millers 4NE**, who lost power for 14 hours, reported 6.3". The strong winds created blizzard like conditions and near zero visibility in Carroll and Washington counties.

Five days on the 9th the heaviest March snow in years came by surprise. The heaviest snow fell from band from Western Maryland where **Rebecca Harvey of Eagle Rock reported 14"** east southeast through Virginia to Washington DC where **Brian Papa reported 9.5"** and National Airport in VA reported 8.7". This daily amount at DCA not only was greater than the "Storm of the Century in Mach 1993, but was the greatest daily March snowfall since the NWS moved to National Airport. Amounts decreased as the storm moved eastward. **Kenny Boggs of Whalesville**, approximate 12 miles west of Ocean City, reported 3.8" which was his heaviest snowfall in three years.

Five days later on the 14th & 15th, the last of the series of wet snowstorms hit the area. This time the heaviest snow fell further north and west. **Rebecca Harvey of Eagle Rock** reported another 14" bringing the months total to date to 55", **Jim Vaughn of Smithsburg 3NE** reported 13.5", **Greg Keefer of Hagerstown 1E** measured 12.4", and **Jack Thomas at Middle Mountain** near Thurmont reported 11.5".

The wettest storm system of the month moved through the area on the 21st. Over 1" of rain fell at many locations east of the mountains to the Atlantic Ocean. Thunderstorms was observed by many observers.

Overall precipitation was slightly above normal this month, while snowfall was much above normal. Precipitation for the first three months of 1999 averaged above normal, welcome relief to the severe drought of the last half of 1998.

**EXTREMES REPORTED
 BY ACON OBSERVERS**
MAXIMUM TEMPERATURE

Ridge 79

4 ACON stations 78

MINIMUM TEMPERATURE

Eagle Rock -10

Smithsburg 3 NE 10

3 ACON stations 12

WARMEST AVG. TEMP.

duPont Circle DC NW 47.1

Ridge 45.6

Baltimore 2 SE 45.3

COLDEST AVG. TEMP.

Eagle Rock 32.4

Thurmont Middle Mt. 35.5

Smithsburg 3 NE 39.2

MAXIMUM PRECIPITATION

Eagle Rock 8.08

Jug Bay Wetlands 5.49

South Bowie 4.94

MINIMUM PRECIPITATION

Baltimore 2 SE 3.36

Westminster 4 SSE 3.43

Owing Mills 2 SE 3.46

MAXIMUM SNOWFALL

Eagle Rock 57.5

Thurmont Middle Mt 24.0

Smithsburg 3 NE 22.9

The other major thing that this March will be remembered by is wind. Stiff gusty winds blew almost constantly. **Gary Gallaher of Bear 2SW** reported daily peak gusts of 20 MPH or greater on all but two days.

Temperatures this month averaged below normal. The coldest temperatures occurred on the morning of the 8th. Many stations remained below freezing on the 9th as result of the heavy wet snowstorm. The warmest days of the month was the 17th and the 31st. Many stations saw temperature in the 70's on both days.

Robert Rickel moved and has closed his Union Mills 2 SE station. He has opened a new station, Hanover 2 S PA, approximate 8 miles north of his old stations. Check out his data.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
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OBSERVER COMMENTS FOR MARCH 1999

Al Kreinik of Parkton 5 SW

14th - Moderate to heavy snow during afternoon and evening. 30 minutes of snow pellets at 12:15PM

21st - Moderate to heavy rain during day. Lighter during evening. Thunder at 7:30PM.

Marty Sharrow of Owings Mills

14th - Heavy wet snow and colder. Thunderstorm 2000 Hours.

Extremely windy month. 25 dates having gusts greater than 20 MPH.

Herb Close of Manchester 1 SW

4th - Rain changed to snow 1-1:30 AM, becomes moderate to heavy. Near blizzard conditions during morning. Visibility near zero with strong winds of 15 - 40 MPH. Power out for 7 hours (3 AM - 10 PM)

Ralph Hartsock of Westminster 4 SSE

4th - Surprised heavy snow - Blizzard conditions
18th - Highest wind gust observed at this station of 54 MPH.

Bobby Miller of Millers 4 NE

Second snowiest March. 19.0" fell in March 1993.

14th - Power out 9:45PM - 11:40AM on the 15th as result of the heavy wet snow.

Ray Muller of Finksburg

Windy month. Several days over 40 MPH

Rebecca Harvey of Eagle Rock

Snow cover every day this month. Depth varied from 6" to 35" at observation.

Rich Giannola of JHU/APL

1st - Two brief SW- in afternoon with unusually warm temps: 43 deg at 2:30PM & 42 deg at 2:40 PM

Rich Giannola of Olney

4th - R changed to S early AM. S ended AM 3.25"

13th - Sundogs at 4:45PM

Rob Cohen of Potomac 4N

15.4" of snow. Snowiest March on record (21 years.)

Joe Terry of Forest Glen

3rd - Strong evening cold front was preceded by a thunderstorm (~1930) and followed by a 10 degree temperature drop (53 to 43 degrees). Temps continued to fall, allowing rain to change to accumulating snow before dawn on the 4th. From 70 degrees to measurable snow in less than 18 hours!

9th - Poorly forecast snow, largest of the season, created very slippery conditions by mid afternoon. especially on the completely snow covered side street.

Kevin Shaw of Gaithersburg 2 WNW

March was snowy and cool. A real reversal to recent patterns, especially for snow, was much appreciated by this snow lover. In fact, this March is the snowiest March I ever recorded, and the fifth snowiest month ever since records began in December 1978. Daily snowfall records were set on the 4th, 9th, 14th, & 15th.

Gary Gallaher of Bear 2 SW

Third straight month with above normal precipitation. This was the windiest month (average wind speed of 8.0 MPH) since records began 11/90. 14 days with wind gusts of 30 MPH or higher.

Bill Hudelson of South Bowie

A month of contrasts which is not unusual for March, surprising that each of the first three months of 1999 has each had a high temperature in the 70's. More surprising that we actually had a notable snow this month.

Floyd Abell of Hollywood

March was a windy month. 20 days with gusts of 20 MPH.

Marlene Walchli of California 3 NW

17th - A 42 degree temperature rise between 0600 & 1400. A real nice day.

Kenny Boggs of Whaleyville

9th - Most snow in 3 years.

Greg Keefer of Hagerstown 1 E

3rd - Windy warm day high of 67. Strong SSE winds gusting to 39 MPH. Rain and numerous thunderstorms between 4:30PM & 8:30PM some heavy downpours and vivid lightning.

4th - Snow and rain mixed midnight - 2 AM. Snow and strong winds began 3:30AM. Snow became heavy with blizzard like conditions ... at one point coming down at a rate of 3" per hour with 6.0" by 7 AM. Snow ended by 10 AM. Windy all day with WNW winds gusting to 40 MPH with blowing snow.

This month saw the second largest snowfall ever for March. The record is 25.2" in 1942.

Jim Vaughn of Smithsburg 3 NE

3rd - Large low in W.Va. 55 mph winds with 1/4" hail in thunderstorm.

Second greatest March snow behind 25.7" in 1993.

Brian Papa of duPont Circle D.C. NW

The first 15 days were 0.35 degrees warmer than the last half of February.