



ATLANTIC COAST OBSERVER NETWORK, MD / DE / DC CHAPTER WITH DATA FROM NEARBY AREAS

FIRST MONTH OF WINTER: A MONTH OF COLD AND MISSED SNOWFALL

The last month of the century was a cold month, the coldest since the record setting cold December of 1989. A persistent jet stream brought in dry, frequent reinforcements of cold Canadian air. This pattern closed the door to the Gulf of Mexico moisture for almost the entire month and limited the number of days where the minimum temperature failed to fall below freezing. The following ACON stations reported minimum temperatures of 32 or below every day :

Millersville 1 SE, Parkton 5 SW, Owings Mills 2 SE, Manchester 1 SW, Westminster 4 SSE, Eagle Rock, Laurel JHU/APL, Potomac 4 N, Glenmont 1 NNE, Gaithersburg 2 WNW, South Bowie, Hagerstown 1 E, Smithsburg 2 NE, and Hanover 1 S PA along with NWS stations at BWI and Dulles. The urban station of **Joe Manfre, Baltimore 2 SE**, reported the least number of days with freezing temperature of 24.

Almost all of the precipitation fell during the middle ten days of the month. The strongest storm occurred on the evening of the 16th and the morning of the 17th. Record warm air was pulled up ahead of the storm system which moved west of the mountains to north of Lake Erie. 60 degree plus temperatures covered the eastern portion. 66 degrees occurred at the **U of D Georgetown DE Research & Education Center**. Wilmington NWS set a daily record of 61 on the 17th. This storm also brought along with it thunder and heavy rains. **Jim Canavan of Wilmington 4 NNE** measured 2.88", and **Gary Gallaher of Bear 2 SW** measured 2.65" of which 2.43" fell on the 17th making it the second heaviest December daily amount since 1963. The heavy rains also caused urban and small stream flooding in Northern Delaware.

The other major storm began

as freezing rain west of the Chesapeake Bay. Freezing rain began to fall on the evening of the 13th and continued on the 14th. It changed to rain on the 14th from south to north. The heaviest glaze and damage was reported by **Rob Rickell of Hanover 1 S**. He reported that it brought down trees and power lines. Several thousand homes in York and Adams counties were without power for up to 2 days. Rainfall amounts of over an inch occurred along the Mason Dixon Line. **Rob Rickell of Hanover 2 S PA** reported the heaviest, 1.40".

Snowfall across the region was below normal. Major snowstorms occurred west, and south of the region. Heavy snows also fell in the Lake Erie and Lake Ontario snow-belts.

Snow fell at all **ACON** stations. An Alberta Clipper brought the regions first significant snowfall and the months heaviest on the 19th-20th. The heaviest amounts fell north and west of Washington D. C. The following stations reported 4" or more:

Manchester 1 SW, Westminster 4 SSE, Millers 4 NE, Gaithersburg 2 WNW, Hagerstown 1 E, Smithsburg 2 NE, and Hanover 1 S, PA.

Another Alberta Clipper, this on the 22nd, brought with it light snow and the coldest air of the month. Snowfall amounts ranged from a Trace to 1" at **Wilmington 4 NNE**. Temperatures on the 23rd generally fell to the single digits and the low 10's east of the mountains.

A major Northeaster was forecasted to form off the Outer Banks the night of the 29th and morning of the 30th. Forecasts called for upwards of 10" of snow. This storm formed further north than expected. The only portions of the area to receive snow (except for some wrap-around effect after the storm passed) was the extreme eastern portions of Delaware. **Jim Canavan** of

EXTREMES REPORTED BY

ACON OBSERVERS

MAXIMUM TEMPERATURE

Bear 2SW DE 65

Three Stations 63

MINIMUM TEMPERATURE

Eagle Rock -8

Parkton 5 SW & Hagerstown 1E 3

WARMEST AVG. TEMP.

Ridge 34.2

Baltimore 2 SE 33.4

COLDEST AVG. TEMP.

Eagle Rock 19.6

Hanover 2 S, PA 24.5

MAXIMUM PRECIPITATION

Wilmington 4 NNE 4.67

Parkton 5 SW 4.02

MINIMUM PRECIPITATION

Ridge 1.86

Baltimore 2 SE 2.22

MAXIMUM SNOWFALL

Eagle Rock 21.7

Smithsburg 2 NE 6.5

Wilmington 4 NNE measured 4.5".

Gary Gallaher of Bear 2 SW reported no snow and a sharp north-south cloud line with clouds covering 60% of the sky at 7 AM on the 30th when the snow was coming to an end in Wilmington.

With all of the cold temperatures no extreme cold was observed. The only sub zero temperatures observed were in Western Maryland's Garrett County. **Rebecca Harvey of Eagle Rock** coldest temperature of -8 was observed on the 26th. Christmas was one of the colder ones, but no where near the extreme cold of 1983. Snow-cover ranged from a few inches to none.

OBSERVER COMMENTS FOR DECEMBER 2000

Jim Canavan of Wilmington 4 NNE

17th - Morning thunderstorm.

30th - 4.5" of snow from coastal northeaster.

Gary Gallaher of Bear 2 SW, DE

Temperatures rose to 50 or higher on only three days. Minimum temperatures failed to fall to freezing or below on only one day, the first December since 1963 (station not in operation during the record cold Dec. 1989). Minimum temperature of 20.2 set a record for December, old record was 20.3 set in December 1963.

17th - Training showers and thunderstorms this morning produced the second heaviest daily December amount in station history.

Al Kreinik of Parkton 5 SW

Coldest December since 1989 when the average temperature was 22.6, 4.5 degrees colder than this year.

11th - Light AM fog, fine freezing drizzle with fog at obs time.

17th - Rain, heavy at times with thunder.

Marty Sharrow of Owings Mills

11th - Early morning black ice.

12th - A strong wind gust to 48 MPH brought wind damage to a new building that was under constructing. Many trees were uprooted.

17th - Thunder (0230, 0530, & 0730 hrs) flooding AM rain.

Joe Manfre of Baltimore 2SE

5th - Partly cloudy, windy, becoming colder in PM.

Herb Close of Manchester 1 SW

14th - Major ice storm. 1/4" glaze, many 2 - 5 1/2" icicle. Some limbs and trees down in area.

19th - First major snowfall, 4.5". Moderate snow during the afternoon and evening. Heavy snow ~ 4 - 4:45 PM. Blowing and drifting snow during the evening. Drifts up to 8" deep.

28th - Burst of heavy snow from 5:50 - 6:15 AM. 1/4" fell in 10 minutes.

Ralph Hartsock of Westminster 4 SSE

14th - Bad ice storm.

22nd - Light snow early, bitter cold PM

23rd - Clear, brutally cold.

30th - Clear, windy, cold.

Bobby Miller of Millers 4 NE

11th - Fog with heavy rime in the area.

12th - Strong FROPA mid morning. Gust from the west of 57 MPH set a new December record.

19th - Period of moderate - heavy snow 2 PM to 5 PM followed by late blowing / drifted through the 20th.

Rich Giannola of JHU/APL, Laurel

14th - Late afternoon ground fog began forming as skies cleared.

Rob Cohen of Potomac 4 N

10th - Light snow and sleet 12 - 3 PM.

13th - Sleet and freezing rain began at 8:30 PM

14th - Freezing rain ended 1/8" - 1/4" glaze.

17th - Thunder pre dawn.

Rich Giannola of Olney

7th - Snow flurries ~ 9 AM.

13th & 14th - IP/ZR began in evening of the 13th. All ZR by 10:30 PM. ZR continued overnight and into 14th AM.

Kevin Shaw of Gaithersburg 2 WNW

The lack of moisture helped to contribute to a rare occurrence: every day during December had a minimum of 32 or less. This has only happened four (4) times before - 2/87, 12/89, 2/93 & 1/94. Except for a brief couple of hours on the 17th when the temperature spiked up into the 50's to record the month's high temperature of 54, maximum temperatures never reached higher than 48 all month. Only a few scattered days were above normal. Snowfall was almost normal, a rare treat for Decembers of late. 4.0" of the 4.2" fell on the 19th.

Joe Terry of Forest Glen

17th - AM thunderstorms with intense lightning and heavy rain.

25th - Sunny and colder.

Bill Hudelson of South Bowie

14th - Freezing rain during predawn (1/8" coating) turning to rain, heavy at times.

15th - Heavy morning and evening frost.

17th - Thunderstorms 0145, 0200, 0500 & 0720 hours. Rain heavy during night. Tornado watch.

Greg Keefer of Hagerstown 1 E

December 2000 was the 5th Coldest on Record with an average of 26.8 F Normal is 34.3. The coldest December ever was in 1917 with an average of 22.0 and a more recent cold December in 1989 with an average of 23.0 which was the 2nd coldest December ever.

14th - Sleet and freezing changed to all freezing rain overnight and was heavy at times coating everything with a heavy ice buildup. Trees and wires hanging heavy and low with ice. Also power outages and broken trees. 0.5" of ice on the ground.

Jim Vaughn of Smithsburg 2 NE

16th - Thunderstorm

17th - Thunderstorm followed by snow

25th - 2" of snow on ground. First white Christmas since 1993.

Rob Rickell of Hanover 1 S

19th - Season's first measurable snow. The snow remained on the ground for the balance of the month.