



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

## MID MONTH HEAT DEADLY TORNADO HITS LAPLATA

**April 2002** will be remembered for the deadly F4 tornado which in a matter of minutes left its marks on portions of Charles, Calvert, and Dorchester counties in southern Maryland. Temperatures again averaged above normal, much to the thanks of an early season mid-month heat wave. Precipitation this month ranged from below normal in the northern regions to normal or above in the southern areas.

### DEADLY TORNADO

The region was under a tornado watch on the afternoon and evening of the 28th when a super cell severe thunderstorm, which produced a small tornado as it crossed I-81 in Virginia, unleashed a deadly tornado on southern Maryland around 5:30 PM. According to NWS reports it touched down between Risen and Marbury in Charles County and intensified into a F4 tornado as it moved east through La Plata. The tornado weakened and continued its eastward movement into Calvert County and over the Chesapeake Bay. Its path was about 400 yards wide and did over 100 million dollars worth of damage while killing five (5) people. The tornado crossed the Chesapeake Bay into Dorchester County and dissipated after traveling 68 miles.

### PRECIPITATION

Dry conditions continued this month across the northern portions of the region. Totals from New Castle County Delaware westward to Washington county Maryland failed to reach the three (3) inch mark while the central and southern regions precipitation totals were in the three to five (5) inch range.

Precipitation fell on 1/3rd of the days this month and was scattered fairly evenly throughout the month. Daily amounts were generally 1/3rd of an inch or less.

There was one day which the entire region saw at least 1 inch of rain,

that was the 28th, the day of the La Plata Tornado. All ACON observers except for **Greg Keefer of Hagerstown 1 E**, **Jim Vaughn of Smithsburg 2 NE**, and **Robert Rickell of Hanover 2 S PA** reported over an inch. **Rebecca Harvey of Eagle Rock** reported 2", the greatest amount.

A stationary thunderstorm dumped heavy flash flooding rains on Anne Arundel County late in the afternoon of the 18th. According to NWS radar upwards of 5 inches fell in spots. The heaviest amount reported by our ACON observers was 2.83" by **Dan Hanson of Millersville 1 SE**. **Jeff Stoudt of Laurel 2 E** reported 1.68" and NWS at BWI reported 1.23".

Hail was reported by the following observers: **Rob Cohen of Potomac 4 N** on the 2nd, **Rich Giannola of Olney 1 S** on the 28th, BWI NWS on the 28th, and **John Zyla of Ridge** on the 3rd. See Observer Notes for details.

Snow Flurries were reported by many observers on the 5th and on the 6th.

### TEMPERATURE

Temperatures this month again averaged above normal. This was mainly due to the summer-like weather from the 14th to the 20th. Maximum temperature were in the 80's and 90's while the minimum temperatures were in the 50's and 60's. Many ACON observers reported station record temperatures (see Observer Comments). **Rebecca Harvey of Eagle Rock**, **Jim Vaughn of Smithsburg 2 NE**, and **Robert Rickell of Hanover 2 S PA** were the only ACON observers not to record a 90 degree reading. This warm period was sandwiched between two cold spells. Temperatures on the morning of the 7th fell into the low to mid 20's. The morning of the 24th saw temperatures fall into the upper 20's and low 30's at stations that radiate well. Salisbury NWS on the Eastern Shore fell to 30 degrees.

### EXTREMES REPORTED BY

#### ACON OBSERVERS

##### MAXIMUM TEMPERATURE

Jug Bay Wetlands	97
Bethesda	97

##### MINIMUM TEMPERATURE

Eagle Rock	16
Hanover 2 S	20

##### WARMEST AVG. TEMP.

Baltimore 2 SE	60.0
Ridge	59.9

##### COLDEST AVG. TEMP.

Eagle Rock	49.1
Hanover 2 S	53.3

##### MAXIMUM PRECIPITATION

Eagle Rock	6.36
Millersville 1 SE	5.98

##### MINIMUM PRECIPITATION

Bear 2 SW DE	2.27
Millers 4 NE	2.57

##### MAXIMUM SNOWFALL

Eagle Rock	4.3
Millers 4 NE	0.1

### Member Notes

#### Floyd Abell

Floyd is recovering nicely. He is back on his weather line. Many thanks to **John Zyla** who assisted Floyd with his April report.

#### Lynn Albright

Lynn's husband has undergone colon cancer surgery. Lets keep them both in our prayers.

#### Brian Smith

Brian is our latest new member. He publishes the Washington-Baltimore Climate Review. His station is located at Oxon Hill. Welcome Brian!

# OBSERVER COMMENTS FOR APRIL 2002

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## **Jim Canavan of Wilmington 4 NNE DE**

6th—1/2" of snow on grass.

## **Gary Gallaher of Bear 2 SW, DE**

Another month with above normal temperatures and below normal precipitation. The minimum temperatures set an April record by not falling below 60 degrees for four (4) days breaking the record of two (2) set in 1973 and tied in 1984.

7th—22 degrees—Asparagus froze in the garden.

16th—Earliest 90 degree temperature on record.

17th—94 degrees—tied the April maximum temperature set on April 22, 1985.

## **Dan Hanson of Millersville 1 SE**

7th — 24 degrees tied station April record low.

18th—Storms dropped 2.83" of rain in only a couple of hours in the late afternoon . Flooded basements and roadways resulted from the sudden inundation. Intense lightning knocked my weather observing computer offline.

## **Jeff Stoudt of Laurel 2 E**

18th—During the late afternoon this location was on the edge of a nearly stationary thunderstorm complex and collected 1.68". Some neighborhoods only a mile or so away got little or no rain while others a short distance the opposite direction probably got even more.

## **Al Kreinik of Parkton 5 SW**

3rd—Temperature drops from 72 degrees at 11 AM to 44 degrees at 3 PM.

5th—Snow flurries at 10:30 AM, 9 PM and at 9:30 PM.

17th—Record heat 93 degrees broke the April record of 92 set on 4/18/76.

## **Marty Sharrow of Owings Mills**

22nd—Predawn rain then slow clearing and windy.

## **Joe Manfre of Baltimore 2SE**

Finally a month with above normal precipitation.

## **Herb Close of Manchester 1 S**

## **Ralph Hartsock of Westminster 4 SSE**

5th — Scattered snow showers and cold.

24th —Frosty start—Sunny and mild.

## **Bobby Miller of Millers 4 NE**

13th—1/8 mile visibility in heavy fog at 6 AM.

17th—90 degrees – The first 90 degree reading in the month of April in station history (since 1982). Old monthly record was 89 degrees set on 4/27/90.

18th—66 degrees—highest minimum temperature on record. Old was 65 set on 4/9/91.

## **Lynn Albright of Fallston 2 NW**

18th—Temperature dropped 21 degrees between 2:15PM and 4:45 PM.

## **Rich Giannola of Olney 1 S**

17th—Earliest date the temperature reached 90 degrees in 16 years of records.

28th—Hail (0.25" to 0.50" dia.) from 6:56PM to 6:58 PM.

## **Rob Cohen of Potomac 4 N**

2nd—Hailstorm at place of employment near Shady Grove Road and Gaither Road. Marble sized to golf ball sized hail fell along with brief gusty winds and near zero visibility. No hail was observed at my station.

14th to 18th — Record maximum temperature each day. 94 degrees on the 17th set an April record.

28th—1.89" of rain, the most rain since 8/1/01.

## **Stan Rossen of Glenmont**

16th—94 degrees breaks the April record of 93 set on April 22, 1985 and tied on April 27, 1994.

17th—96 degrees set a record for the maximum temperature in April.

18th—65 degrees minimum temperature tied April maximum minimum record set on April 30, 1983 and tied on April 9, 1991.

## **Kevin Shaw of Gaithersburg 2 WNW**

Spectacular record smashing heat wave in the middle of the month (average maximum 88 degrees, average minimum 59.4 degrees for the period from the 14th to the 20th.)

17th—94 degrees set an April maximum temperature. Old was 92 set on 4/27/92.

## **Joe Terry of Forest Glen**

21st—Falling temperatures all day. This afternoon was 45 to 50 degrees cooler than the afternoon of the 19th.

25th—Dramatic drying: 30 degree dew point drop in 6 hours (1300—1900).

28th—Beneficial rain all night. Rain continued unabated even well after warm frontal passage @ 0630. Highest daily rainfall since last July 4th.

## **Bill Hudelson of South Bowie**

18th—Severe thunderstorm at 1700 hours with frequent lightning. 1" of rain fell in 20 minutes and 1.40" fell in 30 minutes.

## **John Zyla of Ridge**

3rd—Temperature dropped 48 degrees in 16 hours—from 84 to 36 degrees, a station record.

6th—Snow flurries 7:45 AM to 8:05 AM.

## **Greg Keefer of Hagerstown 1 E**

16th—90 degrees—the earliest 90 degree day on record. The previous 1st 90 degree reading was April 17, 1976.

17th—93 degrees a record high. Old record was 90 set on April 17, 1976.

## **Jim Vaughn of Smithsburg 2 NE**

This was the thirteenth consecutive month with below normal precipitation. Snowfall this season of 7.0" broke the record minimum total of 12.3" set in the 1994-95 season.

5th—Freezing rain

17th— 89 degrees—third warmest April temperature.

## **Rob Rickell of Hanover 1 S, PA**

5th & 6th—Snow flurries and windy.

14th,15th,16th, 18th,19th, & 28th—Thunder