



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

UNUSUAL EARLY DECEMBER HEAVY SNOWFALL FOR THE SECOND CONSECUTIVE YEAR

December 2003's precipitation followed in the footsteps of many of the months this year, that is above average. Snowfall totals were the heaviest in years. December was also a windy month. Temperatures averaged slightly below normal. There were no extremely cold or warm temperatures. Below normal temperatures and four major rain and or snow events dominated the first 17 days. The weather "quieted down" the last 14 days of the month. There was only one major precipitation event, which was rain east of the mountains. Temperatures during this period ranged from normal to above normal.

The month began on a mild note. Temperatures generally ranging in the 50's east of the mountains to 60 degrees in extreme southeastern Maryland. This warmth was short lived. A frontal passage on the 1st brought strong winds and falling temperatures. Below normal temperatures remained through the 8th.

The first major snowstorm of the season arrived late on the 4th. This was a two part storm. Snow moved in from the south and southwest late in the evening of the 4th and the pre-dawn hours of the 5th. The snow changed to rain as temperatures rose slightly above freezing and ended by early afternoon. The heaviest snows fell north and west of highway I-95. **Lynn Albright of Fallston 2 NW** reported 9.5" while **Marty Sharrow of Owings Mills** reported 9.0". Snow resumed the night of the 5th and early on the 6th. This time it did not change to rain. Totals were generally in the 2 to 5 inch range. The heaviest was observed by **Gary Gallaher of Bear 2 SW DE** where 7.7" of new snow fell by the time it ended in the late morning.

The next precipitation event oc-

curred on the 10th and 11th. Rainfall amounts were generally over an inch. The heaviest rains fell in North Central Maryland. **Ralph Hartsock of Westminster 4 SSE** measured 2.50" while less than a mile away **Greg Klein of Westminster 5 SSE** measured 2.39". **Jim Vaughn of Smithsburg 2 NE** recorded 2.39" at his home on South Mountain. The heavy rains, accompanied by temperatures in the 40's and 50's, rapidly melted the snow cover. Some flooding was reported in Washington and Carroll Counties. Heavy fog was reported by many observers as a result of the warmer damp air over the cold snow cover.

Winds and colder temperatures followed on the heels of the rains. The next storm system moved into the region on the 14th. Precipitation began as snow and then changed to rain as the temperatures rose. Snowfall in Carroll and Frederick Counties was around 4". Amounts decreased to the east and south and increased to the west. 10.1" was reported in **Frostburg** by **Greg Latta**, 10.0" by **Nate Mullins of LaVale**. Further west in Garrett County **Rebecca Harvey of Eagle Rock** reported 14"

The next precipitation event occurred on the 17th. Temperatures this time were warmer so very little snow fell. Rainfall amounts was generally in the half inch range. The heaviest amount of 1.25" was reported by **Dan Hanson of Millersville 1 SE** and **Bill Hudelson of South Bowie**. All other amounts reported were under 1".

The last major storm occurred Christmas Eve on the 24th. Proceeding and during this storm temperatures rose into the 50's or 60's. Rainfall amounts were >1" in Delaware and Maryland's Eastern Shore then decreased as you went west.

EXTREMES REPORTED BY

ACON OBSERVERS

MAXIMUM TEMPERATURE

| | |
|--------------------------|----|
| Jug Bay Wetlands | 66 |
| Wash Gas Light Rockville | 65 |
| Potomac 4 N | 64 |

MINIMUM TEMPERATURE

| | |
|---------------|----|
| Eagle Rock | 6 |
| Davis 3 SE WV | 8 |
| Parkton | 11 |

WARMEST AVG. TEMP.

| | |
|----------------|------|
| Ridge | 40.2 |
| Hollywood | 39.2 |
| Baltimore 2 SE | 39.0 |

COLDEST AVG. TEMP.

| | |
|------------|------|
| Davis 3 SE | 25.8 |
| Eagle Rock | 27.3 |
| Frostburg | 29.1 |

MAXIMUM PRECIPITATION

| | |
|---------------------|------|
| Warrington Farms DE | 7.11 |
| South Bowie | 6.86 |
| Fallston 2 NW | 6.43 |

MINIMUM PRECIPITATION

| | |
|---------------------|------|
| Wilmington 4 NNE DE | 3.48 |
| U of D Newark DE | 3.60 |
| Bear 2 SW DE | 3.67 |

MAXIMUM SNOWFALL

| | |
|---------------|------|
| Davis 3 SE WV | 51.4 |
| Eagle Rock | 46.6 |
| Frostburg | 23.5 |

Christmas day was seasonably cold and windy. Light snow fell in Western Maryland while a few flurries fell at several locations east of the mountains.

A few hundreds of an inch of rain fell on the 30th which added to the record or near record annual precipitation totals.

OBSERVER COMMENTS FOR DECEMBER 2003

Gary Gallaher of Bear 2 SW, DE

Winiest December since wind records began in 1990. Second snowiest December behind the 24.2" which fell in 1966. Tied 1973 & 1996 for the greatest number of days with +>0.50" precipitation.

6th - 7.7" of snow - second heaviest daily snow for December and the heaviest so early in the season.

Nate Mullins of LaVale

14th - Snow began around 1 AM and became heavy during the early morning hours. Steady snow was mixed with some sleet early this afternoon.

17th - Light freezing rain formed a 1.8" glaze on everything.

Dave Bryant of St Margarets

1st week of the month temperature 8.8 degrees below avg.

Jeff Stoudt of Laurel 2 E

11th - Rain, heavy at times, before daybreak.

30th - Shower at daybreak.

Al Kreinik of Parkton 5 SW

10th - Rapid snow melt causes some flooding.

14th - AM snow changes to sleet and freezing rain then rain.

24th - Light to moderate rain. Dense fog.

Joe Manfre of Baltimore 2SE

19th - Variable clouds, breezy, cold.

Marty Sharrow of Owings Mills

3rd - Azure blue skies, brisk, and cold.

11th - Thunder 0210 hours.

19th - Variable cloudy skies windy with flurries.

Ralph Hartsock of Westminster 4 SSE

5th - Heavy snow AM. PM sleet & rain, PM snow again.

24th - Rain, fog, and warm.

Greg Klein of Westminster 5 SSE

5th to 6th - Incredible early December snow 13.5".

Bobby Miller of Millers 4 NE

5th - Moderate to heavy snow 7 to 10 AM & 8 to 10 PM.

10th / 11th - Heavy fog / drizzle. Heavy rains along with melting snows caused streams to overflow their banks by several feet. Many roads closed.

17th - Moderate rain back to wet snow before ending.

Manuel Farfan of Frederick 4 N

6th - Wet snow moderate at times all day until 2 PM. Some sleet around 4 PM. Total 5.7" during first pass. Snow again around 4 PM with an additional 1.2" by midnight.

11th - Rain overnight heavy at times and ending around 8 AM. All snow on the ground gone.

28th - Beautiful day, sunny and a high of 49.

Rebecca Harvey of Eagle Rock

31st - Snow cover down to 6" from 23" recorded on the 20th.

Lynn Albright of Fallston 2 NW

8th - Snow pack 7", liquid 1.36".

17th - Thunder snow

Rich Giannola of JHU/APL

11th - Very wind day, beginning with a rainbow at 7:45 AM. Cold front passage 4:30-4:45 AM with R+. In this 15 minute period the temperature dropped from 53 to 47 and the pres-

sure rose from 29.25" to 29.29".

Rob Cohen of Potomac 4 N

5th - Snow, sleet, rain, then light snow ending 9 PM.

14th - Snow to sleet to rain, ending 6 PM.

19th - Flurry mid afternoon.

Rich Giannola of Olney 1 S

4th - Snow began late afternoon. PL at 8 PM. SN at 9:45 PM

5th - Snow at 5:45 AM, PL at 6:45 AM. PL at 9 AM. 5" of snow on the ground at 9:20 AM. RASN at 10:30 AM. RA in early afternoon, changing to SN at 2:15. RAPL at 4:20. Liquid total 1.19". SN at 4:35. SN- in evening. Additional 0.5" snow by midnight.

6th - Additional snow since midnight 4.5". Total Precip since last measurement 0.64".

Kevin Shaw of Gaithersburg 2 WNW

A very normal month, temperature-wise, but a reversal in the normal trend with a tendency towards cold in the beginning of the month and warmer readings towards the end.

Joe Terry of Forest Glen

Snowiest December since station inception.

10th - Extremely dense early evening fog over snow cover.

Within one hour visibility improved to unlimited as fog rapidly dissipated due to warm froppa.

31st - Mild, tranquil end to 2003.

Bill Hudelson of South Bowie

9th - Lunar halo 2230 hours

16th - Heavy frost 0800 hours.

20th - Solar halo 1000 hours with sun dogs.

28th, 29th & 31st - Heavy frost 0800 hours,

Brian Smith of Oxon Hill

14th - -SN 0200 - 0530, -PL 0530 - 0900, -RA 0900 - 1900 hours.

Floyd Abell of Hollywood

4th - Cloudy, evening rain mixed with snow and sleet.

14th - Snow 2 to 4:30 AM then rain.

25th - Breezy at times and chilly.

Greg Keefer of Hagerstown 1 E

1st - Another very windy day with strong winds from the WNW with gusts to 54 MPH.

11th - Good bit of flooding today in roads, streams, and rivers from heavy rains and snowmelt.

25th - Partly cloudy, windy and cold with snow showers overnight & during the morning. WNW winds gusting to 34 MPH.

31st - Light rain showers this morning. More strong winds today from NW gusting to 51 MPH.

Jim Vaughn of Smithsburg 2 NE

This December was the snowiest on record. Old record was 14.8" set in 2002. There were five consecutive days with 50+ MPH winds and two days with 60+ MPH winds.

27th - Daily maximum temperature of 52. Old 51 in 1996

Dave Leshner of Davis 3 SE WV

Minimum snow cover 3" on the 3rd, 4th, 10th, & 11th. Maximum snow cover 20" on the 21st.

Compiled by Gary Gallaher, MD/DE ACON Data Collector and Report Writer, from data received from dedicated observers. Without your observations each month this report will not be possible.