



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

COOL WITH NUMEROUS DAYS OF RAIN

May will be remembered by its unusual number of days with precipitation and the lack of sunshine. Measurable rains fell on 20 days at Washington (DCA) tying July 1904 for the most days with measurable precipitation since records began in 1871. There were very few warm days. Extreme maximum temperatures were lower than they were in April. Most of the month we were on the "cold" side of slow moving storms. These storms pulled maritime air off of the Atlantic which held temperatures down. This maritime air helped to stabilize the atmosphere and held down the number of thunderstorms and precipitation east of the Chesapeake Bay. Dense fog on Savage Mountain on Friday the 23rd contributed to an eighty five vehicle chain reaction accident on I-68 near Frostburg in Western Maryland.

May began on a warm note. Temperatures rose to the upper 70's to lower 80's at many locations on the 1st and again on the 2nd. This was not a sign of things to come. From the 3rd through the 6th maximum temperatures were in the 50's and 60's. The morning of the 5th saw temperatures fall generally into the lower 40's west of the Chesapeake Bay and into the 30s east of the Bay. The coldest temperatures were in Southern Delaware and on Maryland's Eastern Shore. U of D's stations at Georgetown and Harbeson both recorded 33 degrees. Salisbury FAA airport reported the only freezing temperatures for the month, 32 on the 4th and 28 on the 5th.

Severe thunderstorms hit St. Marys County on the evening on the 7th. Two F0 tornadoes were confirmed by the NWS, one near Mechanicsville and another near Oakville. Floyd Abell of Hollywood reported hail and 3.24" of rain of which 3.15" fell in one hour.

Rain fell on most days from the 5th

to the 12th. Amounts were generally light with the 3.24" that fell at Hollywood on the 7th being the only daily amount over 1". Thunder was reported from the 7th to the 11th at many locations west of the Chesapeake Bay.

Briefly the temperatures returned to the mid 70's to lower 80's on the 7th and again on the 11th. This was the warmest of the month at many locations. Ralph Hartsock of Westminster 4 SSE and Jim Vaughn of Smithsburg 2 NE each recorded an 85 on the 7th while Nate Mullins of LaVale recorded 85 on the 11th.

The heaviest rains of the month fell on the 16th. Amounts of upwards of 3 inches were reported. Marty Sharrow of Owings Mills reported 3.04" while other heavy amounts were reported by the following ACON observers: U of D Research Farm at Georgetown DE 2.94", Brian Smith of Oxon Hill 2.83", Jim Vaughn of Smithsburg 2 NE 2.42", Jeff Stoudt of Laurel 2 E 2.22", Joe Manfre of Baltimore 2 SE 2.18", Herb Close of Manchester 1 S 2.17", Dan Hanson of Millersville 1 SE 2.16", and Joe Terry of Forest Glen 2.02".

Clouds with spotty drizzle and light rain prevented the maximum temperature to rise above the upper 40's to mid 50's on the 17th. The following ACON stations reported record low maximum temperatures for May: Herb Close of Manchester 1 S 48, Bobby Miller of Millers 4 NNE 49, Jim Vaughn of Smithsburg 2 NE 51 (tied previous low).

Clear skies finally returned on the 19th. Minimum temperatures fell to the upper 30's and lower 40's. Scattered light frost was reported in Carroll County by Greg Klein of Westminster 5 SSE and Bobby Miller of Millers 4 NNE an in York County PA by Rob Rickell of Hanover 2 S PA. Clouds quickly returned and by the 21st rain was again falling. Rains fell from

EXTREMES REPORTED BY ACON OBSERVERS

MAXIMUM TEMPERATURE

Jug Bay Wetlands	86
LaVale	85
Westminster 4 SSE	85
Smithsburg 2 NE	85

MINIMUM TEMPERATURE

UofD Georgetown DE	33
UofD Harbeson DE	33
Eagle Rock	36

WARMEST AVG. TEMP.

Ridge	62.0
Montgomery Village	61.7

COLDEST AVG. TEMP.

Eagle Rock	53.5
Frostburg	54.4

MAXIMUM PRECIPITATION

Smithsburg 2 NE	10.27
Hollywood	9.29
South Bowie	8.50

MINIMUM PRECIPITATION

U of D Harbeson DE	4.17
Wilmington 4 NNE DE	4.21
Bear 2 SW DE	4.50

the 21st though the 29th and again on the 31st. The heaviest fell on the 26th. Jug Bay Wetlands reported the heaviest with 2.04" while John Zyla of Ridge and Jim Canavan of Wilmington 4 NNE DE each reported 1.82". Bill Hudelson of South Bowie reported 1.83" on the 31st.

PLEASE FORWARD DATA BY THE 15TH OF THE FOLLOWING MONTH. LATE DATA SLOWS THE REPORT DOWN FOR EVERYONE. THE MORE COMPLETE THE REPORT, THE BETTER THE REPORT.

OBSERVER COMMENTS FOR MAY 2003

Gary Gallaher of Bear 2 SW, DE

Extremely cloudy month with only one (1) clear day. Many days of light rains made it seem much wetter than the slightly above normal total. 21 days with T or rain or more and 16 days with 0.01" or more both new May records.

31st - Record low May barometric pres of 29.32" (since 1991)

Greg Latta of Frostburg

Thunder on the 1st, 8th-11th, & 28th.

Nate Mullins of LaVale

8.16" or rain makes this month the third wettest month. It was also the most precipitation to fall in a month without at least one day with 1.00" or more. 24 days with measurable precip is a record for any month. (records 1992 to 2003)

9th - Thunderstorms with heavy downpours and frequent lightning 9-11 AM.

23rd - Low clouds and fog all day. The fog was extremely dense on nearby mountain ridges and caused a massive 85 vehicle pile-up on I-68 at Big Savage Mountain which killed 2.

Dave Bryant of St Margarets

Temperatures the 15th to 29th averaged 10.4 degrees below normal. Bay temperature 60 degrees the third week of May.

Jeff Stoudt of Laurel 2 E

Thunder on the 7th, 8th, 15th, & 31st.

Al Kreinik of Parkton 5 SW

7th - Late afternoon thunder.

16th - Daylong rain heavy at times.

31st - Evening thunderstorm.

Joe Manfre of Baltimore 2SE

Thunder on the 7th, 9th, 10th, 23rd-26th, & 28th.

Marty Sharrow of Owings Mills

30th - Brilliant sunshine, breezy and warmer.

Herb Close of Manchester 1 SW

Tied 1996 for the third coolest May. Set new record for lowest average maximum temperature with 65.9. Old record was 66.9 set in 1996. 26 days with precipitation a new record for any month. Old record was 21 days set in May 1989. 22 days with measurable precipitation a new record for any month. Old record was 21 days set in 5/89 & 6/98.

17th - 48 degrees record low maximum temp for May. Old record was 49 set in 1996 and tied in 1992, 1994, & 1995.

Ralph Hartsock of Westminster 4 SSE

1st - Sun, warm, & humid. Overnight showers.

20th - Some light frost.

Greg Klein of Westminster 5 SSE

Eighth month in a row with below normal temperatures.

Bobby Miller of Millers 4 NE

Thunder on the 1st, 7th-11th, 28th and the 31st.

17th - 49 degrees record low maximum temp for May.

19th - Some valley frost in the AM.

Manuel Farfan of Frederick 4 N

Thunder on the 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 15th, 24th, & 31st.

7th - Dense fog this morning.

31st - Hail (1/4" - 1/2") reported in different locations within a 1 to 3 mile radius from my townhouse.

Rich Giannola of JHU/APL OF Laurel

6th - Am fog and drizzle. Fog lifting late AM but overcast.

Rob Cohen of Potomac 4 N

First May without an 80 degree temperature. 19 days with measurable precipitation a new monthly record. 2nd coldest

May, coldest May avg. maximum temperature.

19th - 40 degrees tied minimum temperature for date.

Rich Giannola of Olney 1 S

Wettest May since 9.41" fell in 1989. Second wettest May in 17 years of records. May average maximum was the lowest in 17 years of records. From the 21st to 29th the temperature range was only 15 degrees (66 to 51).

Stan Rossen of Glenmont 1 NNE

17th - 51 degrees - ties 5/19/81 & 5/4/87 for second coldest maximum temperature. Record is 50 set 5/4/94.

Kevin Shaw of Gaithersburg 2 WNW

A cool, wet month, lots of rainy days, nothing spectacular on any one day. No daily Precip or max/min temp records were set.

Joe Terry of Forest Glen

Extremely wet and cloudy. Two long stretches with measurable rain - 7 days and 9 days. Only one 80 degree day after the 11th.

17th - Very cool. Afternoon max temperature only 50.

25th - Brief but violent rain shower around 0115. 0.34" in 5 minutes. Raindrops so large and rain so heavy that it crushed an 8" pepper plant.

Bill Hudelson of South Bowie

7th - Dense fog morning and evening.

8th - Dense fog this evening.

31st - Thunderstorms (1830-2200) with heavy rain (1.83"), moderate lightning and thunder, rainbow at 2000.

Brian Smith of Oxon Hill

30th - With all the rain we have had, there was measurable dew this morning.

Floyd Abell of Hollywood

Second wettest May from station records.

7th - Strong late day / evening thunderstorm, 3.15" of rain in one hour, tornado warning, hail.

8th - Hail

John Zyla of Ridge

Records set this month: Wettest May (7.10"), most days with precipitation (21), Lowest average high (68.8), low (55.1), and average (61.9) temperature, Lowest May maximum temperature (83), five thunderstorm days (7th—11th) in a row (High in station history)

Greg Keefer of Hagerstown 1 E

Wettest May on record (8.21") Old record was 8.09" set in 1989. (Records date back to 1898)

7th - Very dense fog overnight and this morning.

9th - Dense fog again overnight and this morning. Thunderstorm with heavy downpours and sharp lightning.

12th - Strong W winds overnight, some minor wind damage reported.

Jim Vaughn of Smithsburg 2 NE

Wettest May (10.27"). Old record was 8.17 set in 1989. 25 days with a trace or more precipitation a new record. Old record was 24 days set in June 1998.

16th - 2.42" of rain set a new daily record.

17th - 51 degrees maximum tied 5/3/94 for the lowest maximum temperature for May.

Rob Rickell of Hanover 2 S PA

Thunder on the 5th, 7th-11th, 24th, 25th, 28th, & 31st.

19th - Light frost