

FEBRUARY 2001: For the fifth consecutive February, warmer than normal conditions and subnormal snowfall were observed across the Washington/Baltimore area. In fact, there were 20 days with at or above-normal temperatures at DCA, including a daily record high of 70°F on the 9th. Monthly temperature departures were between +3°F and +5°F at the three major airports. It was the 14th winter month (Dec., Jan. & Feb.) out of the last 15 with above-normal temperatures at DCA. There was only one day with subfreezing highs at DCA, BWI and IAD and 13 days with at or below freezing lows (19 at BWI & 21 at IAD). In addition, highs reached or exceeded 50°F on 16 days (57%) at DCA.

Subnormal precipitation was observed across the Washington/Baltimore area with monthly totals around 2 inches common at most locations. The majority of the February precipitation occurred with three events. A storm system on the 4th-5th produced nearly 3/4" of precipitation at both DCA and BWI before ending as a brief period of wet snow. Both DCA and BWI recorded a trace of snow from this event, but up to an inch blanketed the ground at IAD. An unsettled weather pattern between the 12th and 17th produced more than 0.75" of precipitation at DCA and just over an inch at both BWI and IAD. Most of the rainfall was recorded on the 16th when just over 0.75" fell at both BWI and IAD. Monthly snowfall was generally limited to the 22nd when 2-4 inches of snow blanketed most of the area, including the three major airports. Amounts up to 5 inches were reported at a few locations in southern Maryland and northern Virginia. The snowfall created hazardous road conditions and according to press reports, led to hundreds of traffic accidents across the region, including a 100+ vehicle collision just south of Washington.

FEBRUARY 2001 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA:

Station Location	Temperatures (°F)					Extreme/Day		Precipitation (In)			
	AvMx	AvMn	AvgT	NmIT	DepNml	MaxT	MinT	Total	Norm	DepNml	Snow
National (DCA)	49.9	31.8	40.9	37.5	+3.4	70/9	21/18	1.83	2.71	-0.88	2.8
Baltimore (BWI)	48.2	28.6	38.4	34.8	+3.6	69/9	16/19	2.47	3.12	-0.58	3.7
Dulles (IAD)	49.1	27.9	38.5	33.6	+4.9	69/9	14/19	1.68	2.81	-1.13	3.7
Ft. Belvoir (DAA)	50.1	28.9	39.5	N/A	N/A	70/9	16/19	2.29	3.0	-0.8	1.7
Andrews AFB (ADW)	47.5	27.3	37.4	N/A	N/A	66/9	18/18	2.39	3.3	-0.9	3.3

WINTER (DECEMBER-FEBRUARY) 2000-2001: The winter of 2000-2001 was marked by subnormal temperatures, precipitation, and snowfall, but it will be remembered most for a dramatic mid-winter temperature shift from unusually cold weather during the first half of the season to warmer than normal conditions during the latter half. Seasonal temperature departures were slightly below normal, marking the first winter with cooler than normal conditions since 1995-96 at the three major airports. The cooler than normal winter was due in large part to abnormally cold weather during December as temperatures averaged more than 6°F below normal for the month at the three major airports. It was the coldest December since 1989 in the Washington/Baltimore area. There were 29 of 31 days with subnormal temperatures and only 3 days when highs exceeded 50°F at DCA. Meanwhile, minimum temperatures were consistently below freezing with 28 such December days observed at DCA and 31 at both BWI and IAD. The Arctic chill was most pronounced during the last two weeks of the month as lows dipped into the teens and single digits at many locations, including a reading of 6°F at IAD on December 21st. The colder than normal conditions during December ended a streak of 12 consecutive winter months with above-normal temperatures at DCA. Slightly warmer than normal conditions prevailed during the first month of 2001 across the Washington/Baltimore area. Monthly temperature departures between +0.9°F and +1.4°F were observed at the three major airports. The persistent cold weather which dominated the region in December ended around January 10th and was followed by generally warmer than normal conditions the remainder of the month. DCA recorded 18 January days with at or above-normal temperatures, including 11 consecutive such days from the 10th-20th. In sharp contrast to the previous month, there were no January days with subfreezing highs at DCA (6 such days in December). BWI recorded three days with highs of 32°F or lower while IAD observed four such days compared to a total of 6 & 10 December days, respectively. In addition, DCA's above-normal daily average temperature on the 10th (39°F; Dep. Nml.: +4°F) ended a string of 23 consecutive days (December 17th-January 9th) with at or below-normal temperatures. On January 15th, DCA, BWI and IAD all recorded their first minimum temperature above 32°F since December 16th, November 28th and November 27th, respectively. The final month of meteorological winter was highlighted by much above-normal conditions. Temperature departures exceeding +3°F were recorded at the three major airports, marking the 5th consecutive warmer than normal February, but also the coolest such month in 5 years at all three locations.

Seasonal precipitation totals were below normal at 4 of the 5 local airports with deficits near or slightly above two inches common. Only ADW recorded above normal precipitation. Once again, winter snowfall totals were below normal. Slightly more than 7 inches of snow fell at 4 of the 5 airports while just under one foot of snow was recorded at IAD. The winter commenced with subnormal precipitation during December with monthly deficits of more than an inch recorded at most locations. It marked the third consecutive month with drier than normal weather at the five local airports. On December 13th-14th, a storm system generated nearly three-quarters of an inch across the Washington/Baltimore area overnight, while in the colder suburbs the rain combined with freezing temperatures and produced a coating of ice on cars and trees. In the far northern and western suburbs of the Washington/Baltimore area the precipitation fell as snow and ice (up to an inch reported in some areas), producing some power outages and dangerous driving conditions. A few days later, a powerful storm system generated heavy showers and thunderstorms, and up to two inches of rain at a few locations. The first measurable snowfall (one to three inches) of the season fell on the 19th with up to six inches reported well north and west of Washington/Baltimore area. In January, precipitation totals between two and three inches were common across the local area, but monthly totals were below-normal for the fourth consecutive month at the three major airports. It was also the driest January since 1985 at DCA. The majority of the months precipitation occurred on January 18th-19th when a series of storm systems generated more than an inch of rain at all five airports. The rain changed to snow during the evening of the 20th before ending. Snowfall amounts ranged between 1 and 4 inches, with a few higher amounts (up to 10") reported well north and west of Washington/Baltimore area. The only other winter weather occurred on the January 5th when a steady, light snow (up to 2 inches) fell. It was the fourth January in the past five years with subnormal snowfall. Once again, subnormal precipitation occurred during February across much of the local, marking a 5th consecutive month with precipitation deficits at the three major airports. February precipitation totals under two inches were recorded at IAD and DCA, making it the driest such month since 1995 in Washington. Snowfall totals also fell short of monthly averages with only 2.8" measured at DCA and 3.7" at both BWI and IAD. It was the 13th February out of the last 14 with subnormal snowfall and the 5th consecutive winter with less than normal snow totals at DCA.

WINTER 2000-2001 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA:

Station Location	Temperatures (°F)					Extreme/Month-Day		Precipitation (In)			
	AvMx	AvMn	AvgT	NmIT	DepNml	MaxT	MinT	Total	Norm	DepNml	Snow
National (DCA)	43.7	28.3	36.0	37.2	-1.2	70/2-9	14/12-23	6.06	8.55	-2.49	7.2
Baltimore (BWI)	42.5	25.1	33.8	34.5	-0.7	69/2-9	12/12-23*	7.46	9.58	-2.12	7.7
Dulles (IAD)	42.4	23.1	32.8	33.2	-0.4	69/2-9	6/12-21	6.28	8.73	-2.45	11.9
Ft. Belvoir (DAA)	44.2	25.1	34.6	N/A	N/A	70/2-9	10/12-26	7.38	9.1	-1.8	8.9
Andrews AFB (ADW)	41.3	24.0	32.6	N/A	N/A	66/2-9	12/12-21#	9.69	9.3	+0.4	8.2

Other Occurrences: * December 24th; # December 22nd, 23rd, 26th and 27th.

LOOKING AHEAD TO MARCH: The transitional month.

With the end of another winter our thoughts now turn to spring. Since March is the transitional month from winter to spring, it can be a month of extremes. Below is a list of some notable March climatological statistics for Washington since records began in 1871 (snowfall records began in 1888).

Temperature Extremes			Precipitation Extremes		
Coldest: 1885	Avg. Temp.: 34.5°F	Dep. Nml.: -12.7°F	Wettest: 1891	Tot. Prec.: 8.84"	Dep. Nml.: +5.67"
Warmest: 1921 & 1945	Avg. Temp.: 55.5°F	Dep. Nml.: +8.3°F	Driest: 1910	Tot. Prec.: 0.57"	Dep. Nml.: -2.60"
Extreme Minimum: 4°F (March 4, 1873)			Snowiest: 1914	Tot. Snowfall: 19.3"	Dep. Nml.: +17.7"
Extreme Maximum: 93°F (March 23, 1907)			Most precipitation in one day (liquid): 2.79" (March 9, 1881)		
Most days with: lows ≤ 32°F: 24 (1960); highs ≥ 90°F: 3 (1907)			Most snowfall in one day: 11.3" (March 29, 1942)		