

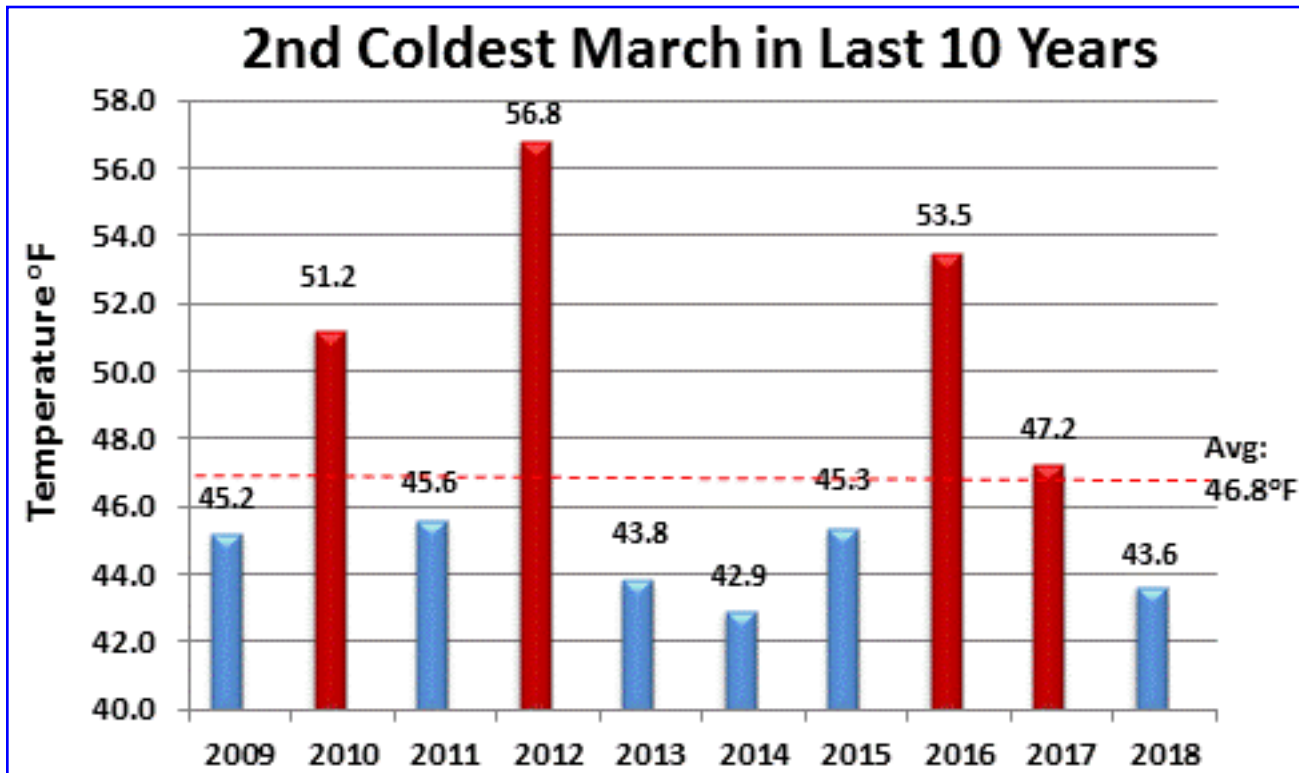


# PRESTO

PRECipitation Summary and Temperature Observations  
For the Washington, DC and Baltimore, MD Area



## MARCH 2018: Damaging Winds on the 2<sup>nd</sup>; Significant Snowfall on 21<sup>st</sup> and Well Below Normal Temperatures



### March Highlights

- Well below normal temperatures: -3.2°F at DCA, -3.4°F at BWI and -4.6°F at IAD
- Second consecutive year March colder than February in Washington, marking the first such occurrence since 1890-91
- DCA did not reach at or above 60°F until the 29<sup>th</sup>, latest date in March since 1958
- On the 2<sup>nd</sup>, a high impact wind storm resulted a long-duration event with strong and damaging winds. Gusts peaked at 71 mph at IAD, 62 mph at DCA and 61 mph at IAD. Outside the metro area, gusts were clocked at 78 mph in Etlan (Madison County), VA, and 71 mph at Ballenger Creek (Frederick County), MD. The winds knocked out power to nearly 500,000 customers largely as a result of downed trees falling on power lines. One person was injured in Kensington, MD, when a tree fell onto a house causing significant structural damage. Most school systems and the federal government were closed and airlines cancelled a significant number of flights. The air traffic control tower at IAD was briefly evacuated during the period of peak gusts. The winds were the strongest in many areas since the June 29, 2012, derecho.
- On astronomical spring, 21<sup>st</sup>, heaviest snowfall of the season, with substantial totals well north and west of the metro areas and generally between 4"-8" across the D.C.-Baltimore area. Highest amounts in Maryland included 17.5" near Sabillasville (Frederick County) and 13.1" in Norrisville (Harford County); in Virginia, greatest amounts included 12.0" in Staunton and 10.8" in Fishersville (Augusta County). Closer to the cities, amounts included 6.7" in Oakton (Fairfax County), VA, 7.4" in Baden (Prince Georges County), MD, and 4.1" at the National Zoo in Washington. Airport totals were a daily record 4.8" at IAD, 4.7" at BWI and 4.1" at DCA

## March 2018

**Temperatures:** The first month of meteorological spring featured well below normal temperatures: -3.2°F at DCA, -3.4°F at BWI and -4.6°F at IAD. For the second consecutive year, March was colder than February at all three major airports, marking the first such occurrence in Washington since 1890. Temperatures stayed below normal until late in the month. DCA and BWI did not reach 60°F until the 29<sup>th</sup> (when it hit 78°F and 75°F respectively), the latest date in March since 1958 at DCA. On the first day of astronomical spring (21<sup>st</sup>), high temperatures—with snow falling—held in the 30s at all three major airports, including a record low maximum temperature of 34°F at IAD. IAD recorded 19 days with maximum temperatures below 50°F, BWI, 18 such days and DCA, 15. Nighttime minimum readings were also consistently cold. IAD reported 23 days with low temperatures at or below 32°F (8<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup>), BWI, 22 such days (5<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup>) and DCA, 8. IAD's average temperature of 37.4°F was its 7<sup>th</sup> coldest on record.

**Precipitation:** Well below normal precipitation but above normal snowfall was recorded at the three major airports: 1.92" at DCA (-1.56"); 2.25" (-1.65") at BWI and 1.79" (-1.59") at IAD. Snowfall totals were 4.5" (+3.2") at DCA, 6.7" (+4.8") at BWI, 5.3" (+2.5") at IAD. The month featured a high impact wind storm as well as several snowfall events, including the season's largest snow event on astronomical spring.

On the 2<sup>nd</sup>, a rapidly intensifying and slow moving storm system increased the pressure gradient resulting a long-duration event with strong, damaging winds. The winds rapidly increased after midnight on the 2<sup>nd</sup> with daytime gusts to 71 mph at IAD, 62 mph at DCA and 61 mph at IAD. Outside the metro area, gusts reported as high as 78 mph in Etlan (Madison County), VA, and 71 mph at Ballenger Creek (Frederick County), MD. The winds knocked out power to nearly 500,000 customers at its peak about midday, according to press reports, largely due to trees falling on power lines. One person was injured in Kensington, MD, when a tree fell on a house, also causing significant damage. Most school systems and the federal government were closed and airlines cancelled a significant numbers of flights. The air traffic control tower at IAD was briefly evacuated due to gusts. The winds were the strongest in many areas since the June 29, 2012, derecho. Winds dropped below the damaging level by evening on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, but remained gusty on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, hampering recovery efforts. In the Dupont Circle area of DC, an historic 200 year elm tree was uprooted by winds landing on a parked car.

The majority of the month's precipitation occurred on the 20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup>. The storm began as a cold soaking rain with about ¾" to 1" at DCA and IAD. The rain changed to freezing rain in the afternoon on elevated surfaces grazing trees with between 0.1"-1/4" of ice. The cold air continued the following day when a second storm system resulted in the heaviest snowfall of the season, with generally 4"-8" across the metro areas and more north and west. Highest amounts in Maryland: 17.5" near Sabillasville (Frederick County) and 13.1" in Norrisville (Harford County); in Virginia, 12.0" in Staunton and 10.8" in Fishersville (Augusta County). Nearer the cities, totals included 6.7" in Oakton (Fairfax County), VA, 7.4" in Baden (Prince Georges County), MD and 4.1" at the National Zoo in DC. Airport totals were a daily record 4.8" at IAD, 4.7" at BWI and 4.1" at DCA. Two more systems also brought snow. On the 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>, totals in Maryland included 4.5" in Churchville (Harford County), and 4.0" in Long Green (Baltimore County). On the 12<sup>th</sup>, highest totals in Virginia, included 6.0" in Summerdean (Augusta County) and 6.0" in Staunton.

### March 2018 Weather Statistics for the Washington/Baltimore Area

| Location        | Station Temperatures (°F) |       |      |      |        | Extreme/Day |          | Precipitation (inches) |      |        |      |
|-----------------|---------------------------|-------|------|------|--------|-------------|----------|------------------------|------|--------|------|
|                 | AvMx                      | AvMin | AvgT | NmlT | DepNml | Max         | Min      | Total                  | Nml  | DepNml | Snow |
| National (DCA)  | 51.9                      | 35.3  | 43.6 | 46.8 | -3.2   | 78/29       | 31/11,15 | 1.92                   | 3.48 | -1.56  | 4.5  |
| Baltimore (BWI) | 49.2                      | 31.3  | 40.2 | 43.6 | -3.4   | 75/30       | 23/10,11 | 2.25                   | 3.90 | -1.65  | 6.7  |
| Dulles (IAD)    | 49.7                      | 29.5  | 39.6 | 44.2 | -4.6   | 76/29       | 20/10    | 1.79                   | 3.38 | -1.59  | 5.3  |

**Looking Ahead to April:** Last Freeze at DCA and IAD. April is usually the last month before autumn when a 32°F or lower reading occurs in Washington suburbs. The city has never recorded a freezing reading in May, although suburban areas have. Below is a list of the last 32°F or lower readings at DCA and IAD for the last 10 years.

| DCA  |                                    |      |                                    | IAD  |                                    |      |                                    |
|------|------------------------------------|------|------------------------------------|------|------------------------------------|------|------------------------------------|
| Year | Date of last 32°F or lower reading | Year | Date of last 32°F or lower reading | Year | Date of last 32°F or lower reading | Year | Date of last 32°F or lower reading |
| 2017 | March 23 (30°)                     | 2012 | March 6 (29°F)                     | 2017 | April 9 (32°F)                     | 2012 | April 25 (31°F)                    |
| 2016 | April 10 (31°F)                    | 2011 | March 28 (31°F)                    | 2016 | April 14 (31°F)                    | 2011 | April 6 (30°F)                     |
| 2015 | March 29 (28°F)                    | 2010 | Feb. 27 (31°F)*                    | 2015 | April 12 (31°F)                    | 2010 | April 18 (32°F)                    |
| 2014 | March 27 (27°)                     | 2009 | March 24 (28°F)                    | 2014 | April 21 (31°F)                    | 2009 | April 13 (32°F)                    |
| 2013 | April 4 (31°F)                     | 2008 | March 9 (29°F)                     | 2013 | April 4 (31°F)                     | 2008 | April 16 (31°F)                    |

\*Earliest last freeze in DCA's recorded history.