

AUGUST 1989: The immediate Washington area observed much drier to record dry conditions in August, a complete turnabout from excessive precipitation during the past several months. In addition to the lowest August precipitation on record at Dulles and Ft. Belvoir, Andrews AFB measured its third driest August with 0.55", and one of our cooperative observers (AH) in Silver Spring reported just 0.31". While National Airport's 1.15" was not a record, it would have been the all-time driest August had not a brief, localized thunderstorm on Aug. 17 dropped 0.94" of rain. It is also interesting to note that 2.6" of BWI's 3.38" fell from heavy showers on Aug. 28. Meanwhile, torrential rainfall totals were found relatively close to Washington as 10-15" of rain drenched parts of Delaware, the eastern shore of Maryland, and the Virginia Tidewater area.

With the memory of last August's oppressive heat and humidity, especially during the stretch of 21 days (July 29-August 18) with highs at or above 90°F, August 1989 might have seemed cool even though temperatures generally averaged near normal. On Aug. 8 and 9, near-record lows were set at DCA, BWI, and IAD as an unseasonably cool air mass covered most of the eastern half of the nation. Just a few days earlier on Aug. 5, hot and muggy conditions kept the DCA minimum temperature from dropping below 80°F, which tied the previous all-time August highest minimum temperature record. In contrast, maximum temperatures on Aug. 11 failed to reach 70°F at DCA, IAD, BWI, and ADW.

AUGUST 1989 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA:

Station Location	Temperatures (°F)					Extreme/Day		Precipitation (In)		
	AvMx	AvMn	AvgT	NmiT	DepNm	MaxT	MinT	Total	Norm	DepNm
National (DCA)	84.7	69.4	77.0	77.6	-0.6	94/6*	57/9	1.15	4.40	-3.25
Baltimore (BWI)	82.7	65.9	74.3	75.6	-1.3	92/4	53/9	3.38	4.62	-1.24
Dulles (IAD)	84.4	64.2	74.3	74.3	0.0	94/23*	47/9	0.76	4.16	-3.40
Ft. Belvoir (DAA)	87.8	69.5	78.7	75	+4	99/6	56/9	0.29	4.4	-4.1
Andrews AFB (ADW)	85.1	69.4	77.2	75	+2	95/23	55/9	0.55	4.4	-3.9

Other dates of occurrence: *Aug. 4 *Aug. 5 and 6

SUMMER (JUNE-AUGUST) 1989: Dry to record-dry August rainfall prevented many locations in the Washington area from recording the wettest summer in recent memory. However, BWI's torrential late August rain pushed their summer total to their highest level since 1979 when 18.83" was measured. On the other hand, a very dry August at Andrews AFB resulted in a somewhat drier than normal summer.

As depicted on the front page, the summers of 1988 and 1989 at DCA were quite different with respect to extreme heat. For example, nearly 60% of the days during last summer recorded highs at or above 90°F while June-August 1989 only observed 20 days with highs greater than or equal to 90°F. There were 24 days with maximum temperatures of 95°F or more in 1988, including 7 days in the one hundreds, but only 2 days at or above 95°F this year and no days with triple-digit readings. Summer temperatures at DCA averaged slightly above normal this year due mainly to a warmer than normal June but were nearly 2°F lower than last summer.

SUMMER 1989 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA:

Station Location	Temperatures (°F)					Precipitation (In)			YTD Precip (In) 1989 Totals	
	AvMx	AvMn	AvgT	NmiT	DepNm	Total	Norm	DepNm	Total	DepNm
National (DCA)	85.0	69.7	77.4	77.0	+0.4	12.83	11.63	+1.20	33.69	+6.81
Baltimore (BWI)	83.1	66.3	74.7	74.9	-0.2	16.71	12.27	+4.44	39.25	+10.49
Dulles (IAD)	84.6	64.6	74.6	73.5	+1.1	12.50	12.14	+0.36	32.07	+4.27
Ft. Belvoir (DAA)	88.1	69.8	78.9	74.3	+4.6	14.33	11.9	+2.4	40.38	+12.0
Andrews AFB (ADW)	85.1	69.2	77.2	74.7	+2.5	11.35	12.4	-1.1	39.24	+10.3

SEPTEMBER STATS:

WILL THE PATTERN REPEAT IN 1989?

Since 1984, a pattern has emerged at DCA where significantly below normal precipitation and temperatures have occurred during even-numbered September years while alternating (odd-numbered) years have displayed a sharply reversed trend.

Year	Total(In)	DepNm(In)	AvgT(F)	DepNm(F)
1988	1.85	-1.37	68.9	-2.2
1987	5.11	+1.89	72.0	+0.9
1986	0.60	-2.62	70.9	-0.2
1985	6.67	+3.45	71.9	+0.8
1984	2.51	-0.71	68.3	-2.8