

DECEMBER 1990: The exceptional warmth of 1990 continued into the final month of the year with temperatures averaging over 5°F above normal at DCA, BWI, and IAD. There were 4 days with temperatures of 68°F or higher at DCA, including record highs on the 23rd and the 30th. Unlike last December's near-record cold, only intermittent bursts of Arctic air grazed the area, especially during the 24th-28th when the airports recorded the lowest readings of this Winter (20°F at DCA, 19°F at BWI, 17°F at IAD). As the warm air returned, a band of snow developed, dumping between 2 and 5 inches across the area. Outside the immediate D.C. area, however, amounts varied from 0.5" at Hollywood, MD to 13" at Berkley Springs, WV. The snow changed to freezing rain during the early morning hours of the 28th, causing a 1/4" glaze on many exposed surfaces. Thick fog hampered travel on the 29th as warm air moved over the snow cover. Near-record warmth on the 30th and the 31st melted most signs of the season's first snow. Overall, precipitation was heavy during the month, with amounts well above normal throughout most of the area. Rainfall totals of nearly an inch occurred on the 3rd, 16th, 23rd, and the 27th (liquid amounts from the snow and ice).

DECEMBER 1990 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA:

Station Location	Temperatures (°F)					Extreme/Day		Precipitation (In)			
	AvMx	AvMn	AvgT	NmlT	DepNm	MaxT	MinT	Total	Norm	DepNm	Snow
National (DCA)	53.1	35.9	44.5	38.9	+5.6	71/23	20/25	4.73	3.18	+1.55	3.0
Baltimore (BWI)	52.1	32.3	42.2	36.5	+5.7	69/23	19/25	4.86	3.40	+1.46	4.8
Dulles (IAD)	51.8	30.7	41.3	35.1	+6.2	68/23	17/25*	5.00	3.29	+1.71	4.7
Ft. Belvoir (DAA)	53.6	32.7	43.2	37	+6	69/30	21/25*	3.59	3.3	+0.3	2
Andrews AFB (ADW)	51.9	33.0	42.5	38	+5	68/18*	19/25	3.05	3.4	-0.4	2.1

Other dates of occurrence: *December 12, #December 26

ANNUAL: 1990 will be remembered as the warmest year on record in the Baltimore/Washington area as temperatures for 9 of the 12 months averaged above normal (see front cover). Historical records for ADW and DAA were not available, but 1990 was also most likely the warmest. Exceptionally mild conditions occurred from January through March, and for extended periods during April, and October through December. Ironically, the Summer had no prolonged heat waves, and averaged close to normal. The months with near or below normal monthly temperatures were May, August, and September. Significant monthly departures occurred early in the year, with January producing the largest departures (DCA: +8.4°F; BWI: +8.8°F; IAD: +9.0°F; DAA: +8°F; and ADW: +8°F).

Precipitation was above normal throughout 1990, although it was not nearly as wet as in 1989. However, it was the first time since 1978-1979 that there were two consecutive wetter than normal years at DCA and BWI. While DCA and BWI were only slightly above normal, some locations around the region recorded 45-48 inches of precipitation, with a cooperative observer in Calvert County recording 57.53 inches. Only September was exceptionally dry, with DCA recording 0.60 inches while ADW observed its driest September on record (0.54"). Precipitation was frequent on the weekends at DCA, with 16 consecutive wet (trace or more) weekends from late February through mid-June. Unusually violent October 18th thunderstorms spawned 5 tornadoes that struck Kensington and Reisterstown, MD, Remington, VA, and Orange and King (VA) counties. With the exceptional mildness, no major snowstorms occurred, although moderate snow fell during late March, with DCA measuring 2.4 inches (largest March total since 1980) and IAD recording 6.4 inches, (greatest March total since 1984). The remaining snowfall event of 1990 (December 27th; 2-5 inches) melted rapidly before the month's end.

1990 ANNUAL WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA:

Station Location	Temperatures (°F)					Extremes-1990		Precipitation (In)			
	AvMx	AvMn	AvgT	NmlT	DepNm	MaxT	MinT	Total	Norm	DepNm	Snow
National (DCA)	69.2	50.7	60.0	57.5	+2.5	100/7-5	14/2-26	40.84	39.00	+1.84	5.8
Baltimore (BWI)	68.1	47.4	57.9	55.1	+2.8	101/7-9	13/2-26	41.88	41.84	+0.04	6.8
Dulles (IAD)	68.7	44.9	56.8	53.9	+2.9	99/7-5	11/2-26	45.33	40.35	+4.98	19.3
Ft. Belvoir (DAA)	68.8	46.4	57.6	55	+3	101/7-5	11/2-26	45.79	41.7	+4.1	5.3
Andrews AFB (ADW)	67.8	48.1	58.0	56	+2	99/7-5	16/2-26	42.67	42.5	+0.2	2.8

LOOKING AHEAD TO JANUARY: A DRY START TO 1991?

Since 1980, only January 1987 has been significantly wetter than the normal of 2.76" at DCA.

A look back at the last eleven January's at DCA:

Year	Precipitation Total	Year	Precipitation Total
1980	2.85"	1986	2.38"
1981 [third driest Jan. ever]	0.38"	1987	4.90"
1982	2.27"	1988	3.14"
1983	1.69"	1989	2.49"
1984	1.71"	1990	2.95"
1985	2.11"	1991	?