

FEBRUARY 1990: The mild weather which began in January continued well into February. Only a brief cold snap during Feb. 25–27 prevented this February from being the warmest ever in Washington (February 1976: 46.9°F). Meanwhile, IAD and BWI recorded the first and second warmest February on record, respectively, which came on the heels of the warmest January ever at both locations (fifth warmest January at DCA). As a result, National has observed its second warmest start to a year (AvgT=44.4°F) with only Jan–Feb. 1932 being greater at 44.9°F. BWI also recorded its second warmest start to a year, while IAD reported its warmest annual commencement since records began in 1963.

In addition to National observing 23 days with above normal temperatures, there were only 8 days with sub-freezing readings and only 4 days that averaged below normal. 2 days topped 70°F, including a record high of 72°F on Feb. 2, and 13 days equaled or surpassed 60°F, just short of the record 14 days set in 1976. The lowest reading during February occurred on Feb. 26 when the mercury plunged to 14°F. The last time the thermometer dropped as low was 61 days earlier on December 27 (13°F).

Monthly precipitation was well below normal at all the airports, continuing a dry weather trend that began in November. Three of the past four months have been drier than usual at BWI, IAD, DCA, and ADW. Of course, most of 1989 was excessively wet throughout the Washington–Baltimore area. There were no February precipitation events at DCA over half an inch, and the largest event occurred at Ft. Belvoir on Feb. 10 when 0.81" of rain fell. It was the driest February since 1980 at DCA (1.16"), IAD (1.00"), BWI (1.06"), DAA (1.44"), and since 1978 at ADW when 0.75" were measured.

February is normally the snowiest month of the year, but in 6 of the past 14 years (including this year), National has not recorded any measurable snow. Similarly, the other four stations reported a trace of snow as a dusting occurred on the 27th across the region. Some areas recorded snow showers on the 24th and early on the 25th.

FEBRUARY 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)	55.1	35.3	45.2	37.5	+7.7	73/14	14/26	1.30	2.62	-1.32	T
Baltimore (BWI)	53.3	30.8	42.0	34.7	+7.3	70/14	13/26	1.48	2.98	-1.50	T
Dulles (IAD)	54.3	29.3	41.8	33.6	+8.2	71/14	11/26	1.65	2.64	-0.99	T
Ft. Belvoir (DAA)	52.8	29.9	41.3	36	+5	71/14	11/26	1.71	3.0	-1.3	T
Andrews AFB (ADW)	54.5	34.3	44.4	36	+8	73/14	16/26	1.41	2.8	-1.4	T

WINTER (DECEMBER–FEBRUARY) 1989–1990: The Winter of 1989–1990 was full of memorable events and extreme contrasts, even though the seasonal statistics depicted slightly above normal winter temperatures and slightly below normal winter snowfall. Hidden beneath these figures were a bitterly cold December and an unseasonably mild January and February (see front cover for more information), which, when averaged together, were close to normal. Likewise, the snow season got off to a fast start with moderate snow on Thanksgiving Eve while the five airports received between 9" and 13" of December snow. Since then, however, only 0.2" have fallen at DCA, the lowest Jan–Feb total since 0.1" back in 1973, and the second smallest amount in 58 years. Winter precipitation, although not as extreme as the temperatures and snowfall, also varied from month to month as December was very dry, January was relatively wet, and February ended up with about half the normal precipitation.

WINTER 1989 – 1990 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA:

Station Location	Temperatures (°F)					Precipitation (In)			Snowfall		
	AvMx	AvMn	AvgT	NmlT	DepNm	Total	Norm	DepNm	Total	Nml	DepNm
National (DCA)	47.4	30.4	38.9	37.2	+1.7	6.35	8.56	-2.21	12.7	14.3	-1.6
Baltimore (BWI)	45.8	26.8	36.3	34.6	+1.7	7.31	9.38	-2.07	14.5	16.8	-2.3
Dulles (IAD)	46.1	23.9	35.0	33.4	+1.6	6.51	8.76	-2.25	18.8	19.2	-0.4
Ft. Belvoir (DAA)	46.0	25.6	35.8	35	+0.8	7.04	9.1	-2.1	16.2	17.9	-1.7
Andrews AFB (ADW)	46.2	28.7	37.5	36	+1.5	6.67	9.3	-2.6	16.7	16.5	+0.2

A LOOK AHEAD TO MARCH:

With the second warmest start to a year at National, how have previous March temperatures (normal AvgT = 45.8°F) behaved like after the top five warmest January–February periods?

Year	Jan.	Feb.	AvgT(°F)	March AvgT(°F)
1932	46.8	42.9	44.9	40.0
1990	43.6	45.2	44.4	?
1890	43.8	43.4	43.6	41.4
1950	48.0	38.7	43.4	41.7
1949	42.6	43.8	43.2	46.6

NOTE:

Annual and Decade reviews are planned. Issues will be printed when time permits.