

JANUARY 1990: After experiencing the second coldest December ever at DCA and the coldest December on record at IAD, BWI (and most likely ADW and DAA), a continuation of the cold weather into January seemed quite possible based upon the performances of past Januarys that followed some of the coldest Decembers in Washington. In reality, however, the month with the lowest normal average temperature was anything but cold as January 1990 averaged 8.4°F above normal at DCA. With records commencing in 1871, this was only the fifth mildest January at DCA, but the warmest January of all-time at BWI and IAD since their historical data started in 1951 and 1963, respectively. Readings hit or exceeded 50°F on 15 or more days at DCA (21), DAA (17), BWI (16), IAD (15), and ADW (15), and only fell below 32°F on 9 days at DCA. Surprisingly, there were relatively few daily maximum temperature records at DCA, IAD, and BWI. This was due to zonal (west to east) flow and strong upper-air winds that rapidly pushed weather systems across the country. The bitterly cold Arctic air remained in northern Canada while the frequent replacement of air masses prevented the build-up of extremely warm weather. In addition, the sudden shift from December's cold to January's mildness produced the greatest temperature departure from normal contrast in history (19.4°F) for any two consecutive months in Washington (12/89: 11.0°F BELOW normal versus 1/90: 8.4°F ABOVE normal). The largest back-to-back monthly temperature departures from normal (non-contrasting) occurred in Dec. 1917 (27.9°F) and Jan. 1918 (23.7°F) with deviations of -11.0°F and -11.5°F (-22.5°F). Record daily highs included: DCA (69°F 1/18); BWI (67°F 1/17, 68°F 1/18); IAD (54°F 1/4, 57°F 1/15, 70°F 1/17 and 1/18, 59°F 1/21 and 1/28). Record high minimum temperatures included: DCA (50°F 1/18) and IAD (38°F 1/5, 47°F 1/18 and 1/25, 45°F 1/24, 35°F 1/28). Daily temperature records were not available for ADW and DAA, along with record high minimums at BWI.

After two straight months of subnormal precipitation, the wet weather pattern that the Washington-Baltimore area experienced during much of 1989 returned in January as all five airports recorded slightly above normal precipitation. While the majority of the month was dry, two major rain events on the 25th-26th and the 29th provided the region with nearly two-thirds of the monthly totals. Unlike December's subnormal monthly precipitation but above normal snowfall, January observed the opposite. With temperatures above freezing much of the month, snowfall amounts ranged from a trace at ADW up to 5.0" at IAD, and most of this (4.7") occurred on January 6. National's 0.2" was the least since 1983, and BWI's 0.5" was the lowest since 1973. Little or no January snowfall, however, occurs rather frequently in Washington as less than an inch of snow has fallen at DCA 7 times since 1960 (22.6%).

JANUARY 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)	52.3	34.8	43.6	35.2	+8.4	69/18	26/14	2.95	2.76	+0.19	0.2
Baltimore (BWI)	50.9	32.2	41.5	32.7	+8.8	68/18	22/14	3.71	3.00	+0.71	0.5
Dulles (IAD)	51.0	29.7	40.4	31.4	+9.0	70/18*	18/14@	3.14	2.83	+0.31	5.0
Ft. Belvoir (DAA)	50.5	30.0	40.3	32	+8	67/18	19/14	2.98	2.8	+0.2	0.1
Andrews AFB (ADW)	50.6	32.4	41.5	34	+8	66/18*	21/14	3.12	3.1	0	T

Other earlier dates of occurrence: *Jan 17, @Jan. 13

**NO, WE DID NOT FORGET!
COMING LATER IN FEBRUARY(hopefully):**
★ The 1989 Review
★ The 1980's in Review

LOOKING AHEAD - FEBRUARY 1990:

Mild Januarys - ? Februarys in Washington

Degrees F		Degrees F		Degrees F		Degrees F	
Month	ObsT DepNml*	Month	ObsT DepNml*	Month	ObsT DepNml*	Month	ObsT DepNml*
Jan 1950	48.0 +12.8	Feb 1950	38.7 +1.2	Jan 1990	43.6 +8.4	Feb 1990	? ?
Jan 1932	46.8 +11.6	Feb 1932	42.9 +5.4	Jan 1974	42.9 +7.7	Feb 1974	39.2 +1.7
Jan 1937	43.8 +8.6	Feb 1937	36.6 -0.9	Jan 1933	42.6 +7.4	Feb 1933	38.4 +0.9
Jan 1890	43.8 +8.6	Feb 1890	43.4 +5.9	Jan 1949	42.6 +7.4	Feb 1949	43.8 +6.3
Jan 1913	43.6 +8.4	Feb 1913	36.6 -0.9				

Coldest February: 24.6°F in 1934

Warmest February: 46.9°F in 1976

* Based upon 1951-1980 normals of Jan (35.2°F) and Feb (37.5°F)