

MAY 1990: For the first month since December, temperatures averaged below normal at all five airports, with departures ranging from -1°F at both Andrews AFB and Dulles Airport to -2°F at Fort Belvoir. In a reverse from the previous month, the coolest weather occurred during the last third of the month, with several days recording highs only in the lower sixties. May was also the first month of 1990 with no dramatic warm spells (see April PRESTO for details). In addition to the frequent number of cool days and relatively low number of warm days (e.g. ADW only had 4 days with highs at or above 80°F but 11 days with maximums below 70°F), the nights were similarly cool. Temperatures dropped below 60°F on all but 2, 2, 3, 3, and 4 days during May at IAD, DAA, DCA, BWI, and ADW, respectively.

May is usually one of the wettest months of the year (e.g. third wettest month at DCA, normal=3.48"), and this May was no exception. Although precipitation was frequent and heavy, it was still significantly less than last year's record or near-record May rainfall. Yet, despite the above normal precipitation, the month was known for its steady soaking rainy days, a more winter-like feature than late Spring, when thunderstorms usually provide most of the rainfall in a brief time period. There were also large disparities in precipitation throughout the area, with amounts varying from 4.37" at IAD up to 8.23" at ADW.

The continuation of precipitation on weekends continued through the month (see front cover). Climatological 24-hour rainfall frequencies for the 3 major airports (NOAA Technical Report NWS 39, Sep. 1987) were about 33% for the February-May period. Assuming independence of precipitation events, one might expect precipitation, on the average, every third day. Yet, precipitation (trace or more) has occurred on 16 of the last 17 weekends (either Saturday, Sunday, or both). Using the above values, the likelihood of precipitation on any weekend (either one or both days) during this period is about 0.55. From this, the probability of precipitation on 16 of the past 17 weekends is calculated at .000536, or a once in a 2000 period (year) event.

MAY 1990 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)	73.1	55.5	64.3	66.0	-1.7	85/17	48/11*	5.20	3.48	+1.72
Baltimore (BWI)	72.0	52.2	62.1	63.4	-1.3	84/17	43/12	4.92	3.44	+1.48
Dulles (IAD)	72.4	50.4	61.4	62.4	-1.0	84/16	38/12	4.37	3.62	+0.75
Ft. Belvoir (DAA)	72.4	50.8	61.6	64	-2	63/16*	39/12	6.13	3.8	+2.3
Andrews AFB (ADW)	71.7	53.7	62.7	64	-1	84/16*	43/12	8.23	4.0	+4.2

Other dates of occurrence: *May 23, #May 17

SPRING (MARCH-MAY) 1990: March through May recorded temperatures slightly above normal (+0.9°F at DCA), mainly on the strength of a very mild March when temperatures averaged nearly 4.5°F above normal. March and April were noted for exceptional warm spells [At DCA: March 12-16 had highs in the eighties; April 23-28 recorded readings in the eighties and nineties], but no dramatic warm spells occurred in May. In fact, the May extreme maximum temperatures at all 5 locations were lower than the March and April extreme highs.

Precipitation throughout the region was frequent and widespread, particularly during April and May, which resulted in a wetter than normal Spring. Surplus March-May precipitation ranged from 1.18" at BWI up to 3.4" at ADW. Snowfall varied considerably from station to station, with the greatest totals in the western and northern suburbs (10.4" at IAD) and the lowest in the southern and eastern areas (0.7" at ADW).

SPRING 1990 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)	66.8	47.4	57.1	56.2	+0.9	93 4/27	22 3/7	11.86	9.87	+1.99
Baltimore (BWI)	65.1	44.3	54.7	53.6	+1.1	92 4/26	18 3/8	11.69	10.51	+1.18
Dulles (IAD)	66.4	42.5	54.5	52.7	+1.8	92 4/26	13 3/8	12.21	10.19	+2.02
Ft. Belvoir (DAA)	66.2	43.4	54.8	54.3	+0.5	92 4/26	14 3/8	13.37	10.7	+2.7
Andrews AFB (ADW)	65.5	45.8	55.6	54.7	+0.9	91 4/27	21 3/7	14.05	10.6	+3.4

A LOOK AHEAD TO JUNE: Wet Mays = ? Junes

Since 1948 (last 43 years), only 6 years have had above normal rainfall in both May and June at DCA, although 20 Mays have been wetter than usual [Normals: May=3.48", June=3.35"].

Year	May Total	June Total
1990	5.20	?
1989	7.77	6.02
1983	4.62	7.09
1982	5.11	5.41
1974	4.37	3.40
1972	4.78	11.53
1968	4.23	7.40

SPRING 1990 SNOW STATISTICS

Station	Total (In)	Normal	DepNmI
National (DCA)	2.6	2.3	+0.3
Baltimore (BWI)	2.8	4.0	-1.2
Dulles (IAD)	10.4	3.2	+7.2
Ft. Belvoir (DAA)	3.2	4.2	-1.0
Andrews AFB (ADW)	0.7	3.7	-3.0