

JANUARY 1992: For the fourth consecutive January, temperatures averaged above normal throughout the region. Although no record highs were observed, Arctic air made only brief intrusions into the area, resulting in above normal temperatures for prolonged periods of time. Temperatures averaged above normal for 13 consecutive days (2nd – 14th), during which time lows only dropped below freezing twice. However, significant temperature changes did occur. For example, the high at DCA reached 65°F (63 °F at both BWI and IAD) on the 14th in advance of a strong cold front. Less than a week later, lows dipped into the teens. Only one day produced readings below freezing for the entire day (19th), the only such occurrence this Winter. The modest low of 14°F occurred on the 19th, the lowest temperature since February 26, 1990.

Precipitation was almost normal throughout most of the area, except well below normal east and northeast of Washington (only 1.27" at BWI and 1.80" at ADW). Three noteworthy storm systems affected the area in January. The first was a strong coastal storm which brought windswept rains to the area on the fourth. The storm dumped up to half a foot of rain along the North Carolina coast and up to 4 inches of rain in the Virginia Tidewater area. Hurricane-force wind gusts and high surf battered portions of the Atlantic Coast and caused extensive damage to several ocean communities in Delaware, especially Bethany and Rehobeth Beaches. The heaviest local rains occurred in Washington (1.91") and Fort Belvoir (1.59"). There was a sharp edge to the northern and western extent of the storm with BWI recording less than half an inch (0.47") and IAD little more than an inch (1.06"). The storm was located in a classic position to provide the area with a major snowfall, but cold air was lacking. The second storm was an intense spring-like storm that passed to the west of the area on the 14th. This provided the mechanism for a rare January outbreak of morning thunderstorms accompanied by strong wind gusts and morning temperatures in the sixties. The storms were fast-moving, thus dropping less than half an inch of rain in most areas. The third noteworthy event occurred on the 25th when an "Alberta Clipper" (a fast-moving storm that originates in the Canadian Prairie provinces) dropped between 2 and 4 inches of snow from northern Virginia to north of Baltimore, MD. It was the latest one-inch snow accumulation in sixteen years at DCA. The storm lasted about six hours and caused roads to become hazardous as temperatures remained below freezing. Its rapid departure and bright sunshine resulted in a rapid improvement in road conditions the following day.

JANUARY 1992 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA:

Station <u>Location</u>	<u>Temperatures (°F)</u>					<u>Extremes/Day</u>		<u>Precipitation (In)</u>			
	<u>AvMx</u>	<u>AvMn</u>	<u>AvgT</u>	<u>NmlT</u>	<u>DepNm</u>	<u>MaxT</u>	<u>MinT</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Norm</u>	<u>DepNm</u>	<u>Snow</u>
National (DCA)	46.2	30.2	38.2	35.2	+3.0	65/14	14/9	2.78	2.76	+0.02	4.0
Baltimore (BWI)	43.6	25.5	34.6	32.7	+1.9	63/14	9/19	1.27	3.00	-1.73	2.2
Dulles (IAD)	45.4	24.6	35.0	31.4	+3.6	63/14	8/19*	2.13	2.83	-0.70	2.1
Ft. Belvoir (DAA)	45.8	27.5	36.6	32	+5	61/14	12/19*	2.62	2.8	-0.2	3.0
Andrews AFB (ADW)	44.9	26.7	35.8	34	+2	64/14	10/16#	1.80	3.1	-1.3	4.0

Other dates of occurrence: * January 20th; # January 19th.

LOOKING AHEAD TO FEBRUARY: Feast or Famine!

Since the 1983–84 winter season, DCA has recorded only 2 winters with above normal snowfall. With only 4.0 inches measured thus far (December: 0" and January 4.0"), how will the 1991–1992 season fare? Below is a list of the winter [December–February] snowfall totals since the 1983–84 season. (Normal winter snowfall at DCA: 14.3")

<u>Winter Season</u>	<u>Total Snowfall</u>	<u>Dep. Nml.</u>
1991–1992	?	?
1990–1991	8.1"	-6.2"
1989–1990	9.2"	-5.1"
1988–1989	5.3"	-9.0"
1987–1988	13.1"	-1.2"
1986–1987	31.1"	+16.8"
1985–1986	15.4"	+1.1"
1984–1985	10.3"	-4.0"
1983–1984	6.5"	-7.8"