

MAY 1997: The cool and relatively dry weather so prevalent across most of the Washington/Baltimore during April continued into May. Monthly temperature departures between -3°F and -4°F were reported at the three major airports due mainly to unusually cool nights. In fact, the average minimum temperature at DCA (51.8°F ; Dep. Nml.: -4.8°F) was the lowest such May reading in 30 years. Lows in many suburban locations fell into the thirties on several mornings with scattered frost reported in some areas. The morning of the 8th featured the coldest conditions across the area as lows dipped below 32°F at IAD (31°F ; lowest May reading in more than ten years) and near freezing at BWI (33°F ; a daily record). There were 22 days with below normal temperatures at DCA and only 6 days with readings at or above 80°F . The only summerlike heat occurred on the 19th (the same date as last year's first $90^{\circ}\text{F}+$ reading) as temperatures in the Washington/Baltimore area soared above 90°F for the first time this year. Both DCA and DAA topped 95°F with highs of 96°F (tied daily record) and 97°F , respectively.

Much like April, most of the monthly precipitation fell during the last week. Once again precipitation totals prior to this time were less than an inch across most areas. In fact, DCA recorded less than one-third of an inch from the 1st–24th. On the 25th and 26th however, a narrow band of beneficial soaking rains fell on most of the local area with 2-day totals topping 2 inches at the three major airports, but just to the north, west and southeast of this area precipitation totals remained under an inch.

MAY 1997 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA:

Station Location	Temperatures ($^{\circ}\text{F}$)					Extreme/Day		Precipitation (In)			
	AvMx	AvMn	AvgT	NmlT	DepNml	MaxT	MinT	Total	Norm	DepNml	Yr to Date
National (DCA)	74.0	51.8	62.9	66.4	-3.5	96/19	42/8	3.04	3.66	-0.62	14.58
Baltimore (BWI)	72.2	46.8	59.5	63.4	-3.9	93/19	33/8	3.01	3.72	-0.71	16.15
Dulles (IAD)	71.8	45.7	58.8	62.2	-3.4	92/19	31/8	2.86	4.02	-1.16	13.49
Ft. Belvoir (DAA)	75.9	48.4	62.1	N/A	N/A	97/19	36/8	1.88	3.8	-1.9	16.88
Andrews AFB (ADW)	71.6	48.2	59.9	N/A	N/A	92/19	39/8	2.23	4.0	-1.8	14.21

Other Occurrences:

SPRING (MARCH–MAY) 1997: The unusually cool conditions in both April and May were significant enough to overcome a mild March and produce a cooler than normal Spring in the Washington/Baltimore area. More than half of the March days were highlighted by warmer than normal conditions and included 11 days with $60^{\circ}\text{F}+$ readings at DCA. In addition, there were only two days with at or below freezing temperatures at DCA, the fewest such March days since 1973. In April, a persistently cool pattern developed and continued for the rest of Spring with only brief periods of warmer than normal conditions. For most locations it was the coolest April in more than ten years. Subnormal temperatures were observed on 23 April days at DCA and included a low of 28°F on the 10th, the lowest reading (tied with 28°F on February 13th) since January 30th. In addition, highs during April failed to top the 80°F mark for the first time since 1988. Cool conditions carried over into the final month of Spring (22 days with subnormal temperatures), with monthly departures of -3°F and lower recorded at the 3 major airports. There were only 6 days with highs of 80°F or greater and one day with $90^{\circ}\text{F}+$ readings. Seasonal temperature departures of -1.5°F or lower were common at the three major airports.

Seasonal precipitation was near normal across most of the area. March got off to a wet start with more than 2 inches of rain soaking parts of the local area between the 1st and 3rd. Monthly totals ranged from 4–6 inches at the five airports. Measurable precipitation fell on 14 March days at DCA, including 6 of the first 10 days. The month ended on a wintry note as heavy snow fell across northeastern Maryland, leaving up to a foot of snow on the ground in Harford County, MD (up to 6 inches in Baltimore), but only snow showers in the Washington area. The final two months of Spring had similar precipitation scenarios with very little precipitation falling before the final week of the month. During April, less than an inch of rain was observed at DCA from the 1st–26th. On April 27th–28th, more than an inch of rain soaked most of the local area, pushing monthly totals to just under normal at many locations. Subnormal precipitation fell again in May at most locations with deficits over half an inch at the 3 major airports. During the last week of May, soaking rains drenched much of the local area with over 2 inches observed at DCA, BWI, and IAD.

SPRING 1997 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA:

Station Location	Temperatures ($^{\circ}\text{F}$)					Extreme/Mth–Day		Precipitation (In)			
	AvMx	AvMn	AvgT	NmlT	DepNml	MaxT	MinT	Total	Norm	DepNml	Snowfall
National (DCA)	65.2	45.1	55.2	56.8	-1.6	96/5–19	28/4–10	9.60	9.54	+0.06	T
Baltimore (BWI)	63.8	40.5	52.2	53.7	-1.5	93/5–19	23/3–17	11.08	10.19	+0.89	2.7
Dulles (IAD)	63.1	39.3	51.2	52.7	-1.5	92/5–19	23/3–16	9.82	10.30	-0.48	1.5
Ft. Belvoir (DAA)	67.7	43.0	55.4	N/A	N/A	97/5–19	27/3–16*	9.62	10.7	-1.1	T
Andrews AFB (ADW)	63.7	41.8	52.8	N/A	N/A	91/5–19	25/3–16*	9.43	10.6	-1.2	T

Other Occurrences: * March 17th.

LOOKING AHEAD TO JUNE: An Eighth Consecutive Drier Than Normal June?

As mentioned above, May precipitation was slightly below normal, marking the fourth such month in 1997 at DCA. Only March was wetter than normal with a surplus of about an inch, while precipitation for the 5-month period (January–May 1997) at DCA was about one-half inch below normal. Our attention now turns to June precipitation. If it ends with drier than normal conditions, it would mark the eighth consecutive such June and the fifth month of 1997 with subnormal precipitation at DCA. Below is a list of the last seven Junes and the corresponding total precipitation and departures from normal. [Normal June Precipitation at DCA: 3.38"]

Year	Total Precipitation (in.)	Dep. Nml. ($^{\circ}\text{F}$)	Year	Total Precipitation (in.)	Dep. Nml. ($^{\circ}\text{F}$)
1997	?	?	1993	1.73	-1.65
1996	3.14	-0.24	1992	2.35	-1.05
1995	2.42	-0.96	1991	1.27	-2.11
1994	1.59	-1.79	1990	3.14	-0.24