

Weather of 1992

Cool Year with Below Normal Precipitation, Record-Setting Snow Storm in December

After two record warm years in 1990 and 1991, temperatures in 1992 returned to below average, after a warm start. The predicted cool temperature pattern, due to the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo in June 1991, seemed to finally kick in around mid-March. The summer was cool with a notable lack of extreme heat, El Nino developed late in the year, and the area was surprised by a record-breaking snow storm in December.

The first half of January was quiet and mild. However, a strong cold front early on the 14th brought a surprise, severe mid-winter thunderstorm with torrential rain, hail and 60 mph wind gusts that sent trees toppling over. Following this front, temperatures were seasonably cold, and the season's first significant snow of 3.5" finally fell on the 25th.

February was another mild month with little snowfall. 3" of snow and ice fell on the 13th, but following this storm, there was a stretch of 15 consecutive days from the 14th-28th with every day reaching 40 or higher. The winter's high temperature peaked at 65 on the 23rd. Three days of steady rain from the 24th-26th pushed precipitation slightly above normal, with a total of 1.77" falling in that period.

Mother Nature threw us for a big loop in March, which began very balmy with a high of 75 on the 2nd and a record 72 on the 3rd. Every day from the 1st through the 10th was 50 or higher. However, winter made a dramatic late appearance after a cold front early on the 11th changed rain to snow, and high winds created blizzard conditions. 4 to 12 inches of snow fell in the area. An active weather pattern continued, as another winter storm on the 18th-19th brought 4" of snow and sleet, and 1.25" of precipitation. Another fast-moving storm dropped 5 inches of snow on the 22nd. More snow fell in March (15.5") than in the entire winter season from December 1991 to February 1992 (11.5").

April began chilly, with snow flurries on the 2nd and a high of only 36 on the 3rd. However, within a week, spring finally arrived, as temperatures reached 81 by the 11th with scattered thunderstorms. While April had below normal precipitation, we had a little bit of everything: Ice pellets, glaze, fog, thunder, hail (twice) and damaging winds.

May began warm with a high of 90 on the 2nd, but quickly turned cool. Heavy rains, totaling 1.84", fell on the 8th and 9th. This storm moved northwards from the southern Appalachians, where some of the higher peaks reported a record-smashing late-season snow up to 3 feet. Temperatures frequently struggled to reach 70 throughout much of May.

June began wet and cool, with heavy rains (1.74") on the 4th-5th. However, the remainder of the month was very dry and also very cool. With a mean temperature of 65.5 F, June went down as the 3rd coolest on record.

Thunderstorms, some strong to severe, were common in July. Precipitation was above normal for the first time since March. 15 days had measurable rainfall, and 12 days had thunder. Some wind damage was observed from severe storms on the 10th, while the heaviest rains fell towards the end of the month. 2.24" of rain fell from strong thunderstorms on the 23rd-24th, with 1.88" on the 24th setting a new daily record. Another 1.28" fell on the 26th-27th. Temperatures and high humidity made July feel more like summer, but again with a lack of extreme heat – the high only reached 90.

August 1992 turned out to be the coolest August on record, with a mean temperature of 67.5 F, and the summer of 1992 ranked 2nd coolest on record (mean temperature of 68.5 F), immediately following the hottest summer ever in 1991. Precipitation returned to below normal, with most of the month's rain (1.55") falling ahead of a cold front combined with the remnants of devastating Hurricane Andrew, on the 27th-28th. Many tornadoes were reported in the southern and eastern part of the state.

The first two fall months were very quiet, with the trend of below normal temperatures and precipitation continuing. September brought several light rainfall events, a couple of mild thunderstorms, and the season's first frost on the 30th.

October was very dry, in fact 2nd driest ever on record with only 0.67" rainfall. The highlight of the month was not even weather related: On the evening of the 9th, a spectacular meteorite rocketed across the sky, eventually smashing a car in Hagerstown. Talk about an unusual insurance claim! Winter made a brief early appearance on the 19th, when light showers of snow, sleet and freezing rain were observed.

Temperatures finally returned to above normal, albeit slightly, in November. Heavy rains, totaling 1.73", fell on the 1st-3rd, 1.40" on the 2nd. The 12th was quite a weather day. It began cool with dense fog, then became quite warm and sunny, before a cold front plowed through with heavy rain and damaging winds in excess of 50 mph. A half-inch of snow fell on the 15th from lake-effect snow showers. Dreary weather continued, as the 18th-24th had a full week (7 days) of consecutive days with measurable rainfall.

The highlight of December and in fact the entire year was the powerful Nor' Easter that exploded off the Carolina coast then battered the Mid-Atlantic with hurricane force winds, heavy rain and flooding. Inland, and at higher elevations, very heavy, wet snow fell. 23.5" of snow fell on the 10th-11th with 3.45" of precipitation meltdown. Damaging winds were reported at higher elevations. Piney Dam in eastern Garrett Co. reported an incredible 42 inches of snow from this storm, an unofficial state record for a single storm. The 20 inches of snow that fell on the 10th, along with the 2.80" of precipitation, both set all-time records for the month of December. Late in the month, on the 28th, a minor ice storm reeked havoc on holiday travel and caused several accidents along I-68 and other area roads. Though December was overall cold, and had a white Christmas, the final two days of 1992 were quite warm, reaching the mid 60s.

1992 Weather Statistics

1992 Monthly and Annual Climate Summary LaVale, MD, Allegany County Observer Nate Mullins Station Observation Time: Midnight Lat: 39.657780°, Long: - 78.821871°, Elevation 1016'										
Month	Temperature, ° F							Number of days		
	Mean Max	Mean Min	Mean Temp	Max Temp	Date	Min Temp	Date	Max ≥ 90	Max ≤ 32	Min ≤ 32
Jan	41.5	23.6	32.5	59	13	4	19	0	7	25
Feb	43.9	27.1	35.5	65	23	8	10	0	3	21
Mar	50.3	31.1	40.7	75	2	14	16	0	0	18
Apr	63.2	41.9	52.5	81	11	26	4	0	0	7
May	70.3	47.5	58.9	90	2	36	7	1	0	0
Jun	76.8	54.1	65.5	88	30	46	22	0	0	0
Jul	82.4	62.7	72.6	90	14*	52	6	2	0	0
Aug	78.3	56.6	67.5	90	11	46	30	1	0	0
Sep	73.9	52.1	63.0	87	10	34	30	0	0	0
Oct	65.3	37.9	51.6	81	15	23	20	0	0	9
Nov	51.1	35.3	43.2	68	3	20	16	0	0	11
Dec	38.5	25.5	32.0	65	31	10	27	0	4	28
Year	61.3	41.3	51.3	90	8/11*	4	1/19	4	14	119

Precipitation, Inches				Number of days				Snow/ice, Inches		
Month	Total Precip	Max Day	Date	> 0.01"	> 0.10"	> 0.50"	> 1.00"	Total Snow	Max Day	Date
Jan	1.54	0.52	23	11	3	1	0	5.8	3.5	25
Feb	2.88	0.69	25	8	6	3	0	4.2	3.0	13
Mar	4.92	0.84	18	14	9	5	0	15.5	5.0	22
Apr	1.78	1.15	21	9	3	1	1	0.1	0.1	2
May	3.70	1.12	8	11	8	3	1	-	-	-
Jun	2.01	1.01	5	6	3	2	1	-	-	-
Jul	5.78	1.88	24	15	11	3	1	-	-	-
Aug	2.43	1.22	28	9	5	1	1	-	-	-
Sep	1.88	0.57	6	12	5	1	0	-	-	-
Oct	0.67	0.21	24	7	3	0	0	0.1	0.1	19
Nov	4.02	1.40	2	15	7	2	1	0.7	0.5	15
Dec	4.84	2.80	10	13	6	3	1	25.0	20.0	10
Year	36.45	2.80	12/10	130	69	25	7	51.4	20.0	12/10
Note: * = also occurred on earlier dates that month										
Number of days with										
Month	Fog	Sleet	Glaze	Thunder	Hail	Dmg wind				
Jan	3	1	0	1	1	1				
Feb	5	1	1	0	0	0				
Mar	8	2	0	0	0	0				
Apr	2	1	1	5	2	1				
May	3	0	0	4	0	0				
Jun	2	0	0	1	0	0				
Jul	1	0	0	12	0	1				
Aug	6	0	0	4	0	0				
Sep	16	0	0	2	0	0				
Oct	5	1	1	2	0	0				
Nov	16	0	0	1	0	1				
Dec	3	2	1	0	0	0				
Year	70	8	4	32	3	4				