

Weather of 1994

Record January Arctic Outbreak, Severe Winter Storms, Rollercoaster Temperature and Precipitation Year

The winter of 1993-1994 was one of the most memorable in recent history. This was one of the coldest, snowiest and iciest winters on record. On the other hand, 1994 had its share of hot weather, with two months setting or tying record high mean temperatures. The precipitation and temperature patterns were very “bipolar” in that it was very cool then very warm; very wet then very dry. There were a number of records or near records for hot and cold temperatures and for wetness, snowiness and dryness. 1994 had the greatest range of extreme temperatures of any year on record, from 97 to -16, a 113-degree range!

The first three months of 1994 set a new record for the wettest and also the snowiest first three months of any year (records go back to 1948). 17.11” of precipitation fell, with 5.20”, 5.07” and 6.84” falling in January, February and March, respectively, all ranking in the top 5. The snow total for the first three months was a whopping 69.8 inches. January was the 2nd snowiest on record with 30.3 inches. The month began with a strong Nor’ Easter on the 3rd-4th that dumped 11.3” of snow. Ice and snow storms passed through on the 7th and 12th, respectively, before one of the most severe Arctic outbreaks on record hit the eastern U.S. From the 15th-21st. Six of seven low temperatures were sub-zero, three of them double digits below zero, and all 7 days were sub-freezing. The 19th tied January 21st, 1985, for the coldest temperature ever at -16. The high that day only reached +2, a record low max. The low hit -13 on the 21st. On the 17th, a foot (12.0”) of snow fell, bringing the snow depth to 2 feet. After temperatures finally moderated, a nasty ice storm on the 27th-28th brought a solid inch of sleet and freezing rain.

February was cold, but without the records that were set in January. However, the winter blitz of snow and ice storms continued. On the 3rd, a snow squall dumped 1-2 inches of snow in only 20 minutes. Then on the 8th-9th, one of the worst ice storms in years battered the Middle Atlantic. 3.3” of sleet and freezing rain accumulated, nearly 2 inches of total precipitation, paralyzing travel for days and causing sporadic power outages. The same system moved back north as a warm front, bringing another 5.5” of snow and ice on the 11th. After a brief, dramatic warm-up at mid-month, with temperatures peaking at 66 on the 20th, another major winter storm dumped 9 inches of heavy wet snow on the 22nd-23rd, along with more sleet and over 2 inches of water equivalent precipitation.

Winter wouldn’t let up in March. Another major Nor’ Easter pounded the Appalachians on the 1st-3rd, bringing another 12.3 inches of heavy, wet snow, and upwards of two feet in the mountains. A week later, another major winter storm brought heavy snow, sleet and freezing rain. 4” of snow/ice accumulated with 1.73” of precipitation on the 9th-10th. The season’s final measurable snow fell on the 18th, 1.5 inches, and the snow showers changed to rain and the season’s first thunderstorms. The winter of 1993-1994 had at least an inch of snow on the ground every day from December 21-March 21, extremely rare, and finished 2nd snowiest ever with a whopping 77.1 inches of snowfall. 1994 was the snowiest calendar year also with 71.1 inches. Meanwhile, March’s wetness continued with nearly 2 inches of rain on the 27th-29th.

After a brutal winter, April brought a dramatic reversal in the temperature pattern. It was very warm, in fact tying 1954’s monthly record of 57.0 F. April was much drier than the first three months, but still came up slightly above average after a string of wet days near mid-month. On the 13th, 1.64” of rain fell from a series of heavy thunderstorms.

However, just as quickly as the temperatures warmed up, they cooled down in May – literally. For the first time ever, May was actually *cooler* than April, with a mean temperature of 56.8 F, ranking it 3rd coolest on record. Precipitation was slightly below normal, with a wet first half and dry second half. Some large hail was reported in portions of the area on the 25th from a line of severe thunderstorms.

June continued the incredible 1994 rollercoaster temperature ride. After a cool start, an unusually intense early summer heat wave set in at mid-month, with 11 consecutive days in the 90s from the 13th-23rd and a high of 99 on the 16th. June in fact was the hottest on record with a mean temperature of 73.3 F. It was also the 5th driest with only 1.47” of rainfall, as thunderstorms missed us left and right, except on the evening of the 16th, when a rare southwestward-moving line of severe storms dumped .76” of rain in 15 minutes and also produced damaging winds in excess of 50 mph, along with dime-sized hail.

July was also a hot and uncomfortably humid month with 11 days in the 90s and no low temperatures below 55. Temperatures were well above normal again. Thunderstorms were numerous, most of them passing slightly south and east. Precipitation looked like it would finish below normal, but a surprise late-evening thunderstorm on the 31st dumped 1.25” of rain in only 45 minutes, along with 30 mph wind gusts, and precipitation wound up above normal again with 4.10” for the month.

August was cool and wet, with only one day reaching 90, after 21 90+ degree readings in June and July combined. The year’s heaviest rain of 2.55” fell on the 17th from the remnants of Tropical Storm Beryl. However, the rain came to an abrupt end in September and October, which each ranked 2nd driest ever with only 0.66” and 0.52” of rainfall, respectively, and, combined, were the driest September-October period on record. Temperatures were near average, with mild days and chilly nights.

Unusually warm temperatures returned during the final two months of 1994. In the midst of an Indian summer, a record of 79 was recorded on November 5th. The weather pattern also abruptly turned active again, with strong thunderstorms jolting everyone awake on the first morning of the month. There were many days with rain, including a 1.30” deluge on the evening of the 27th and early on the 28th that also included thunderstorms. Aside from a snow squall on the 23rd that dropped nearly an inch in 15 minutes, November was a very mild month, with a mean temperature of 46.9 F ranking it 4th warmest on record.

December continued quite mild and active, with most of the month’s precipitation falling during the first two-thirds of the month. Only a half-inch of snow and ice fell all month. The year ended with a treacherous ice storm on New Year’s Eve that glazed trees with a quarter-inch of freezing rain.

1994 Weather Statistics

1994 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	31.0	15.9	23.4	47	24	-16	19	0	13	27
Feb	40.2	21.2	30.7	66	20	6	2	0	9	27
Mar	48.3	29.7	39.0	78	23	18	17	0	2	25
Apr	71.2	42.7	57.0	89	26	25	8	0	0	6
May	69.5	44.1	56.8	89	23	35	14*	0	0	0
Jun	86.9	59.7	73.3	99	16	42	3	12	0	0
Jul	86.7	63.5	75.1	97	8	55	12	11	0	0
Aug	81.3	58.8	70.0	90	12	47	7	1	0	0
Sep	74.6	51.9	63.2	86	16	42	30	0	0	0
Oct	66.7	37.6	52.2	81	1	27	28	0	0	7
Nov	58.1	35.7	46.9	79	5	24	30	0	0	10
Dec	47.0	27.4	37.2	63	7*	18	30	0	2	26
Year	63.4	40.7	52.1	99	6/16	-16	1/19	24	26	128

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	5.20	1.22	17	12	9	6	1	30.3	12.0	17
Feb	5.07	1.70	23	14	7	4	2	21.0	8.0	23
Mar	6.84	1.30	9	17	13	5	3	18.5	8.5	2
Apr	3.77	1.64	13	13	6	3	1	-	-	-
May	3.37	1.31	7	12	7	1	1	-	-	-
Jun	1.47	0.76	16	8	5	1	0	-	-	-
Jul	4.10	1.25	31	10	9	4	1	-	-	-
Aug	4.86	2.55	17	12	5	2	1	-	-	-
Sep	0.66	0.18	22	7	4	0	0	-	-	-
Oct	0.52	0.18	2	5	2	0	0	-	-	-
Nov	4.06	1.08	27	13	8	4	1	0.8	0.8	23
Dec	3.22	0.68	5	14	8	3	0	0.5	0.3	31
Year	43.14	2.55	8/17	137	83	33	11	71.1	12.0	1/17
Note: * = also occurred on earlier dates that month										
Month	Number of days with									
	Fog	Sleet	Glaze	Thunder	Hail	Dmg wind				
Jan	5	3	2	0	0	0				
Feb	2	5	3	0	0	0				
Mar	5	2	2	2	0	0				
Apr	2	0	0	5	0	0				
May	2	0	0	5	1	0				
Jun	10	0	0	6	1	1				
Jul	9	0	0	10	0	0				
Aug	17	0	0	5	0	0				
Sep	11	0	0	1	0	0				
Oct	2	0	0	2	0	0				
Nov	8	1	0	2	0	0				
Dec	9	3	1	0	0	0				
Year	82	14	8	38	2	1				