

Central Indiana

March 2020

Climate Summary

Tied for 23rd Warmest on record at Indianapolis

39th Wettest on record at Indianapolis

Tied for 46th Least Snowiest on record at Indianapolis

Temperatures

March began on a mild note with highs in the 50s and 60s over the first 5 days of the month. Temperatures briefly dipped back into the 40s in many areas on the 6th and 7th before much warmer air returned with highs in the 60s for much of central Indiana from the 8th through the 10th. The passage of a frontal boundary brought temperatures back to seasonable levels over the following week with highs in the 40s and 50s. The coldest day during this period came on the 14th as temperatures struggled to climb out of the 30s and into the lower 40s with snow falling at times across the northern half of central Indiana.

Temperatures briefly turned warmer again on the 19th into the morning of the 20th ahead of a strong cold front before the coldest daytime highs of the entire month on the 21st and 22nd with many locations remaining in the 30s with damp, cloudy weather. Temperatures would gradually warm beginning on the 23rd, culminating in the warmest stretch of March coming from the 25th through the 30th as high temperatures were generally above 60°. As a warm front slowly drifted north through the area on the 27th and 28th, temperatures rose into the 70s and across southern counties, approached 80°. The month ended on a chilly note with highs largely in the 40s as a cool northerly flow with scattered light showers developed as an upper level disturbance passed through the Ohio Valley.

Temperatures averaged 4 to 6° above normal across central Indiana for March and for much of the area, it was the warmest March since 2016. At Indianapolis, the temperature never fell to 20° or lower, the first time that had happened in March since 2012 and only the 4th March that had happened since 1985.

Site	March 2020 Avg Temp	March 2020 Difference from Normal	Highest Temperature	Lowest Temperature
Indianapolis	46.2	+4.0	74 on 28	21 on 7
Lafayette	46.3	+5.5	74 on 28	18 on 7
Muncie	45.9	+6.3	72 on 28	23 on 7
Terre Haute	46.6	+3.8	74 on 28	20 on 7
Bloomington	48.0	+5.1	77 on 27	20 on 7
Shelbyville	47.5	+5.7	73 on 28	23 on 7
Indy – Eagle Crk.	45.8	+3.4	74 on 28	21 on 7

At Indianapolis, there were 22 days with above normal average temperatures and 9 days with below normal average temperatures.

March 2020 was tied for the 23rd warmest March in the Indianapolis area since weather records began in 1871.

Precipitation

March was an active month hydrologically for central Indiana, but not unusually so. Several rain events impacted the area at different times through the month, generally keeping rivers high for most of the month and producing minor flooding from near the middle of the month through the end of the month in some places.

Rainfall totals set up in a northwest to southeast gradient across central Indiana. Northwestern portions saw 2 to 4 inches, while central and southern portions saw 4 to 6 inches, with additional areas of 6 to 8 inches over south central and southeastern parts of central Indiana. Thus rainfall across the HSA ranged from near normal in the northwest to 150 to over 200% of normal around the southern half or so of the area.

Several significant rain events occurred during the month of March and led to periods of minor flooding. The first event occurred on the first of the month across southern Indiana where 1 to 2 inches of rain fell. This led to the falling river levels on the East Fork White briefly rising, but led to no new flooding. Flooding would return after a series of rainy days (along with the only measurable snow for the month for Indianapolis on the

14th) from March 13th to the 15th where 2 to 3 inches of rain fell. This led to widespread minor flooding along the main stem rivers which would continue through the end of the month across the southern White and Wabash basins.

Conditions were seasonably dry for much of the latter half of March with rain amounts generally less than an inch except for a locally heavy area of rain across southeastern Indiana on March 20th which brought flash flooding to portions of the upper East Fork White basin and some moderate flooding along several of the East Fork White tributaries. Mostly dry conditions prevailed afterwards until a heavy rain and severe weather event on March 28th brought locally heavy rain and renewed flooding for portions of the White and Wabash Rivers. Significant flash flooding occurred in the headwaters of the White River where a series of thunderstorms brought repeated heavy rain to the area.

Site	March 2020 Precipitation	March 2020 Difference from Normal	Wettest Day	Longest Dry Stretch
Indianapolis	4.68	+1.12	1.05 on 18	2 days 7-8
Lafayette	3.08	+0.41	0.56 on 18 and 19	2 days 7-8 and 30-31
Muncie	4.39	+1.44	1.62 on 28	2 days 7-8
Terre Haute	3.73	+0.36	0.88 on 19	2 days 4-5, 7-8, 25-26 and 30-31
Bloomington	6.63	+2.75	2.36 on 19	2 days 4-5, 7-8 and 29-30
Shelbyville	5.57	+2.14	1.48 on 19	2 days 4-5 and 7-8
Indy–Eagle Crk.	2.89	-0.41	1.24 on 28	2 days 7-8

March 2020 was the 39th wettest in the Indianapolis area since weather records began in 1871.

Severe Weather

A few strong thunderstorms produced small hail late in the evening of the 2nd and the early morning of the 3rd to the northwest of Indianapolis. Early in the morning of the 20th, strong storms produced gusty winds over southern portions of central Indiana ahead of a cold front.

The first severe weather of the year came in multiple waves on the 28th. Thunderstorms developed in the vicinity of a warm front around midday throughout the afternoon and

produced large hail across portions of central Indiana, including up to golf ball size hail in Shelbyville in Shelby County and Anderson in Madison County. Hail covered the ground in spots across the northern Indianapolis suburbs through Boone and Hamilton Counties. Another round of severe storms impacted the region during the late evening with wind gusts measured in excess of 65 mph. Microbursts were responsible for roof and shingle damage to homes in Mooresville in Morgan County and to the north of McCordsville in Hamilton County.

For information on severe weather in other areas during March, visit the Storm Prediction Center “Severe Weather Event Summaries” website at <http://www.spc.noaa.gov/climo/online/>.

Miscellaneous

The maximum wind gust at the Indianapolis International Airport was 52 mph from the southwest on the 29th in the wake of a strong cold front. Fog or haze was reported at Indianapolis on 19 days during the month, with dense fog occurring on 3 days. Thunder occurred on 5 days in March at Indianapolis with ice pellets being reported on the 14th and 22nd.

April 2020 Outlook

The official outlook for April 2020 from the Climate Prediction Center indicates a greater chance of above normal temperatures across central Indiana. At Indianapolis, the average temperature for the month is 53.0 degrees. The outlook also calls for a greater chance of above normal precipitation. The average precipitation for April at Indianapolis is 3.81”, with 0.2” of snowfall.

Data prepared by the Indianapolis Forecast Office.