



NWS Des Moines

Cover Photo: On April 19th, 2021 light snow fell across central and southern Iowa. The official measurement at our office in Johnston and at the Des Moines airport was 0.8", bringing the season total up to 56.6" - the 11th snowiest on record.

The Weather Whisper

May 2021

Spotter Training 2021 Wrap Up

Brooke Hagenhoff, Meteorologist

NWS Des Moines wrapped up another successful spotter training season in April, conducting 6 virtual training sessions and 1 virtual advanced training session. The virtual format has proven extremely popular with nearly a thousand attendees. Meanwhile the advanced training, which digs into the mechanics of storm development and radar interpretation, saw over 400 attendees.

Spotters play an important role in the warning process by supplying ground truth information in addition to the

environmental and radar data that NWS staff use in making warning decisions. Radar data can become limited as distance from the radar increases, with the beam widening and the beam height increasing, making it difficult to see details in the lower levels of storms. Real-time spotter reports help to fill the gap and provide ground truth information about storms. Sometimes this information can make the difference between a warning or no warning. While training is wrapping up for this season, spotters can still access training materials available on our [website](#).

Submit a Report

Phone

800- SKYWARN (759-9276)

Text message

(515) 240-5515

Online

<https://inws.ncep.noaa.gov/report/>

Email

dmx.spotterreport@noaa.gov

Facebook

[US National Weather Service Des Moines IA](#)

Twitter

[@NWSDesMoines](#)

SPOTTER TRAINING 2021

6	979	407	400
<i>virtual sessions</i>	<i>basic session attendees</i>	<i>advanced session attendees</i>	<i>new registered spotters</i>

Des Moines • Iowa

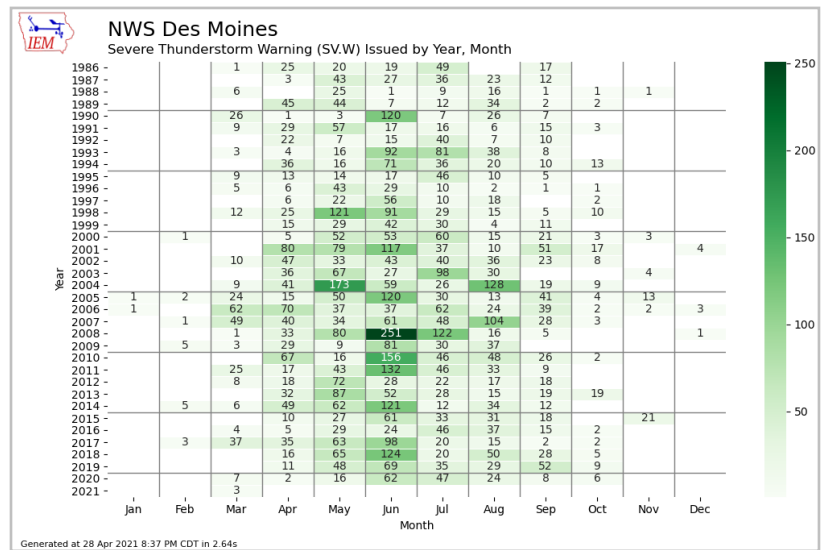
Severe Weather Season Off to a Slow Start

Brooke Hagenhoff, Meteorologist

The severe season is off to a remarkably slow start in for NWS Des Moines with only 3 severe thunderstorm warnings issued so far this year, all on March 10th. Since 1986 the office has averaged about 34 severe thunderstorm warnings by the end of April. While a quiet start is certainly welcome, it is not indicative of how the rest of the season will go. Other years that started off slow ended as significant seasons—including 1993 with record setting flooding and 2008 which is the most active severe season on record for number of warnings issued.

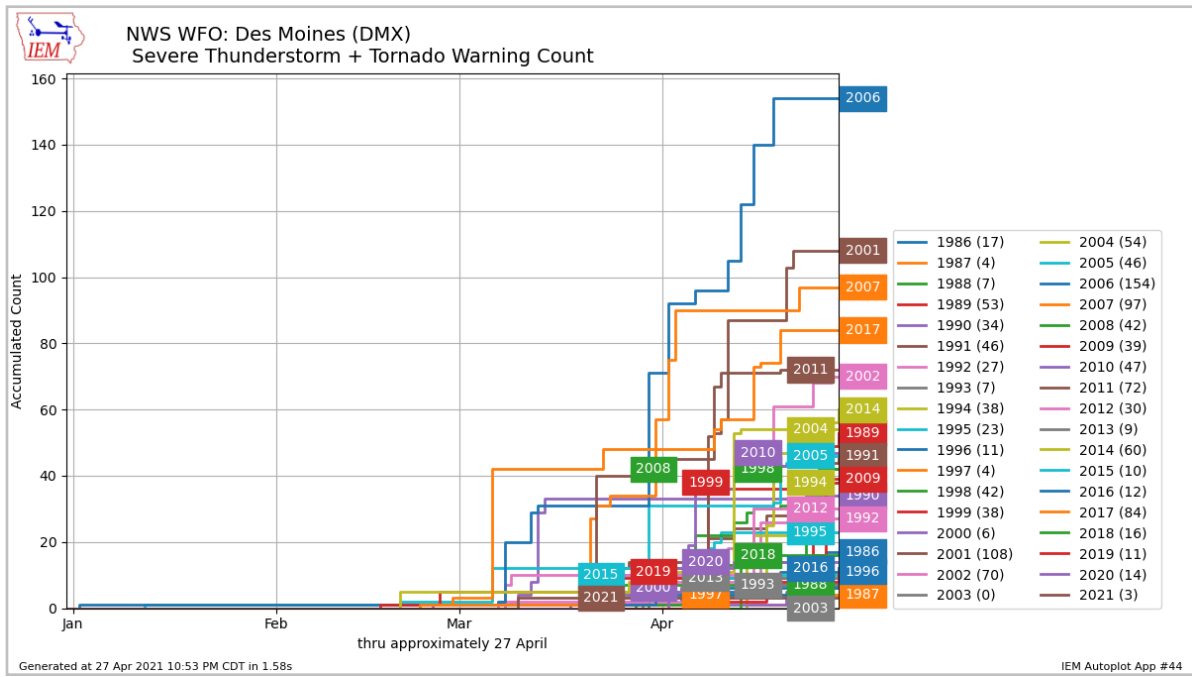
In Iowa, storm activity typically ramps up through the month of May with a peak occurring in June. By September storm frequency tapers off quickly, though NWS Des Moines has issued severe thunderstorms warnings in every month of the year (yes, even December, January, and February).

Remember it only takes one—one bad storm, one bad day—to change the whole season. Are you ready?



Monthly distribution of severe thunderstorm warnings.

Graphics courtesy of Iowa Environmental Mesonet and they can be generated here: mesonet.agron.iastate.edu/plotting/auto/



Total severe thunderstorm and tornado warnings issued through the end of April, by year. Notice this year we've only had 3 warnings for central Iowa.



9607 NW Beaver Drive
Johnston, Iowa 50131
Phone: 515-270-2614

Editor E-mail:
Kenneth.Podrazik@noaa.gov
Brooke.Hagenhoff@noaa.gov