

JANUARY 2002: Abnormally warm and dry weather continued through January across the Washington/ Baltimore area. In fact, monthly temperature departures exceeded +6°F at both DCA and BWI and topped +7°F at IAD, yielding the third warmest January on record at both BWI and IAD (13th warmest at DCA). The month commenced with the coldest air of the season, producing highs in the thirties during much of the first week at most locations. Lows during this same period fell into the teens in suburban locations, including IAD where the mercury plunged to 12°F on the 2nd. The cold weather was short-lived, however, and after the 8th only one day (19th) with subnormal temperatures was observed at DCA. Mild conditions prevailed around mid-month, yielding a few days when temperatures averaged 10°F or more above normal. Abnormally warm conditions enveloped the local area towards the end of the month, producing highs that frequently topped 60°F and one day (30th) when readings soared near 80°F at DCA. Temperatures during the last 10 days averaged more than 15°F above normal at DCA and included daily record highs at both DCA (77°F) and BWI (70°F) on the 30th and at IAD on the 28th (68°F) and 30th (70°F). The record high at DCA (on the 30th) also equaled the second highest January reading ever recorded in Washington. A high of 74°F at IAD on the 29th was not a daily record high, but was the second highest (tied with January 4, 1997) January temperature ever recorded at the airport. The prolonged warmth resulted in 16 days with highs at or above 50°F at DCA (normal January maximum temperatures are 42°F-43°F at DCA), and 15 days at both BWI and IAD. Abnormal warmth in December combined with that in January, yielded the fourth warmest December-January period on record at DCA, 2nd at BWI (tied with 1971-72) and the warmest such period ever at IAD.

Subnormal precipitation was observed across the region during the first month of 2002 with monthly totals generally less than two inches (between 40-60% of the normal) at most locations. In fact, it was the driest January since 1981 at DCA & IAD. In addition, January marked the sixth consecutive month with below normal precipitation at DCA (fifth consecutive month with less than two inches), fifth consecutive at BWI and fourth consecutive at IAD. Dry weather since last summer has led to reduced reservoir and ground water levels across much of the mid-Atlantic region, prompting a change from a "drought watch" to a "drought warning" for the central and eastern shore of Maryland, according to press reports. Precipitation deficits from August 1, 2001-January 31, 2002 exceeded 11" at DCA and 7" at both BWI and IAD. The most significant precipitation event during January occurred on the 6th when a steady rainfall produced between 0.50" and 1.00" at most locations. The precipitation initially began as snow and ended as a wintry mixture, yielding little or no measurable accumulation at most locations. The first 1"+ snowfall of the season fell on the 19th with 2"4" blanketing most of the local area. The storm caused few traffic problems since it fell on a weekend. In sharp contrast, ten days earlier (9th) a brief, early morning period of freezing rain coated roads with a thin layer of ice creating extremely hazardous driving conditions across portions of the area and contributed to hundreds of accidents during the morning rush hour, according to press reports. On the 3rd, a snowstorm trekked to the south of the Washington/Baltimore area and eventually out to sea. Although the local area missed the snow, southern Maryland and Stafford & Spotsylvania counties in Virginia were blanketed with up to 10 inches of snow. Monthly snowfall totals at DCA, BWI and IAD were all below normal. In fact, it was the fifth January out of the last six with subnormal snowfall at all three major airports.

JANUARY 2002 WEATHER STATISTICS FOR THE WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE AREA:

Station Location	Temperatures (°F)					Extreme/Day		Precipitation (In)			
	AvMx	AvMn	AvgT	NmlT	DepNml	MaxT	MinT	Total	Norm	DepNml	Snow
National (DCA)	49.7	33.5	41.6	34.9	+6.7	77/30	20/1	1.32	3.21	-1.89	2.7
Baltimore (BWI)	49.2	29.0	39.1	32.3	+7.4	72/29	16/1	2.19	3.47	-1.28	2.3
Dulles (IAD)	48.9	29.6	39.2	31.7	+6.9	74/29	12/2	1.22	3.05	-1.83	2.6
Andrews AFB (ADW)	49.5	31.1	40.3	N/A	N/A	77/30	18/1	1.84	3.1	-1.3	2.0

LOOKING AHEAD: *The 1971-2000 Normals at DCA.*

Just recently the 1971-2000 normals were recently released for the local area. The table below lists the old normals (1961-1990) and the new normals (1971-2000) for average temperature and total precipitation for each month along with the corresponding change at DCA.

Month	1961-1990 Normals	1971-2000 Normals	Change	1961-1990 Normals	1971-2000 Normals	Change
	Avg. Temp. (°F)	Avg. Temp. (°F)		(°F)	Tot. Prec. (In.)	
January	34.6	34.9	+0.3	2.72	3.21	+0.49
February	37.5	38.1	+0.6	2.71	2.63	-0.08
March	47.2	46.5	-0.7	3.17	3.60	+0.43
April	56.5	56.1	-0.4	2.71	2.77	+0.06
May	66.4	65.6	-0.8	3.66	3.82	+0.16
June	75.6	74.5	-1.1	3.38	3.13	-0.25
July	80.0	79.2	-0.8	3.80	3.66	-0.14
August	78.5	77.4	-1.1	3.91	3.44	-0.47
September	71.3	70.5	-0.8	3.31	3.79	+0.48
October	59.7	58.8	-0.9	3.02	3.22	+0.20
November	49.8	48.7	-1.1	3.12	3.03	-0.09
December	39.4	39.5	+0.1	3.12	3.05	-0.07
Annual	58.0	57.5	-0.5	38.63	39.35	+0.72

