

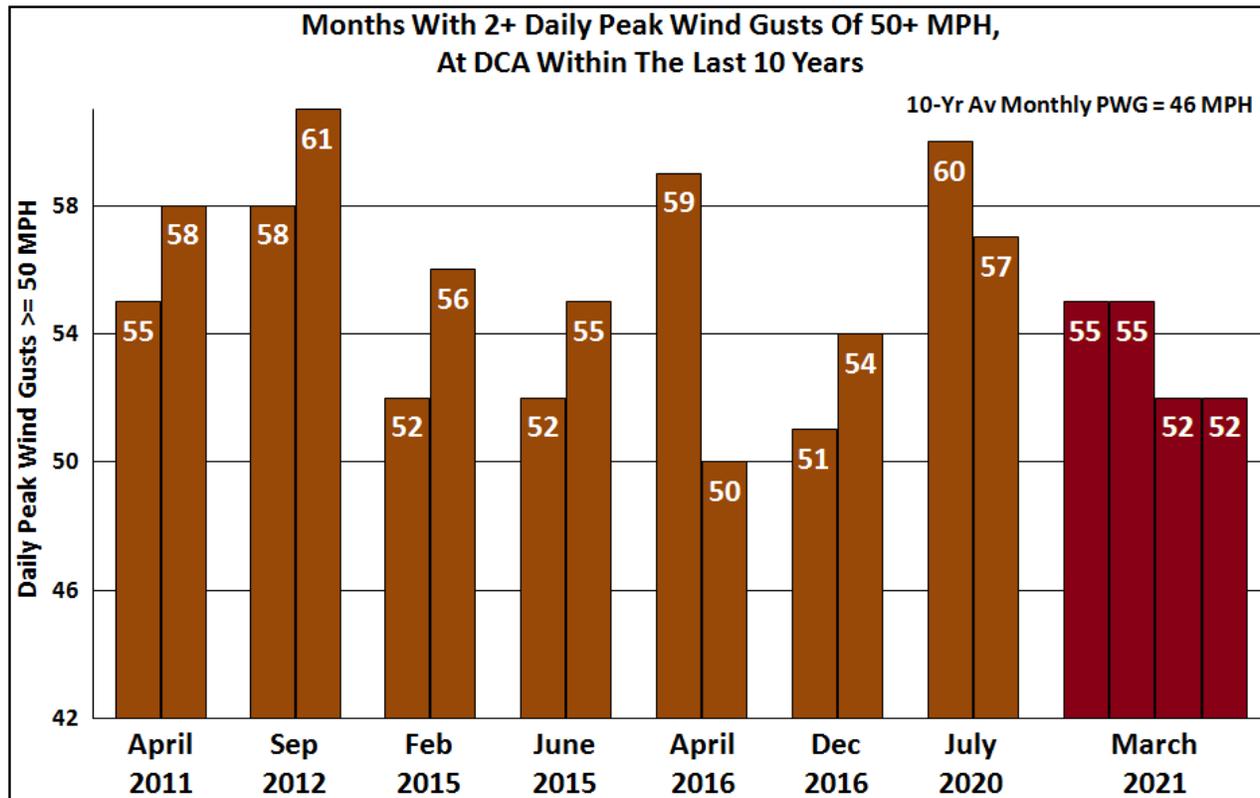


PRESTO

PREcipitation Summary and Temperature Observations
For the Washington, DC and Baltimore, MD Area



MARCH 2021: Windy and Warm with Dry Start, Wet Finish



March Highlights

- Well above normal temperatures: DCA 46.8°F (+4.4°F), BWI 43.6°F (+5.1°F) and IAD 44.2°F (+4.1°F).
- The major airports reported near or normal rainfall: DCA, 3.80" (+0.32"); BWI 3.90" (0.00") and IAD, 2.27" (-1.11").
- On the 1st, Shady Grove, (Greene County), VA, reported a peak gust of 55 mph.
- The area basked in record high temperatures on the 11th; DCA, BWI and IAD each set daily record highs of 79°F.
- On the 12th, BWI had a record warm minimum of 55°F and IAD had a record warm minimum temperature of 54°F.
- Gusty winds returned on the 14th in much of the area with a peak gust of 55 mph at DCA, 54 mph at BWI and 47 mph at IAD; DCA's reading was its strongest since a 60 mph gust on July 6, 2020; at BWI, since a 57 mph gust on April 13, 2020.
- On the 18th-19th, gusty winds returned with a peak gust of 53 mph near Point Lookout, (St. Mary's County), MD.
- The first heavy rain of the month, in the metro areas and east, occurred on the 24th. BWI and DCA set daily records with 1.55" and 1.69", respectively. DCA and BWI also set daily record warm minimums that day: 54°F and 53°F, respectively.
- On the 26th, damaging winds struck Grantsville, (Garrett County), MD, with a peak gust of 58 mph. DCA's peak gust was 55 mph, BWI, 46 mph, and IAD, 38 mph. IAD set a daily record maximum temperature of 81°F and a warm minimum of 57°F.
- More damaging gusts occurred on 28th and 29th, when a peak gust of 63 mph was measured at a buoy near Dundalk, (Baltimore County) MD. A 60 mph gust was recorded in Petersburg (Grant County), WV. Cecil County, MD, had reports of downed trees and winds at 60 mph or greater. IAD had a gust of 53 mph, DCA and BWI had peak gusts of 52 mph.

March 2021

Temperatures: The first month of meteorological spring continued the trend of well above normal temperatures for the area. Temperatures ranged from 4–5 degrees above average for most locations: DCA, 51.2°F (+4.4°F), BWI, 48.7°F (+5.1°F) and IAD 48.3°F (+4.1°F). All three airports set a daily record high temperature on the 11th with 79°F. Although no records were broken, on the 26th, DCA hit 84°F, BWI, 83°F and IAD, 81°F.

Precipitation and Wind: The first half of the month was very dry but then turned wetter with the major airports reporting near normal, normal and below normal totals: DCA, 3.80" (+0.32"); BWI 3.90" (0.00") and IAD, 2.27" (-1.11"). The only measurable snow for the month was reported in Garrett County, MD, marking only the 4th time since 1985 with no March snow in most of the area. The heaviest rain, for most of the area, occurred on the 24th with totals as high as 2.60" in Pleasant Hills (Harford County), MD; 1.67" in Mount Vernon (Fairfax County), VA; and 1.51" at the Southwest Waterfront, D.C.

Although the month's final precipitation totals were near normal, precipitation was far from normal. Most of the metro areas had little or no precipitation from the afternoon of the 1st through the afternoon of the 16th. The three airports observed no measurable precipitation for 16 consecutive days (2nd-17th), which was the longest such period since September 2019; and the longest during March since 2006 at DCA and BWI, and since 1986 at IAD. It was the longest such dry stretch in eastern Montgomery County and many other areas since a 23 consecutive-day period from September 15 through October 7, 2017.

The highest barometric pressure corrected for sea level at DCA for March was 30.63" on the morning of the 20th, this total was the highest March pressure since 2018. The lowest barometer was 29.45" on the afternoon of the 28th and was followed by strong winds that cause some damage across the area. (*Our thanks to contributor Sheldon Kusselson*).

March 2021 Weather Statistics for the Washington/Baltimore Area

Location	Station Temperatures (°F)					Extreme/Day		Precipitation (inches)			
	AvMx	AvMin	AvgT	NmlT	DepNml	Max	Min	Total	Nml	DepNml	Year to Date
National (DCA)	60.9	41.4	51.2	46.8	+4.4	84/26	28/5,7	3.80	3.48	+0.32	10.39
Baltimore (BWI)	59.8	37.6	48.7	43.6	+5.1	83/26	22/7,8	3.90	3.90	0.00	10.90
Dulles (IAD)	60.1	36.5	48.3	44.2	+4.1	81/26	18/7	2.27	3.38	-1.11	8.43

Looking Ahead to April: The month started cold with a few days of hard freezes within the first 4 days. Many are wondering if we have had the last freeze for the season. A freeze in April and even May cannot be ruled out. The average date of the last freeze for the spring in and near the Washington, D.C., metro area is in late March. For the Baltimore metro area, the average date is in the first 10 days of April. For IAD, the average date ranges from the 2nd or 3rd week of April. For areas further north and west, the average date of the last freeze in spring is the 3rd or 4th week of April.

In 2020, there were freezing temperatures and frost across much of the area on May 9 and May 10. In 2002, there were below freezing temperatures across much of the area on May 21 and May 22. Washington's latest freezing temperature or lower on record is April 29, 1874. For Baltimore, the latest freezing temperature or lower on record occurred on May 11, 1966, and for IAD, the last freezing temperature or lower occurred on May 22, 2002. Below is a list of the latest 32°F or lower readings at DCA and IAD for the last 10 years.

DCA				IAD			
Year	Date of last 32°F or lower reading	Year	Date of last 32°F or lower reading	Year	Date of last 32°F or lower reading	Year	Date of last 32°F or lower reading
2020	March 1 (26°F)	2015	March 29 (28°F)	2020	April 3 (30°F)	2015	Feb. 27 (32°F)*
2019	March 8 (32°F)	2014	March 27 (27°F)	2019	March 27 (27°)	2014	April 21 (31°F)
2018	March 21 (32°F)	2013	April 4 (31°F)	2018	April 30 (31°F)	2013	April 4 (31°F)
2017	March 23 (30°F)	2012	March 6 (29°F)	2017	April 9 (32°F)	2012	April 25 (31°F)
2016	April 10 (31°F)	2011	March 28 (31°F)	2016	April 14 (31°F)	2011	April 6 (30°F)

*Earliest last freeze in IAD's recorded history.