Summary: Temperatures were below normal during much of March, particularly at the beginning and again just after mid-month. Mean air temperatures overall were below normal in most places and it was the coldest March for between 5 and 10 years generally; the mean values for this month were lower than those for either December or January of the previous winter at many stations. Severe frost developed at the beginning of the month, when air temperatures fell below -5°C and ground temperatures below -10°C at inland stations; Birr’s ground temperature of -16.0°C on the 3rd was its lowest such value for March since the station opened in 1954. The early part of the month also brought widespread snowfall, mainly in the form of showers, but amounts were generally small. Rainfall totals overall were higher than normal at all stations, however, largely due to spells of wet weather in the periods 6th to 13th and 24th to 31st. It was the wettest March for between 8 and 18 years in most places, although the number of wetdays during the month (days with 1mm or more rainfall) was in the normal range for March.
between 14 and 20. After a very sunny start to the month, mainly cloudy conditions prevailed thereafter. Sunshine totals were below normal everywhere and it was the dullest March for between 6 and 8 years at almost all stations.

1st to 5th: An Arctic airstream covered Ireland, associated with a stationary low pressure system in the North Sea. This very cold northerly flow brought widespread wintry showers at first; these were generally light but there were some heavier falls near northern and western coasts. Showers became more isolated as winds eased, but widespread severe frost developed, with freezing fog in places also. Long sunny spells each day,

Tornadoes in County Cavan on 31st

Heavy showers over midland areas developed into thunderstorms during the afternoon of the 31st. During one of these intense shower events, two separate tornadoes developed simultaneously near the town of Bailieboro, Co. Cavan. Damage was reported to the roofs of several buildings, branches were blown from trees and electricity supplies were cut to 1000 homes in the area. (picture below courtesy The Anglo-Celt)
especially in the southeast.

6th to 13th: Atlantic frontal systems brought a spell of more unsettled weather everywhere, with rain or showers developing each day; rainfall amounts were highest in the period 7th/8th and on the 13th. Winds were mainly from a south or southwesterly direction and were strong on several days, reaching gale force at times at coastal stations between the 9th and 13th. Temperatures rose above normal for most of the period, but there was a widespread ground frost on the 11th. Sunshine amounts were low except on the 10th.

14th to 23rd: High pressure to the north of the country brought mostly dry weather, although the prevailing east or northeasterly wind generated some wintry showers along Irish Sea coasts. This was a cold wind of eastern European origin, bringing low relative humidity values, especially in western areas. Temperatures again fell below normal, with more severe frost developing between the 21st and 23rd.

24th to 31st: Milder weather became re-established as Atlantic frontal systems dominated. Spells of rain or showers were heavy at times, while a tornado developed near Bailieboro, Co. Cavan, on the 31st (see page 2). Strong southwest to westerly winds on several days.

Wind and elements: Mean windspeeds for the month were between 8 and 12 knots generally (15 and 22 km/ hour) and were up to 17 knots (31 km/ hour) at Malin Head; these values are close to normal for March. The highest gust, 55 knots (102 km/ hour), was measured at Belmullet on the 9th. There were isolated thunderstorms on the 3rd, 5th, 9th and 31st while hail showers were recorded in the periods 1st to 6th, 9th to 10th, 16th to 17th and 28th to 29th. Snow was recorded between the 1st and 5th, on the 9th, between the 16th and 17th and on the 21st. Fog was most widespread on the 2nd, 7th, 12th and in the period 24th to 27th.
# Wind & Elements

## Wind (Knots)

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<th>Mean speed</th>
<th>Max. 10-min. mean speed</th>
<th>Max. dir. speed</th>
<th>Days with gales</th>
<th>Hours with gale gusts</th>
<th>Snow</th>
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## Frequency of Wind Direction

**Valentia Observatory**

- Calm: 0.0%

**Dublin Airport**

- Calm: 0.0%
There was little variation in mean sea level pressure values for the month across the country, which ranged from 1006hPa in the northwest to almost 1008hPa in the southeast, around 6hPa below normal for March everywhere. Pressure was below normal throughout most of March, but rose above normal around mid-month as an anticyclone lay to the north of the country. Both the highest and lowest pressure of the month were recorded at Malin Head, with values of 1037.1hPa on the 16th and 978.5hPa on the 28th.

### Summary of Mean Monthly Values

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<tr>
<th>Buoy</th>
<th>Sea surface temp. (°C)</th>
<th>Mean wind speed (knots)</th>
<th>Max. 10-min wind (knots)</th>
<th>Mean wave height (m.)</th>
<th>Max. wave height (m.)</th>
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**Malin Head** 7.7 (0.6°C above normal)
Acid rain occurs when pollutants combine with moisture in the air to form sulphuric or nitric acid. pH is the simplest way of measuring the acidity of precipitation. Usually pH of 7.00 is considered neutral but this is not the case in rainfall samples. Pure water in the atmosphere has an equilibrium pH value of 5.65 at 20°C owing to carbon dioxide in the air dissolving to form carbonic acid. Any value below pH 5.65 is considered acid while any value above is considered alkaline.

Sulphur dioxide and sulphate in air contribute to the formation of sulphuric acid; nitrate in air contributes to the formation of nitric acid.

Conductivity measures the total ion activity in the rainfall, i.e. the higher the conductivity the greater the number of ions present.
### 10-day values for selected Adrometeorological Stations

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Station</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% of Average</th>
<th>Rainfall</th>
<th>Temperature</th>
<th>Sunshine</th>
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<tr>
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### Measured Potential Evapotranspiration (P.E.) and Soil Moisture

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<th>Soil Moisture (mm)</th>
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### Monthly Evaporation (mm) from Class A Pan

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### Global Solar Radiation (MJ/sq. m.)

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**Notes:**
- **AGMET** refers to the Agricultural Meteorological Service.
- **P.E. (Penman)** is calculated using the Penman equation, which considers evaporation from a bare soil surface.
- **Soil Moisture** is measured at 30cm depth at 0900h.
- **Monthly Evaporation** is calculated based on monthly rainfall.
- **Global Solar Radiation** is the total radiation received in a month, measured in MJ/sq. m.
- **Sunshine** is the total number of hours with direct sunlight.

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**Authors:**
- [Full list of authors]

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**Figure Information:**
- **Month:** March 2006
- **Title:** AGMET
- **Page:** 7

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**Additional Notes:**
- **Adrometeorological Stations** are locations where meteorological data is collected.
- **Rainfall** is measured in millimeters.
- **Temperature** includes maximum, minimum, and average daily temperatures.
- **Sunshine** includes total number of hours with direct sunlight.
- **Soil Moisture** is measured at different depths and at different times of the day.
Wednesday 1st: Very cold overnight with a sharp to severe ground frost and scattered wintry showers of hail, sleet and snow, mainly along Atlantic coasts and in Ulster. The day was cold and sunny with the wintry showers continuing, again mainly in the west and north. Very cold again after dark with frost settling in quickly. Light to moderate northwesterly winds, gusty at times in the north.

Rainfall: nil to 10 mm, heaviest at Knock Airport, nil in the east

Temperature: max. 1°C to 6°C, min. -4°C to 1°C, ground temperatures below zero at most stations, down to -9°C at Shannon Airport

Sunshine: 4 to 9 hours, sunniest at Mullingar, 4 hours at Belmont

Thursday 2nd: Bitterly cold overnight with sub-zero air temperatures and a sharp to severe ground frost. Some wintry showers in north Connacht and Ulster. A very cold but sunny day generally with afternoon temperatures well below normal. Some scattered wintry showers along Atlantic coastal areas but mainly dry elsewhere. Bitterly cold again after dark with sharp to severe ground frost developing quickly. Winds were mostly light and variable in direction.

Rainfall: nil generally, 4mm at Malin Head, 3mm at Belmont

Temperature: max. 3°C to 6°C, min. -6°C to -1°C, ground temperatures below zero at all stations, down to -14°C at Birr

Sunshine: 1 to 9 hours, sunniest at Rosslare, 1 hour at Valentia

Friday 3rd: Very cold overnight with a severe frost and freezing fog in places. A band of snow moved into the north towards noon, progressing southwards through the afternoon to affect Ulster, north Connacht and north Leinster. A band of snow moved into the north towards noon, progressing southwards through the afternoon to affect Ulster, north Connacht and north Leinster. A band of snow moved into the north towards noon, progressing southwards through the afternoon to affect Ulster, north Connacht and north Leinster. A band of snow moved into the north towards noon, progressing southwards through the afternoon to affect Ulster, north Connacht and north Leinster.

Rainfall: nil to 4mm, heaviest at Malin Head

Temperature: max. 3°C to 7°C, min. -8°C to 0°C, ground temperatures below zero at all stations, down to -16°C at Birr

Sunshine: 5 to 10 hours, sunniest at Kilkenny, 5 hours at Casement Aerodrome

Saturday 4th: Showers in the west overnight, some of hail, but dry and frosty in most areas with some fog in places also. The showers continued in western areas throughout the day while remaining mostly dry elsewhere with sunshine. Frost again in all areas after dark. Winds were light northwesterly.

Rainfall: nil to 1mm generally, 3mm at Knock Airport, 2mm at Belmont

Temperature: max. 4°C to 8°C, min. 3°C to -7°C, ground temperatures below zero at most stations, down to -15°C at Birr

Sunshine: 5 to 10 hours, sunniest at Rosslare, 5 hours at Malin Head

Sunday 5th: Showers along western coastal areas overnight, some of hail, while the rest of the country remained dry with a widespread frost. The showers continued in the west during the morning, mostly dry with sunny spells over the rest of the country. Showers became more widespread during the afternoon, but still with some sunny spells in places. During the late evening and night the showers died out and frost returned to most areas. Winds were north to northwesterly light to moderate, stronger in the north.

Rainfall: nil to 5mm, heaviest at Valletta

Temperature: max. 6°C to 10°C, min. -3°C to 4°C, ground temperatures below zero at most stations, down to -8°C at Kilkenny

Sunshine: 5 to 9 hours, sunniest at Cork Airport, 5 hours at Malin Head

Monday 6th: The last of the cold weather gave severe frost to many eastern and southern areas. Scattered showers on exposed northern and western coasts. By late morning there were sunny spells in most parts, however during the afternoon thickening cloud in the west gave way to outbreaks of rain and this rain progressed eastwards, gradually reaching all areas by the end of the day. Winds were light to moderate, north or northwesterly, backing southerly.

Rainfall: <1 to 1mm, heaviest at Valletta, <1mm at Casement Aerodrome

Temperature: max. 7°C to 11°C, min. -4°C to 3°C, ground temperatures down to -10°C at Kilkenny and Birr

Sunshine: trace to 7 hours, sunniest at Rosslare, trace at Belmont

Tuesday 7th: A band of rain affected all areas during the first half of the day, heaviest in northern areas, where heavy showers fell associated with a cold front. Light rain and drizzle continued during the afternoon and early evening the rain and drizzle continued. The rain became lighter and intermittent during the evening, with fog patches developing. Moderate to fresh northwesterly winds throughout.

Rainfall: 3 to 13mm, heaviest at Clones, 3mm at Cork Airport

Temperature: max. 10°C to 14°C, min. 5°C to 10°C, no ground frost

Sunshine: nil to trace

Wednesday 8th: Dull, wet and breezy for most of the day with some spells of heavy rain. The rain died out in the afternoon and sunny spells developed. Mostly dry and clear after dark with a slight ground frost forming in some areas. Winds were light southerly, veering northwesterly during the day and increasing moderate to fresh and gusty before decreasing light by evening.

Rainfall: 1 to 17mm, heaviest at Belmont, 1mm at Malin Head

Temperature: max. 10°C to 15°C, min. 4°C to 8°C, ground temperatures down to -1°C at Birr

Sunshine: trace to 4 hours, sunniest at Valletta, trace at Casement Aerodrome

Thursday 9th: A band of rain reached the southeast during the early hours and spread northwartheastwards, giving some heavy falls particularly around Shannon Airport. Another band of rain followed around noon to give heavy falls in the west, followed by showers countrywide. Sunny spells between the showers. Winds were moderate southwesterly and gusty.

Rainfall: <1 to 1mm, heaviest at Knock Airport, <1mm at Casement Aerodrome

Temperature: max. 8°C to 11°C, min. 2°C to 5°C, ground temperatures down to -2°C at Kilkenny

Sunshine: trace to 6 hours, sunniest at Cork Airport and Rosslare

Friday 10th: Some very heavy rain in the north during the early hours, clearing the northeast by late morning. Sunshine countrywise with showers here and there throughout the day. Dry in all areas by evening. Moderate northwesterly winds, easing later.

Rainfall: nil to 7mm, heaviest at Malin Head

Temperature: max. 8°C to 11°C, min. 0°C to 6°C, ground temperatures down to -5°C at Birr

Sunshine: 5 to 10 hours, sunniest at Rosslare, 5 hours at Valletta

Saturday 11th: A dry start in all areas, however by mid-morning rain had reached the southwest and this rain moved gradually northeastwards throughout the day. Some very heavy falls in northern counties during the evening. Very little sunshine. Winds were light southerly, increasing by evening.

Rainfall: 4 to 17mm, heaviest at Malin Head, 4mm at Rosslare

Temperature: max.7°C to 12°C, min. -1°C to 5°C, ground temperatures down to -6°C at Kilkenny

Sunshine: nil to trace generally, >1 hour at Dublin Airport

Sunday 12th: Steady rain overnight in the north with lighter patchy rain or drizzle elsewhere, eventually clearing the east coast around noon. A further spell of rain began to spread into the southwest in the evening. Winds were southeast to southwesterly, generally fresh, decreasing later in the day.

Rainfall: nil to 15mm, heaviest at Malin Head, nil at Casement Aerodrome

Temperature: max. 8°C to 14°C, min. 3°C to 10°C, no ground frost

Sunshine: nil to trace

Monday 13th: Rain and drizzle during the night, persistent and heavy at times. Rain continuing through the period in most areas, becoming more patchy during the evening. Mild overall with just a few brief sunny periods. Winds were southeast to southwesterly, up to gale force, easing later.

Rainfall: 3 to 16mm, heaviest at Rosslare, 3mm at Dublin Airport

Temperature: max.9°C to 14°C, min. 5°C to 9°C, ground temperatures down to -1°C at Kilkenny

Sunshine: nil to 2 hours, sunniest at Shannon Airport

Tuesday 14th: Patches of rain and drizzle, mainly in northern areas during the night. Mainly dry in southern areas. This pattern continued for the rest of the period. A few sunny spells, mainly in the south. Winds were generally light and variable in direction.

Rainfall: nil to 2mm, heaviest at Malin Head

Temperature: max. 9°C to 13°C, min. 3°C to 8°C, ground temperatures down to -3°C at Shannon Airport

Sunshine: nil to 8 hours, sunniest at Valletta, nil at Malin Head

Wednesday 15th: Drizzle overnight through Leinster and Connacht. Generally dull or overcast but some sunshine in south Munster. Drizzle returned to east coasts during the evening. Winds were light and variable, becoming northwesterly occasionally fresh near eastern and northern coasts.

Rainfall: nil to 4mm, heaviest at Casement Aerodrome

Temperature: max. 6°C to 13°C, min. 2°C to 6°C, ground temperatures down to -3°C at Shannon Airport

Sunshine: nil to trace generally, 5 hours at Valletta, 4 hours at Cork Airport
Thursday 16th: Very cold everywhere in a strong easterly wind. Early showers in the southeast spread to all except some western areas. The showers were of rain, hail, sleet and snow. Dry in the east and south, with some sunny spells elsewhere. Winds were moderate easterly with stronger gusts.  
Rainfall: nil to 2mm, heaviest at Rosslare  
Temperature: max. 4°C to 9°C, min. -1°C to 3°C, ground temperatures down to -1°C at Knock Airport and Valentia  
Sunshine: nil to 5 hours, sunniest at Belmullet, nil at Cork Airport

Friday 17th: Early heavy showers along southern and eastern coasts moved inland during the morning, affecting parts of north Munster and Leinster, before gradually dying out during the afternoon. Very cold. Generally overcast, except for the extreme north. Moderate easterly winds.  
Rainfall: nil to 3mm, heaviest at Cork Airport  
Temperature: max. 3°C to 8°C, min. 1°C to 4°C, ground temperatures below zero at Clones  
Sunshine: nil to trace generally, 3 hours at Malin Head, <1 hour at Valentia

Saturday 18th: Dry and very cold overnight with strong winds preventing a widespread ground frost from developing. The day was cold, dry and breezy with sunny spells in places. Becoming very cold again after dark. Moderate to fresh and gusty northeasterly winds were strong to gale force on exposed coasts.  
Rainfall: nil  
Temperature: max. 5°C to 10°C, min 1°C to 5°C, ground temperatures down to -1°C at Valentia and Belmullet  
Sunshine: trace to 11 hours, sunniest at Belmullet, trace at Cork Airport

Sunday 19th: Some clear intervals overnight but generally cloudy, particularly in the east and south. Slight frost in places. Dry throughout with some sunny spells during the morning. Frost was severe in places after dark as the easterly winds decreased to light in strength in most parts.  
Rainfall: nil  
Temperature: max. 6°C to 11°C, min. 0°C to 5°C, ground temperatures down to -6°C at Kilkenny  
Sunshine: trace to 10 hours, sunniest at Shannon Airport, trace at Mullingar

Monday 20th: A few showers during the night, mainly in eastern areas; some of these showers were of hail. Continuing cloudy and showery during the day with a few sunny spells. Temperatures were below normal in the east to northeasterly wind which was moderate to fresh, stronger around coasts.  
Rainfall: nil to >1mm, heaviest at Casement Aerodrome  
Temperature: max. 6°C to 9°C, min. 0°C to 6°C, ground temperatures down to -7°C at Birr  
Sunshine: nil to 3 hours, sunniest at Valentia

Tuesday 21st: It was a cold and cloudy day generally with outbreaks of rain and drizzle, mainly in the southeast of the country. The rain and drizzle largely died out around midday but eastern areas had occasional wintry showers in the afternoon. Some sunny spells in northern areas. Winds were northeasterly, mainly light to moderate, but fresh and gusty at times in the east and north.  
Rainfall: nil to 2mm, heaviest at Mullingar  
Temperature: max. 4°C to 6°C, min. -1°C to 4°C, ground temperatures down to -7°C at Clones  
Sunshine: nil to trace generally, 5 hours at Malin Head, 1 hour at Clones

Wednesday 22nd: A dry, cool and sunny day generally with isolated falls of light rain on southern coasts. Slightly milder than of late but temperatures were still below normal. Long sunny periods in the northern half of the country. Light to moderate northeasterly winds, veering southeasterly.  
Rainfall: nil or trace  
Temperature: max. 5°C to 10°C, min. -4°C to 3°C, ground temperatures below zero at most stations, down to -10°C at Clones  
Sunshine: nil to 9 hours, sunniest at Malin Head and Dublin Airport

Thursday 23rd: Patchy rain in the southwest during the night, otherwise dry. Rain and drizzle in the south during the afternoon, becoming more persistent by evening. A few sunny spells, mainly in the east. Winds were southeasterly, light to moderate with occasional gusts, backing easterly and decreasing later.  
Rainfall: nil to 8mm, heaviest at Cork Airport  
Temperature: max. 6°C to 9°C, min. -2°C to 5°C ground temperatures down to -8°C at Clones  
Sunshine: nil to 3 hours, sunniest at Dublin Airport

Friday 24th: Rain and drizzle in the east and south during the night. The rain spread northwards during the morning, with some heavy spells. Wet everywhere by noon. A clearance in the southwest spread northwards during the evening Light to moderate variable winds.  
Rainfall: 1 to 11mm, heaviest at Dublin Airport and Valentia, 1mm at Belmullet  
Temperature: max. 5°C to 12°C, min. 3°C to 8°C, no ground frost  
Sunshine: nil generally, 1 hour at Valentia

Saturday 25th: A sunny start to the day in the north and east. Rain began to spread into the southwest shortly after dawn and moved gradually northwards during the morning and afternoon. A clearance with some showers followed from the southwest during the evening. Mild. Winds were light to moderate, variable in direction.  
Rainfall: 3 to 9mm, heaviest at Malin Head, 3mm at Shannon Airport  
Temperature: max. 11°C to 14°C, min. 5°C to 8°C, ground temperatures down to -2°C at Kilkenny  
Sunshine: nil to 4 hours, sunniest Casement Aerodrome, nil at Cork Airport

Sunday 26th: Scattered showers in the north and west at first, followed by a band of heavy rain in the southwest before noon, which spread northwards to give a wet day countrywide. Mild and overcast. Winds were moderate or fresh, between southeasterly and southwesterly in direction.  
Rainfall: 2 to 27mm, heaviest at Valentia, 2mm at Dublin Airport  
Temperature: max. 10°C to 14°C, min. 9°C to 11°C, no ground frost  
Sunshine: nil to trace

Monday 27th: Showers in the southeast at first moved northwards to affect eastern counties. Most areas were dry by noon, however a band of rain reached the southwest by early afternoon and spread northwards over most parts. Sunny spells in a few places, mainly in the east. Winds were south to southeasterly, moderate to fresh with occasional gusts.  
Rainfall: 1 to 12mm, heaviest at Shannon Airport  
Temperature: max. 11°C to 15°C, min. 7°C to 9°C, no ground frost  
Sunshine: nil to 4 hours, sunniest at Casement Aerodrome, nil at Valentia

Tuesday 28th: Patchy rain and drizzle overnight continued in many areas during the morning and afternoon. Some dry periods also with sunny spells. Strong and gusty southwesterly winds, becoming northwesterly and easterly with frost setting in quickly after dark.  
Rainfall: <1 to 7mm, heaviest at Valentia, <1mm at Casement Aerodrome  
Temperature: max. 7°C to 11°C, min. 0°C to 7°C, ground temperatures down to -4°C at Mullingar and Clones  
Sunshine: nil to 3 hours, sunniest at Belmullet, nil at Cork Airport

Wednesday 29th: A dry start in all parts, except for a few light showers in the southwest. Long sunny spells except in the extreme south. Rain reached the southwest by early afternoon and spread quickly northwards, affecting all parts by midnight. Winds were variable in direction, moderate with occasional stronger gusts.  
Rainfall: <1 to 14mm, heaviest at Valentia, <1mm at Malin Head  
Temperature: max. 9°C to 13°C, min. -2°C to 7°C, ground temperatures down to -8°C at Birr  
Sunshine: trace to 9 hours, sunniest at Malin Head, trace at Cork Airport

Thursday 30th: Rain and drizzle in many areas during the night. Generally cloudy during the day with rain and drizzle in most areas and just a few spells. Mild with no frost. Winds were moderate south to southwesterly, up to gale force at times with much stronger gusts.  
Rainfall: <1 to 13mm, heaviest at Clones, 1mm at Dublin Airport  
Temperature: max. 9°C to 15°C, min. 5°C to 10°C, no ground frost  
Sunshine: <1 to 3 hours, sunniest at Dublin Airport, <1 hour at Cork Airport

Friday 31st: The day began dry but dull, but wet weather moved into the southwest and pushed up over the country during the morning and afternoon. The rain was heavy and thundery at times. Drier, clearer weather with scattered showers followed on in the afternoon. A slight ground frost developed in some places after dark. Winds were moderate to fresh and gusty, southerly overnight, but turned southeasterly for a time in the morning before becoming southerly again for the afternoon and evening.  
Rainfall: 1 to 12mm, heaviest at Clones, 1mm at Belmullet  
Temperature: max. 10°C to 15°C, min. 3°C to 8°C, ground temperatures down to -2°C at Kilkenny and Mullingar  
Sunshine: 2 to 6 hours, sunniest at Mullingar, 2 hours at Knock Airport

March 2006
Rainfall totals for the month were a little below normal in parts of the northwest, but it was a wet month generally with more than twice the normal March totals recorded in parts of the east and northeast. Totals ranged from 53mm at Casement Aerodrome to 204mm at Maam Valley, Co. Galway, with percentage of normal values between 97% at Connemara National Park, Co. Galway and 187% at Johnstown Castle, Co. Wexford. It was the wettest March for between 8 and 11 years at many stations, the wettest since 1988 at both Mullingar and Clones and the wettest since 1981 at Johnstown Castle, Co. Wexford.

Despite the high totals overall, there was a spell of mostly dry weather around the middle of the month, with very wet periods near the beginning and end. Heaviest falls were concentrated into the periods 5th to 13th and 24th to 31st, with the highest daily totals measured at the majority of stations either on the 11th or the 26th/27th. The month’s highest daily value, 39.3mm, was recorded at Carron, Co. Clare, on the 27th, the highest daily value for March at the station since it opened in 1974. There was unusually little variation across the country in the number of wetdays recorded (days with 1mm or more of rainfall); there were between 15 and 20 wetdays measured at all stations.

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<th>County/Station</th>
<th>Total Amount (mm)</th>
<th>% of 1961-90 average</th>
<th>Most in a day / date</th>
<th>Number of Raindays (&gt;0.2mm)</th>
<th>Number of Wetdays (&gt;1mm)</th>
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Total rainfall (mm)

Percentage of normal rainfall

Daily 0-24h rainfall values (mm)
Cool for most of month, becoming milder

Temperatures were below normal throughout much of March, but rose above normal during the final week. As a result, mean air temperatures overall were near or a little below normal everywhere. At some stations the mean values for March were lower than those for any of the previous winter months. They ranged from 4.8°C at Knock Airport to 7.5°C at Sherkin Island, Co. Cork and they were the lowest mean values for March since 2001 at most stations and since 1996 in some places.

The month began with daytime temperatures of only around 5°C and some exceptionally low air and ground temperatures. Air temperatures fell below -5°C at inland stations between the 2nd and 4th, while grass minimum temperatures reached below -10°C. These were the lowest such values for March for at least 20 years at several stations. The lowest air temperature of the month, -8.6°C was measured at Straide, Co. Mayo, on the 3rd, while the lowest grass minimum value of -16.0°C was recorded at Birr on the same day. The month’s highest temperature, 15.4°C, was recorded at both Dublin (Merrion Square) on the 27th and at Ardfert (Liscahane), Co. Kerry, on the 12th and 30th.

Daily 0-24h maximum temperatures (°C)

Daily 0-24h minimum temperatures (°C)
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<th>Mean min.</th>
<th>Mean/ deviation from 1961-90 average</th>
<th>Highest max./date</th>
<th>Lowest min./date</th>
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### March 2006

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**Duller than normal except in north**

March sunshine totals were below normal everywhere except in the north. Totals ranged from 72 hours at Johnstown Castle, Co. Wexford, to 100 hours at Belmullet, with percentage of normal values between 70% at Johnstown Castle, Co. Wexford and 100% of normal at Malin Head. Most stations had their dullest March for between 6 and 8 years.

The sunniest weather of the month coincided with the spell of very cold weather during the first week, although higher daily values were measured later in the month. Belmullet recorded the highest daily sunshine, 10.8 hours on the 18th. Global solar radiation totals were also below normal generally, ranging from 86% of normal at Birr to 104% at Malin Head.

### Daily Sunshine Values (hours)

- **Valentia Observatory**
- **Dublin Airport**
- **Clones**

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**Map of Total Sunshine**

(Difference from 1961-90 normals)

- **Map Legend**
  - 150%
  - 100%
  - 96%
  - 96%
  - 79%
  - 86%
  - 96%
  - 89%
  - 89%
  - 92%

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**Total Sunshine**

(Difference from 1961-90 normals)
JANUARY-MARCH 2006 RAINFALL
(Percentage of 1961-1990 normal)

JANUARY-MARCH 2006 MEAN AIR TEMPERATURES
(difference from 1961-1990 normal)

Global weather highlights of the month

Tropical cyclone Larry came ashore just south of Cairns on the 20th. Maximum sustained winds at the time of landfall were over 185 km/hr, with gusts as high as 290 km/hr. There were 30 injuries reported but no fatalities. The cyclone was described as one of the most powerful cyclones to hit Australia in decades, wiping out nearly 90% of the country’s banana crop.

In Germany, two people were killed and 80,000 homes suffered power outages when a tornado struck Hamburg late on the 27th. The storm ripped off roofs and overturned cars. Around 300,000 people in the city spent the night without electricity.

Despite some rainfall over southern Kenya, a severe long-term drought persists throughout large areas of East Africa. In Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia, an estimated 8 million people are affected by famine as a result of the worst drought for ten years.

A major storm system affected southeastern Europe between the 12th and 14th. Strong winds cut power supplies across parts of Bulgaria, Romania, Greece and Turkey, while heavy rainfall flooded thousands of homes.

After months of drought conditions, severe grass and forest fires over an area of 340,000 hectares of Texas killed 11 people and approximately 10,000 livestock. Other significant fires were reported in Oklahoma.

Data supplied by NOAA Climate Prediction Centre, US Department of Commerce
Reducing the dangers caused by natural disasters

Every year, World Meteorological Day is celebrated on March 23rd to commemorate the establishment in 1950 of the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), which now represents the national Meteorological and Hydrological Services of 187 countries worldwide. To mark the day, a theme is chosen to emphasise a global weather-related issue. “Preventing and Mitigating Natural Disasters” was the worldwide theme of this year’s World Meteorological Day, in recognition of the fact that 90 per cent of all natural hazards are related to weather, climate and water and of the vital role played by Meteorological Services in all countries in contributing to prevention, preparedness and mitigation of natural disasters, as well as those arising from environmental emergencies.

A synopsis of extreme events in the recent past shows the growing impact of natural disasters on sustainable development. The year 2005 was marked by prolonged droughts in parts of the Greater Horn of Africa, parts of Europe and Asia, Australia and Brazil. Malawi suffered its worst drought in a decade. Heavy rainfall, exceptional in some cases, caused extensive flooding in various parts of the world, while a record number of devastating hurricanes was observed in the Atlantic Ocean. The Antarctic ozone hole was the third largest ever recorded after the years 2000 and 2003, while greater ozone depletion took place in the Arctic. Apart from disasters of meteorological origin, the Pakistan earthquake took tens of thousands of lives and affected millions of people, while the devastation caused by the Indian Ocean tsunami of late 2004 reached an exceptional level in terms of human loss and the magnitude of subsequent response-and-recovery efforts.

Natural disasters worldwide between 1992 and 2001 were linked to more than 620,000 deaths and affected over 2 billion people. Flood and other water-related disasters over the same period resulted in economic losses of an estimated 353 billion euro worldwide, accounting for almost 65 per cent of the total losses due to all natural disasters for the 10-year period 1992 to 2001. Natural disasters occur in different space and time scales; some hazards, such as tornadoes, bring catastrophe to a small area, while others, such as tropical cyclones or drought can affect large regions or even continents. Developing countries are generally more vulnerable to these hazards, both in terms of their frequency and in the proportional damage done to economic and social growth.

Adequate and timely prevention and mitigation measures can help in lessening the damage caused by such hazards. The WMO has 40 regional specialised centres around the world which provide all nations with the necessary global operational infrastructure for observing, detecting, modelling, forecasting and issuing early warnings for a wide range of hazards, ranging from tornadoes and heavy thunderstorms to droughts. The global network of the WMO has been particularly effective in issuing tropical cyclone warnings and six of the regional centres issue forecasts around the clock. Beyond natural hazards, WMO also supports its members and partner organisations to respond to large-scale transboundary emergencies, such as nuclear accidents, environmental emergencies, volcanic eruptions, chemical accidents and forest fires, a service which is gradually expanding in scope and in geographical area.

More information is available on the WMO website: www.wmo.ch/index-en.html