

# The Weather of Winter 2008/9

## (December, January and February summary)

### **Coldest winter for between 8 and 18 years; dry and sunny**

Mean air temperatures for the season were a little below normal for the 1961-90 period at most stations, but it was slightly warmer than normal near Atlantic coasts; here, it was the coldest winter for eight years, while it was the coldest for between 13 and 18 years elsewhere. Mean temperatures were below normal everywhere in December, while they were close to normal in both January and February. Although no long-term records of low daily values were broken, the winter was unusual when compared with recent years for the persistence of cold weather at times; coincidentally, these very cold periods occurred during the early part of each month. Most stations measured their lowest temperatures of the season between January 5th and 9th. Between 24 and 65 ground frosts were recorded during the three-month period, compared with the normal range for winter of between 20 and 48.

Seasonal rainfall totals were below normal everywhere, with percentage of normal values between 69% and 99% of normal, but totals were not as low generally as the very dry winter of 2005/6. January was a wet month except in parts of the east and north, but both December and February were dry. The heaviest daily falls of the season at most stations were during January, with flooding in some southern counties at the end of the month. Cork Airport's fall of 50.1mm on January 30th was its highest daily value for winter since 1990. The total number of wetdays (days with 1mm or more rainfall) was also below normal everywhere; there were between 31 and 52 wetdays recorded, compared with the normal for the 3-month period of between 36 and 54 wetdays.

Sunshine totals were above normal everywhere, particularly in the north. Both December and January were relatively sunny months, but February was dull, especially in the east. The sunniest period of the season at many stations was during early February.

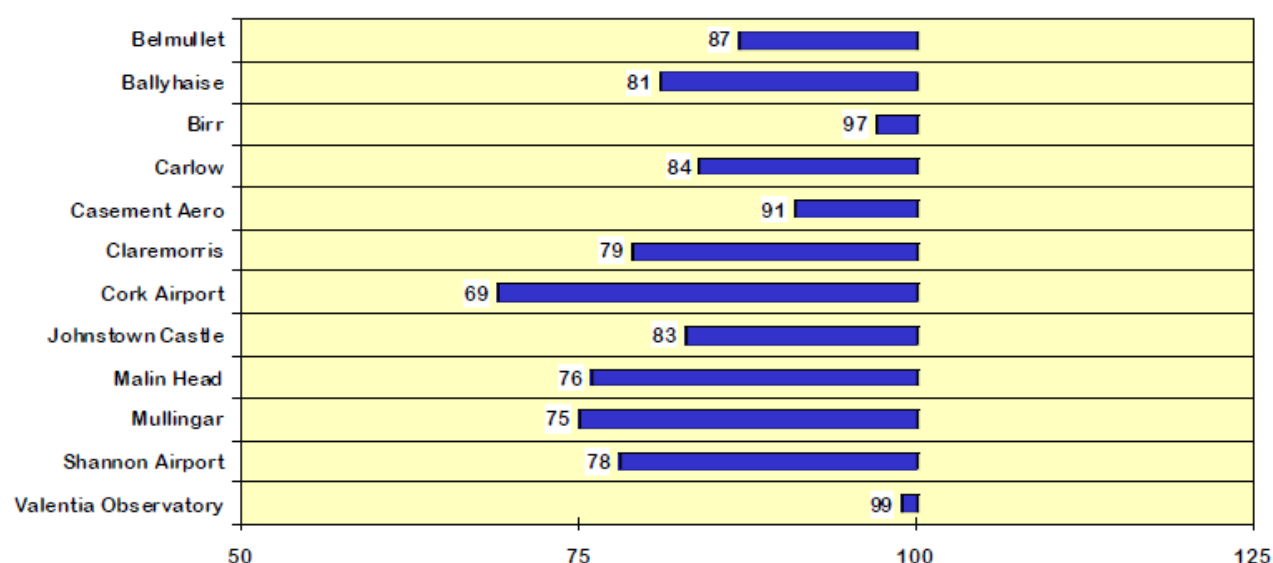
Mean windspeeds for the season of between 7 and 11 knots generally (13 and 20km/h) were below normal everywhere and were well below normal in the south and southwest. Both Cork Airport's and Valentia Observatory's mean windspeeds of 8.9 knots and 9.2 knots respectively (16 and 17km/h) were their lowest on record for winter. A severe storm on January 17th affected all areas, however, with Belmullet measuring a gust of 94 knots (168km/h) on this day, its highest winter gust since January 1957.

#### Extreme values

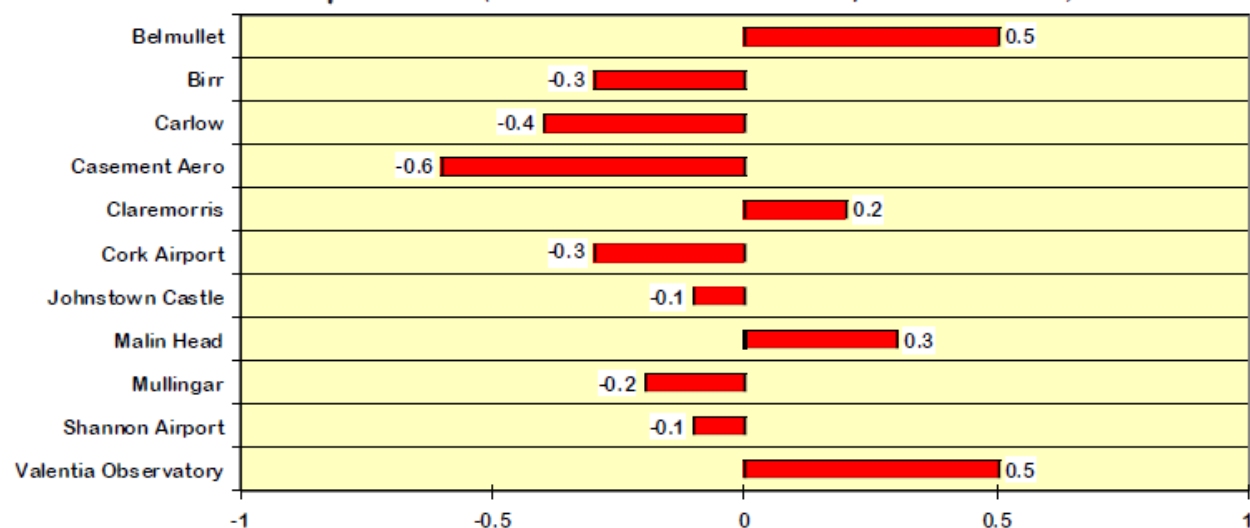
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|-------------|--|
| Rainfall    | Highest seasonal total: 450mm at Valentia Observatory  |
|             | Lowest seasonal total: 157mm at Dublin Airport   |
|             | Highest daily rainfall: 50mm at Cork Airport on January 30th ( <i>its highest winter value since December 1989</i> ) |
| Temperature | Highest mean seasonal temperature: 7.5°C at Valentia Observatory ( <i>its coldest winter since 2000/1</i> )          |
|             | Lowest mean seasonal temperature: 4.0°C at Knock Airport ( <i>its coldest winter since 2000/1</i> )                  |
|             | Highest temperature: 13.3°C at Valentia Observatory on December 18th   |
|             | Lowest air temperature: -7.3°C at Mullingar on January 7th ( <i>its lowest value since January 2002</i> )            |
| Sunshine    | Lowest grass minimum temperature: -13.9°C at Birr on January 6th   |
|             | Highest seasonal total: 197 hours at Dublin Airport  |
|             | Lowest seasonal total: 146 hours at Valentia Observatory   |
|             | Highest daily sunshine: 8.5 hours at Dublin Airport on February 6th and 7th  |

## Winter 2008/9 Percentage / Difference from 1961-90 monthly normals

### Rainfall (% of normal for period 1961-1990)



### Temperature (°C difference from normal for period 1961-1990)



### Sunshine (% of normal for period 1961-1990)

