



Monthly Weather Summary

The Weather of January 2009

Becoming wet and windy after dry start; coldest January since 2001

After a dry, cold start to the month everywhere, the weather became unsettled from the 10th onwards, with heavy rain and strong winds at times, leading to flooding in places. Valentia Observatory's rainfall total of 291mm was its highest for January since 1974 and included daily falls of more than 10mm on 12 days. In contrast, rainfall totals were below normal near eastern and northern coasts, with Dublin Airport recording no days when 10mm or more was measured. The heaviest daily falls generally were on the 10th/11th, 14th, 17th, 21st and 30th; many falls in the period 17th to 20th were in the form of sleet or snow. Despite the fact that very little rain fell before the 10th of the month, most stations recorded a total of between 16 and 20 wetdays (days with 1mm or more rainfall), slightly more than normal for the month. Mean air temperatures for January were a little below normal at most stations for the second successive month. It was the coldest January since 2001 generally and the coldest at Cork Airport since 1997. The lowest temperatures were measured during the first week, when ground temperatures fell below -10°C at some inland stations. Here, there was a total of between 20 and 23 ground frosts recorded, higher than the normal range for January of between 15 and 18 in these areas. Sunshine totals were above normal everywhere except at Valentia Observatory; while it was the sunniest January for between 6 and 8 years generally, at Valentia it was the dullest since 2002.

1st to 9th: A large anticyclone, or area of high pressure, moved slowly southwards over Ireland. Apart from some light coastal rain or drizzle at times, this period was dry with skies becoming increasingly clear as the period progressed. Temperatures were below normal with widespread frost, which was severe in many places between the 4th and 8th. Light east to southeasterly winds at first veered gradually to a southerly direction.

10th to 31st: Atlantic weather systems were the dominant influence during this period, often associated with deep and fast-moving depressions moving close to or over Ireland. Wet and windy conditions prevailed, with rainfall measured each day, falling as sleet or snow at times, particularly in the period 17th to 20th, when thunderstorms were also recorded. The heaviest falls on most days were in the southwest, where during this period almost five times the amount of rainfall was recorded compared with stations in the Dublin area. A slow-moving front at the end of the month brought 2-day falls of more than 50mm over southern and midland areas; this heavy rain falling on saturated ground caused some significant flooding, especially in Clonmel, Co. Tipperary. Stormy conditions at times resulted in damaging gusts over land and waves of over 10 metres on Atlantic coasts; a depression of central pressure 946hPa near the north coast on the 17th produced the highest January gusts for between 16 and 52 years at some western and southern stations. Temperatures were close to normal for much of the time, but rose above normal at the end of the month, while most sunshine was recorded between the 22nd and 28th.

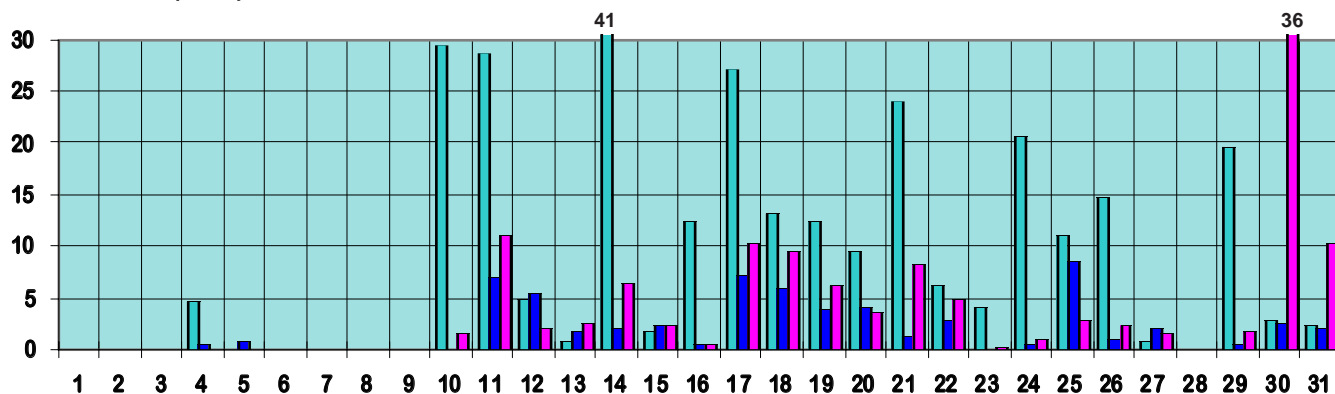
Wind and elements: Mean windspeeds for the month were close to normal everywhere, varying between 8 and 12 knots generally (*15 and 22km/h*), up to 17 knots (*31km/h*) at Malin Head. They were light during the first third of the month but much stronger thereafter. The month's strongest winds were on the 17th, when the highest gust of 94 knots (*174km/h*) was recorded at Belmullet, equalling the previous highest gust at the station, recorded in January 1957. Thunderstorms were recorded on the 10th, 12th, in the period 17th to 20th and on the 22nd and 25th. Hail and snow were observed between the 17th and 25th.

Extreme values

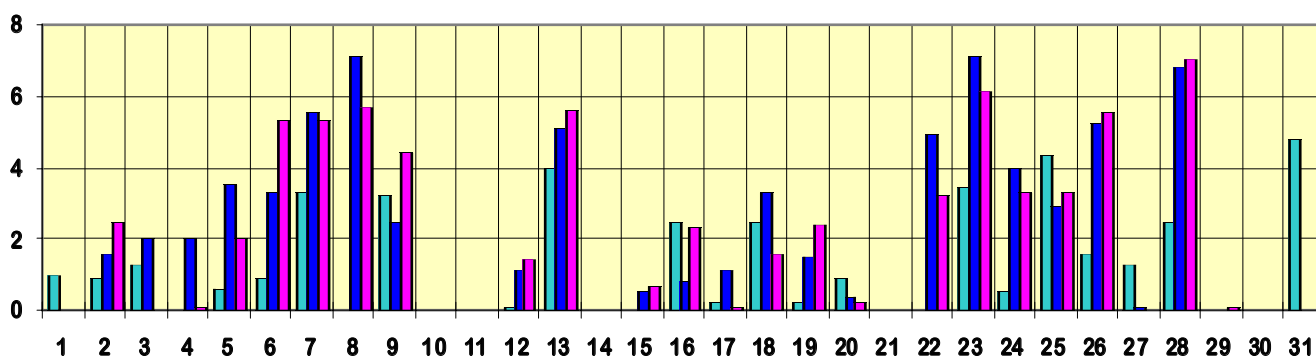
Rainfall	Highest total: 291mm at Valentia Observatory (<i>its wettest January since 1974</i>) Lowest total: 60mm at Casement Aerodrome Highest daily rainfall: 50.1mm at Cork Airport on 30th (<i>its highest daily value for January since 1969</i>)
Temperature	Highest mean monthly temperature: 7.3°C at Valentia Observatory (<i>its coldest January since 2003</i>) Lowest mean monthly temperature: 3.3°C at Knock Airport (<i>its coldest January since 2001</i>) Highest temperature: 13.1°C at Malin Head on 11th Lowest air temperature: -7.3°C at Mullingar on 7th (<i>its lowest value for January since 2002</i>) Lowest grass minimum temperature: -13.9°C at Birr on 6th
Sunshine	Highest monthly total: 75 hours at Casement Aerodrome (<i>its sunniest January since 2001</i>) Lowest monthly total: 40 hours at Valentia Observatory (<i>its dullest January since 2002</i>) Highest daily sunshine: 7.2 hours at Casement Aerodrome on 8th

January 2009 Daily values at selected synoptic stations

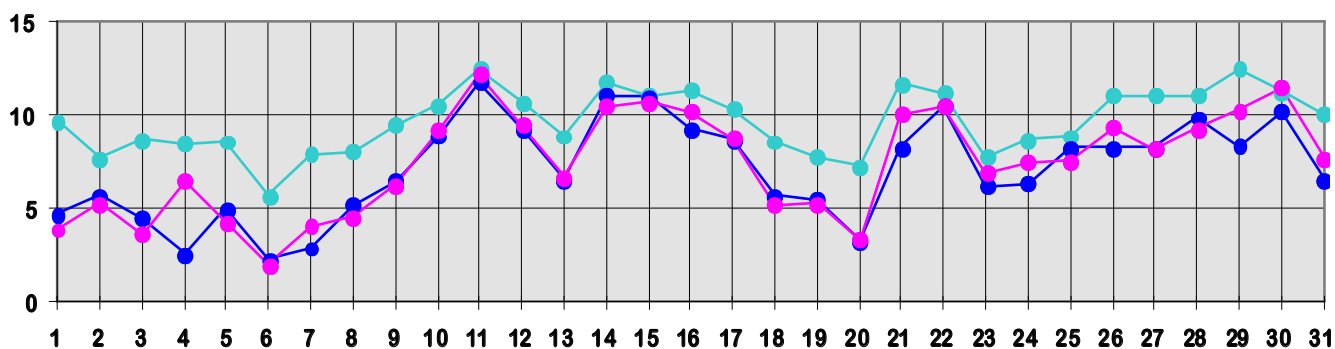
Rainfall (mm)



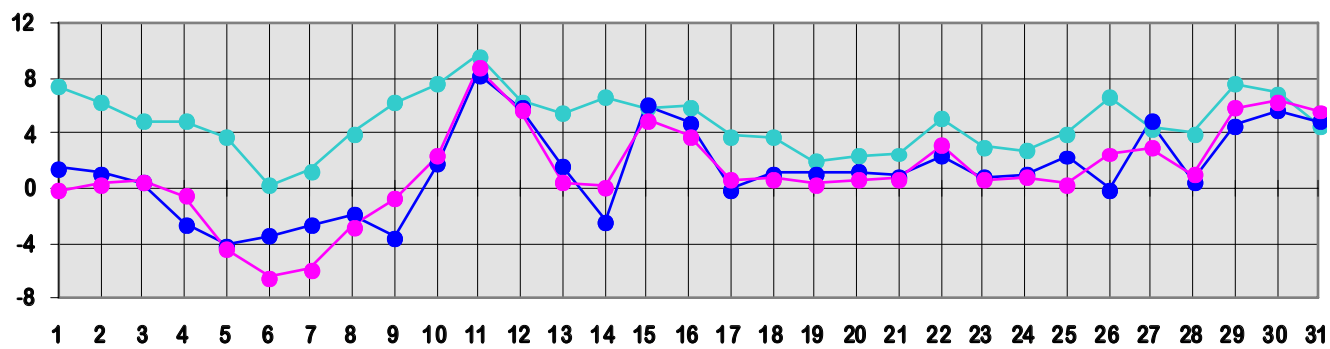
Sunshine (hours)



Maximum temperature (°C)



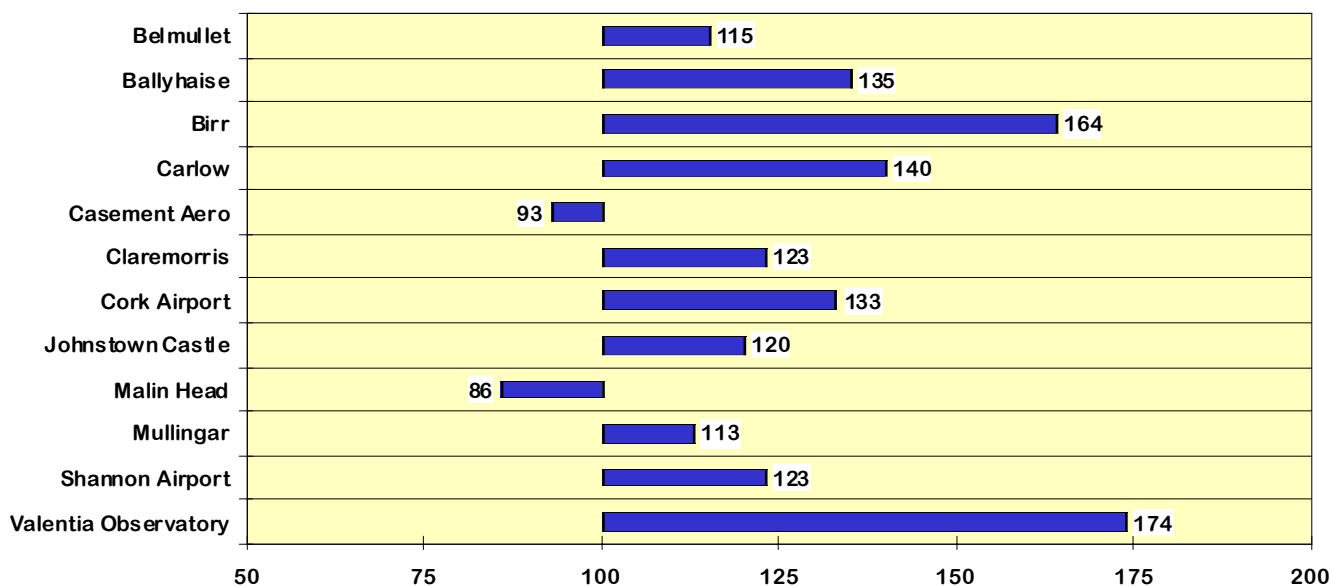
Minimum temperature (°C)



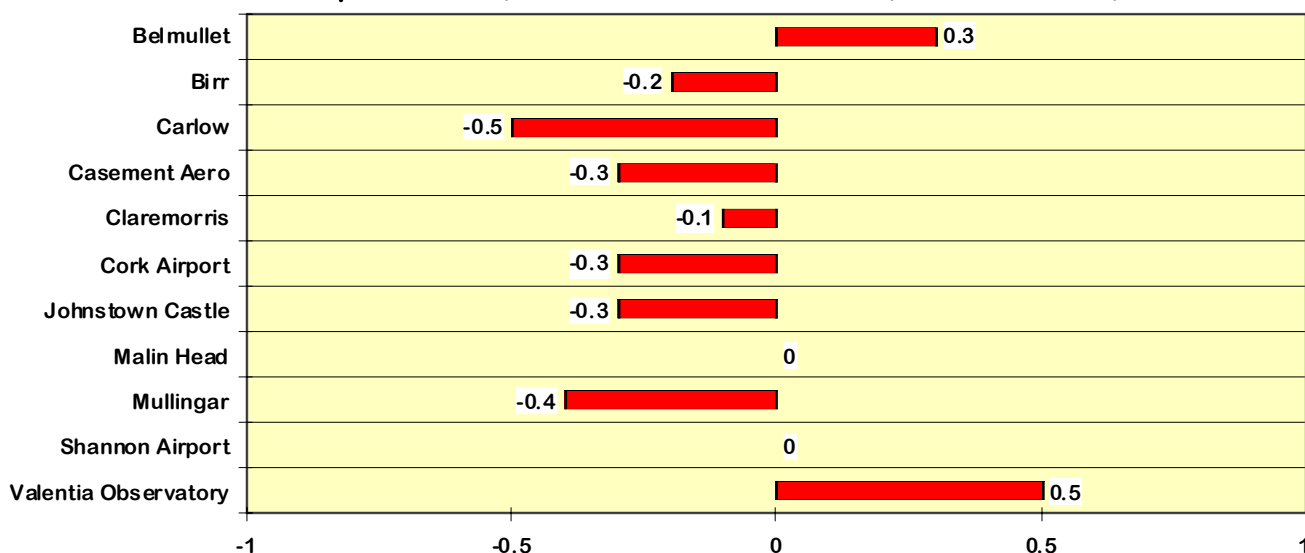
● Valentia Observatory ● Dublin Airport ● Birr

January 2009 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)

