



Monthly Weather Summary

The Weather of March 2009

Mild and dry for most of the month; sunny except in south

March was warmer, drier and sunnier than normal almost everywhere. High pressure close to Ireland around the middle of the month brought mostly dry, mild and sunny conditions, while on either side of this period the weather was cooler and more unsettled. It was the driest March for between six and nine years at some stations; rainfall totals of between 24mm and 88mm were below normal almost everywhere, with less than half the normal rainfall measured over parts of the east and south. The year to date has been drier than normal at all stations except Valentia Observatory, with three-month totals around 80% of normal generally. There were few heavy daily falls this month; most rain was recorded during the first nine days, when there were also falls of sleet or snow. Between eight and 15 wetdays were measured at most stations (days with 1mm or more rainfall), fewer than normal for March. Mean air temperatures for the month were above normal everywhere. The warmest weather was just after mid-month, especially in western and southwestern areas. Frost was most widespread during the first and final weeks; the total number of air frosts of between three and six at most inland stations was close to the average for March. Sunshine totals were above normal everywhere except at Cork Airport; the sunniest period of the month at most stations was the 17th to 20th, but fog in some areas at this time kept sunshine values much lower.

1st to 10th: Atlantic depressions moving north of Ireland brought wet and windy conditions. Rain or showers were heaviest in western areas, with thunderstorms at times, especially on the 7th and 8th. Hail, sleet or snow were recorded between the 2nd and 9th, giving some accumulation of snow in western and upland areas. Temperatures were near or below normal, with widespread air and ground frost between the 3rd and 5th. West to northwesterly winds were strong at times.

11th to 22nd: Pressure rose as an anticyclone became established to the south of Ireland, later moving northeastwards across the country. Weak frontal systems brought cloudy weather at first with light rain in places, but most of this period was dry and mild, with long clear or sunny spells developing from the 17th onwards. Daytime temperatures rose well above normal in many places between the 17th and 20th, but fog in some southern and eastern areas brought much cooler conditions. Winds were generally light throughout the period, between southwesterly and southeasterly in direction.

23rd to 31st: As high pressure moved away westwards, a showery west to northwesterly airstream became established over Ireland. Sunny spells developed between showers, but temperatures fell below normal and showers turned wintry in places. Strong to gale force westerly winds affected all areas between the 26th and 28th, later veering northerly. Showers became light and isolated by the end of the month as winds eased and temperatures rose.

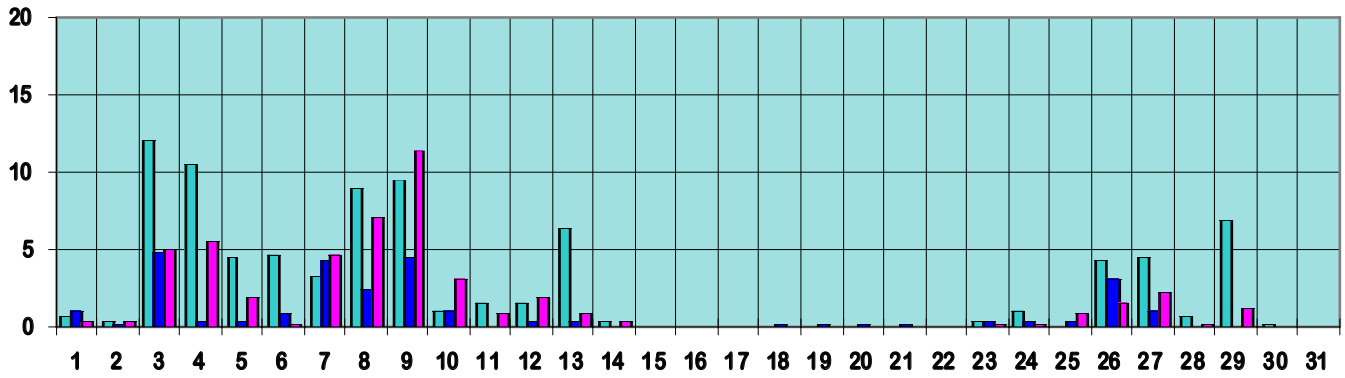
Wind and elements: Mean windspeeds for the month were near or below normal, varying between 8 and 12 knots generally (*15 and 22km/h*). They were strongest near the beginning and end of the month, particularly in the periods 7th/8th and 27th/28th. The month's highest gust of 67 knots (*124km/h*) was recorded at Malin Head on the 7th. Hail and snow were observed in the periods 2nd to 9th and 26th to 28th; snow was most widespread between the 3rd and 5th. Thunderstorms were recorded on the 3rd, 5th, in the period 7th to 9th and on the 27th. Fog was widespread in the periods 18th to 21st and 30th to 31st.

Extreme values

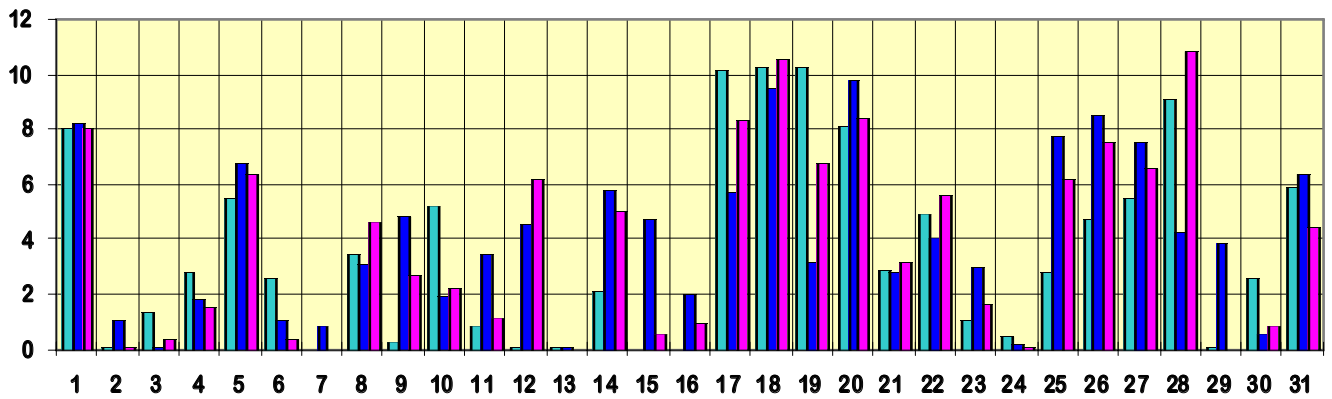
Rainfall	Highest total: 93mm at Belmullet Lowest total: 24mm at Casement Aerodrome Highest daily rainfall: 17.3mm at Belmullet on 3rd
Temperature	Highest mean monthly temperature: 8.8°C at Valentia Observatory Lowest mean monthly temperature: 6.2°C at Knock Airport Highest temperature: 18.9°C at Valentia Observatory on 18th Lowest air temperature: -4.1°C at Casement Aerodrome on 5th Lowest grass minimum temperature: -8.1°C at Casement Aerodrome on 5th
Sunshine	Highest monthly total: 127 hours at Dublin Airport Lowest monthly total: 107 hours at Cork Airport Highest daily sunshine: 10.8 hours at Birr on 28th (<i>its sunniest March day since 1970</i>)

March 2009 Daily values at selected synoptic stations

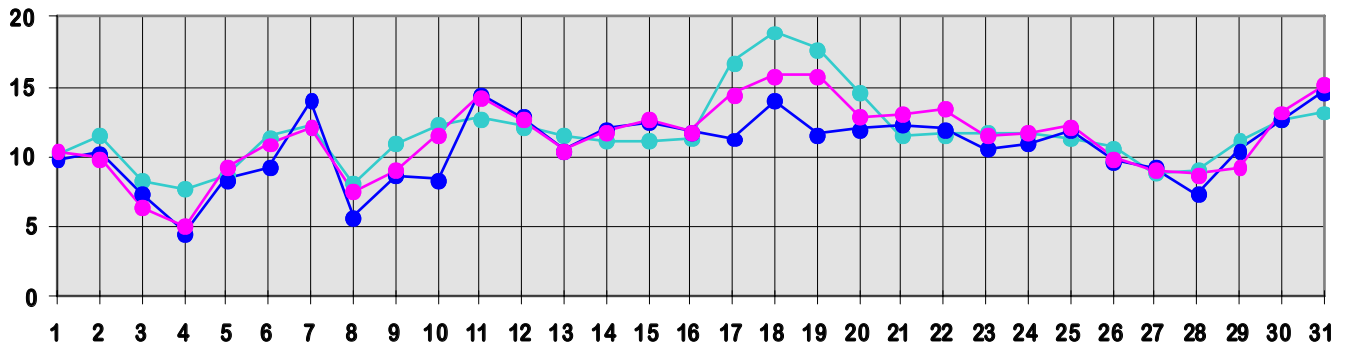
Rainfall (mm)



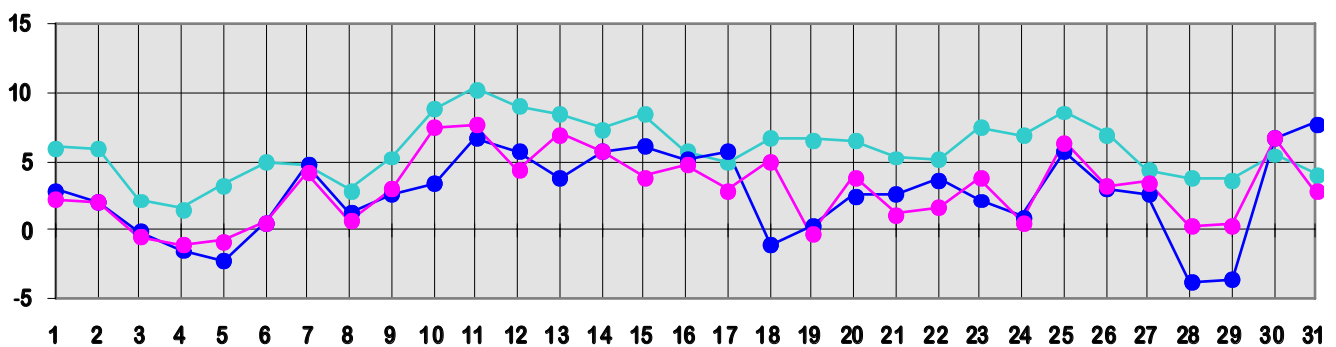
Sunshine (hours)



Maximum temperature (°C)



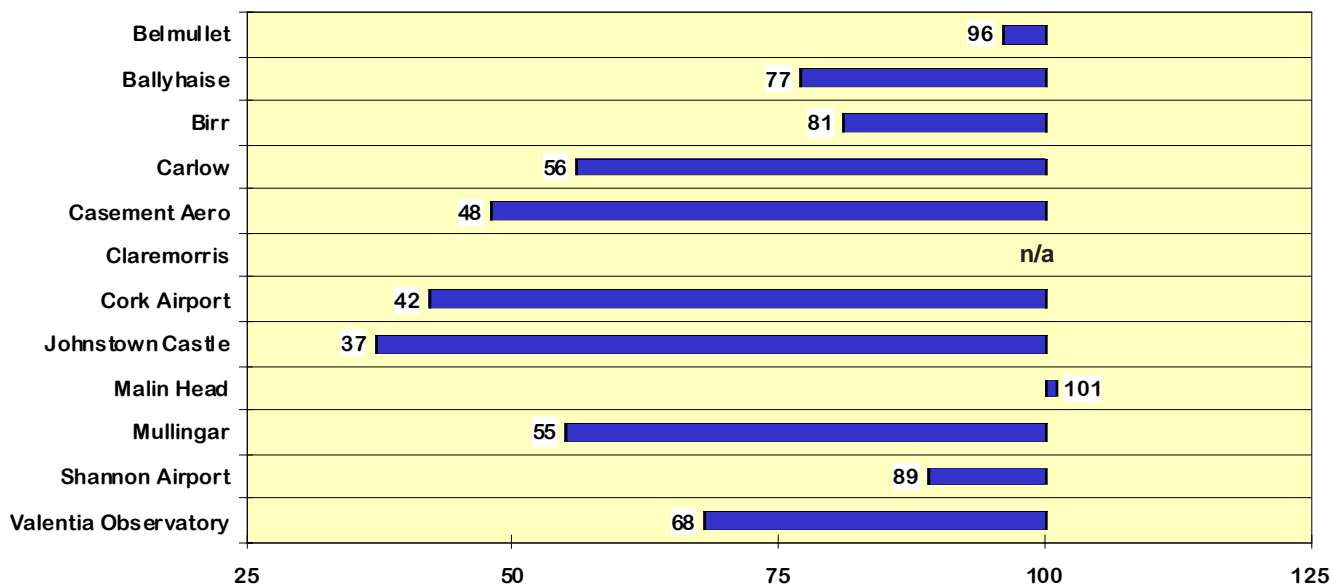
Minimum temperature (°C)



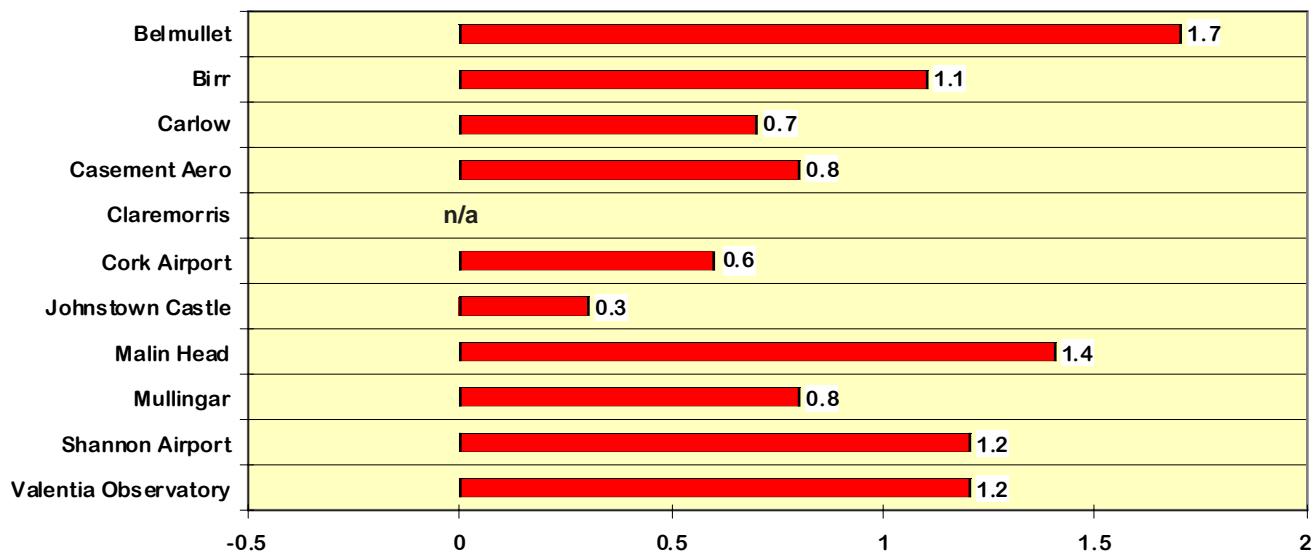
● Valentia Observatory ● Dublin Airport ● Birr

March 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)

