



Monthly Weather Summary

The Weather of March 2010

Another cold month everywhere; becoming unsettled after dry and sunny start

After dry, clear and cold weather during the first half of March, milder but more unsettled conditions developed during the second half, before turning very cold and windy at the end of the month. Mean monthly air temperatures were below normal for the fourth successive month, by around half a degree generally. It was the coldest March for between nine and 14 years at most stations and the coldest since 1987 at both Mullingar and Valentia Observatory. While mean maximum temperatures were a little higher than normal, mean minimum values were between one and two degrees below normal in many places, reflecting the spell of very frosty weather during the early part of the month, when grass minimum temperatures fell below -10°C on several days. There was a total of between 13 and 19 ground frosts in most places, while more than 20 ground frosts were recorded in eastern and midland areas; this compares with the normal range for March of between 7 and 13 ground frosts. March rainfall totals were close to normal generally, but rainfall was very unevenly spread through the month. Little rain fell during the first half of March and some eastern stations recorded no measureable rainfall until the 16th. Heavy rain, sleet or snow fell over most of the country during the 29th and 30th, however, bringing localised flooding, while there was some accumulation of snow in many northern and upland areas. There was a total of between 7 and 13 wetdays at most stations (days with 1mm or more rainfall), below the normal range for March of 12 to 17. Sunshine totals were above normal everywhere and, for the fourth successive month, they were well above normal in the south and west. Valentia Observatory's total of 159 hours was its highest for March since 1955. By far the sunniest period of the month was between the 7th and 10th, when daily values of more than 10 hours were widely recorded.

1st to 15th: A large anticyclone, or area of high pressure, was centred close to Ireland, giving mostly dry and clear conditions with light winds. Frontal systems gave some significant falls of rain over western areas on the 3rd, but totals for the period overall were very small at most stations. The clear conditions brought long sunny periods by day, particularly between the 7th and 11th, but frost developed widely on most nights and it was severe at times in many eastern and midland areas. Daytime temperatures were near or below normal for much of the period, but rose above normal from the 12th onwards. Winds were light easterly or variable, later becoming more northerly in direction.

16th to 28th: As the anticyclone retreated eastwards, Atlantic depressions moved close to Ireland's west coast, allowing frontal systems to cross the country. Rain or showers were recorded each day, but heavy falls were infrequent. Fresh to strong southwesterly winds brought mild and mostly cloudy conditions, with little or no air frost.

29th to 31st: A depression to the south of Ireland moved slowly northwards along the east coast, bringing a spell of very cold weather. Its associated band of rain or snow brought heavy falls in many areas, accompanied by strong easterly winds, backing north to northwesterly. A clearance to wintry showers followed, some of which were thundery.

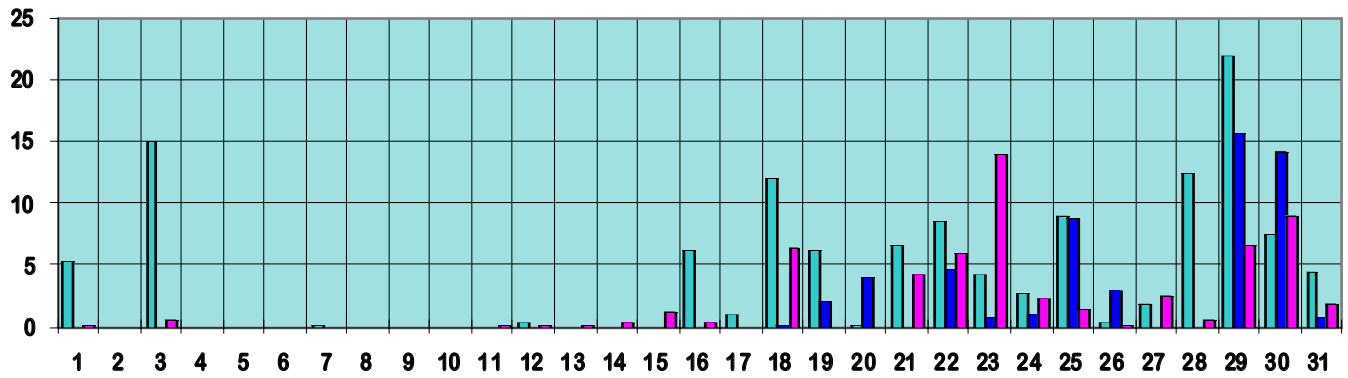
Wind and elements: Mean windspeeds for the month were below normal everywhere. Winds were light during the first half of March, but increased in strength during the second half; the month's strongest winds were on the 18th, 22nd and in the period between the 29th and 31st. Belmullet recorded the highest gust of 57 knots (105km/h) on the 18th. Snow was recorded between the 29th and 31st, while hail was observed on the 22nd and between the 28th and 31st. Thunder was infrequent during the month, but was fairly widespread on the 18th, 22nd and 31st. Fog was most widespread during the spell of frosty weather early in the month.

Extreme values

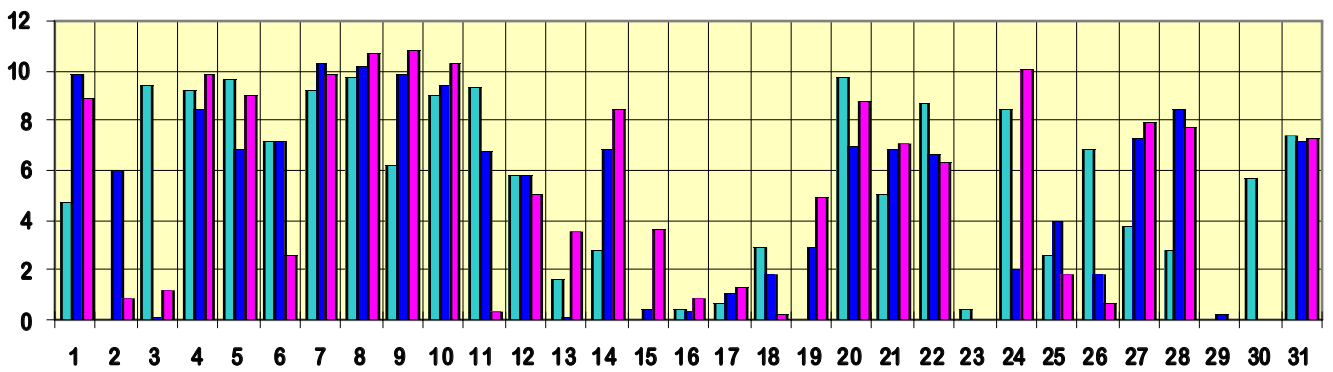
Rainfall	Highest total: 126mm at Valentia Observatory Lowest total: 55mm at Dublin Airport Highest daily rainfall: 39.1mm at Ballyhaise on 30th
Temperature	Highest mean monthly temperature: 7.3°C at Valentia Observatory (<i>its coldest March since 1987</i>) Lowest mean monthly temperature: 4.9°C at Mullingar (<i>its coldest March since 1987</i>) Highest temperature: 14.7°C at Shannon Airport on 18th Lowest air temperature: -7.7°C at Ballyhaise on 8th Lowest grass minimum temperature: -12.3°C at both Ballyhaise and Casement Aerodrome on 8th (<i>Casement's lowest such value for March since 1986</i>)
Sunshine	Highest monthly total: 160 hours at Belmullet (<i>its sunniest March since 2004</i>) Lowest monthly total: 131 hours at Casement Aerodrome (<i>its sunniest March since 2004</i>) Highest daily sunshine: 10.8 hours at Belmullet on 9th

March 2010 Daily values at selected synoptic stations

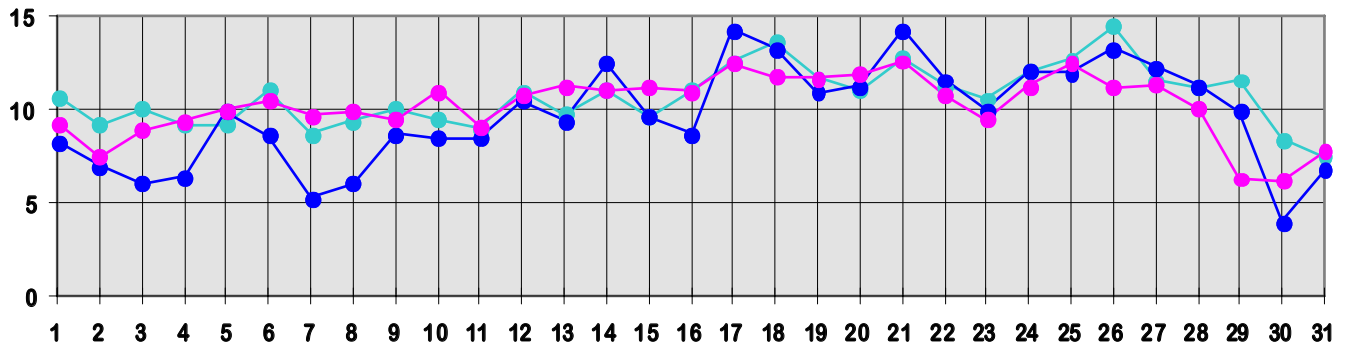
Rainfall (mm)



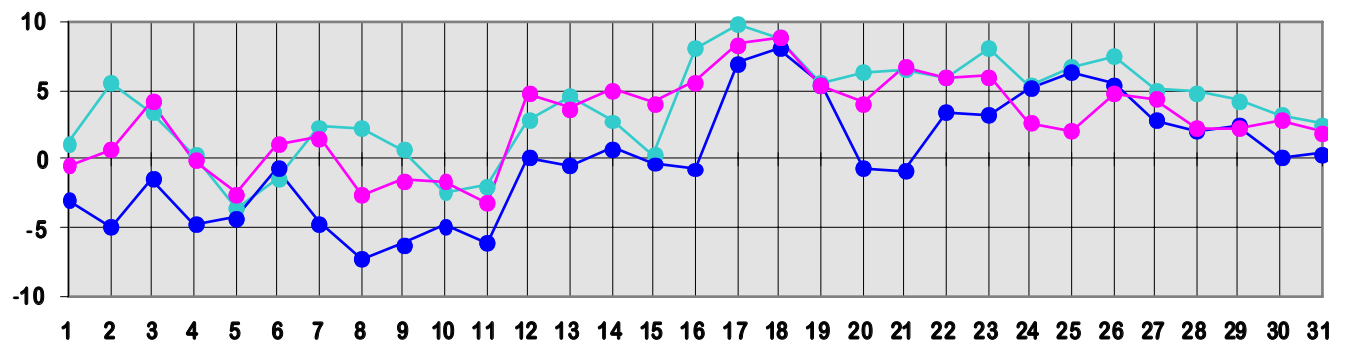
Sunshine (hours)



Maximum temperature (°C)



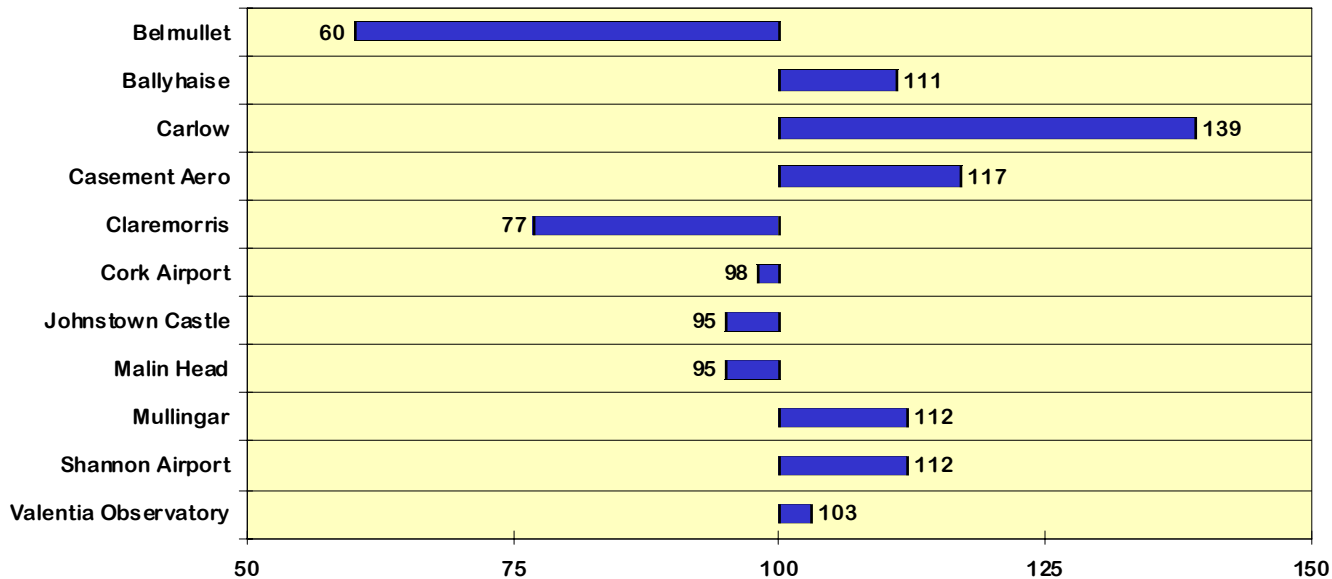
Minimum temperature (°C)



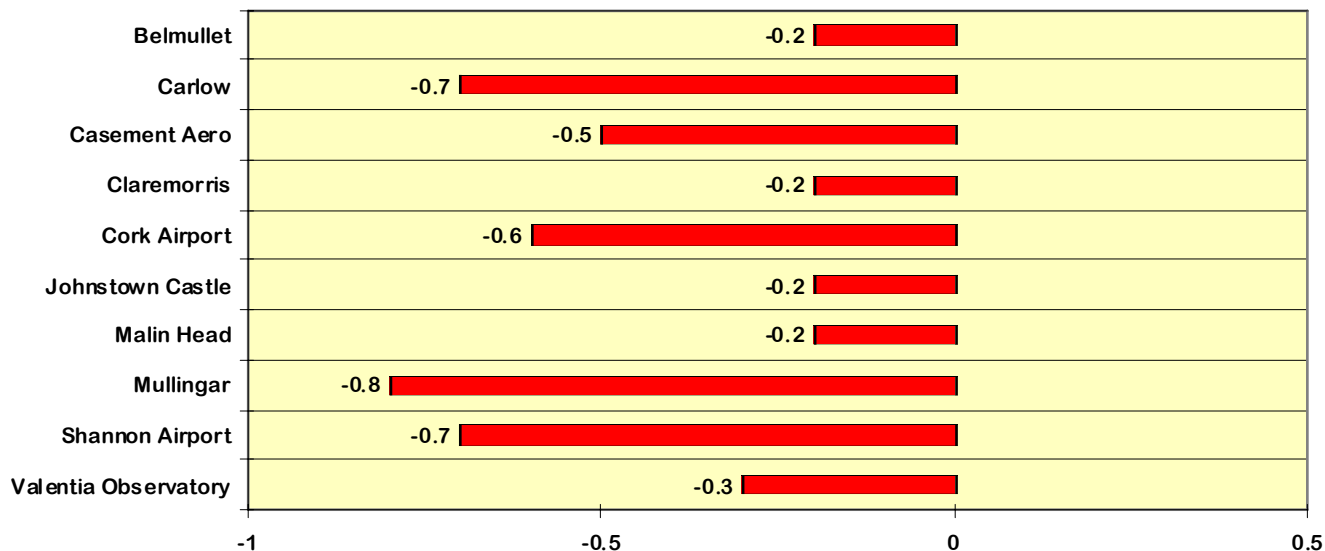
● Valentia Observatory ● Dublin Airport ● Belmullet

March 2010 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)

