



Monthly Weather Summary

The Weather of March 2011

Very dry and sunny everywhere; becoming warm after cool start

Areas of high pressure over or close to Ireland were the dominant influence on the month's weather; as a result, dry and mostly sunny conditions prevailed during the first week and for much of the second half. Temperatures rose above normal during the month after a cold and frosty start. Monthly rainfall totals of between 15mm and 50mm generally were only around half of the normal March amounts, with lowest values relative to normal in eastern and southeastern areas. It was the driest March for between 11 and 14 years at many stations. Most precipitation was confined to the period between the 9th to 14th, when snow fell in some areas, while the 30th and 31st were also wet. Most stations recorded between six and nine wetdays during the month (days with 1mm or more rainfall), well below the normal range for March of between 12 and 17 wetdays. Despite a cold start, March was a little warmer than normal overall; mean monthly air temperatures were around half a degree above normal generally, but were over a degree above normal in some western areas. While mean maximum temperatures were around a degree higher than average, mean minimum values were more than one degree below normal in most places, reflecting the frequency of frost during the month, especially during the first week. The majority of stations recorded a total of between 18 and 25 ground frosts; this compares with the normal range for March across the country of between seven and 13 ground frosts. Sunshine totals were above normal everywhere and, for the fifth successive month, they were well above normal in many places. Cork Airport had its sunniest March since 1970, while totals at both Shannon Airport and Valentia Observatory were the highest for March since 1955. The sunniest period of the month was between the 23rd and 27th, when daily values of more than 10 hours were recorded at many stations.

1st to 7th: A large anticyclone, or area of high pressure, was centred close to Ireland, giving light winds and mostly dry conditions, with fog at times. Although mainly sunny, this period was cool and frost developed widely on most nights. This was severe at times in many parts of Leinster and Munster. Winds were light easterly or variable.

8th to 19th: Pressure fell over Ireland as Atlantic depressions brought frontal systems across the country. Rain or showers were recorded each day, but amounts were generally small except for the period between the 11th and 13th, when some falls were wintry. Temperatures remained below normal, with widespread frost on many nights. Strong westerly winds were recorded between the 8th and 11th, but winds were mostly light for the remainder of the period.

20th to 29th: A return to anticyclonic conditions, bringing more dry and relatively calm weather. Daytime temperatures rose above normal, especially between the 23rd and 25th, but ground frost remained widespread. Skies were virtually clear over Ireland on several days, but there were fog patches locally, with sea fog along some coasts.

30th to 31st: Spells of rain, heaviest in southwestern areas, were accompanied by strong southwesterly winds, as a depression passed close to the north of the country. Temperatures were well above normal.

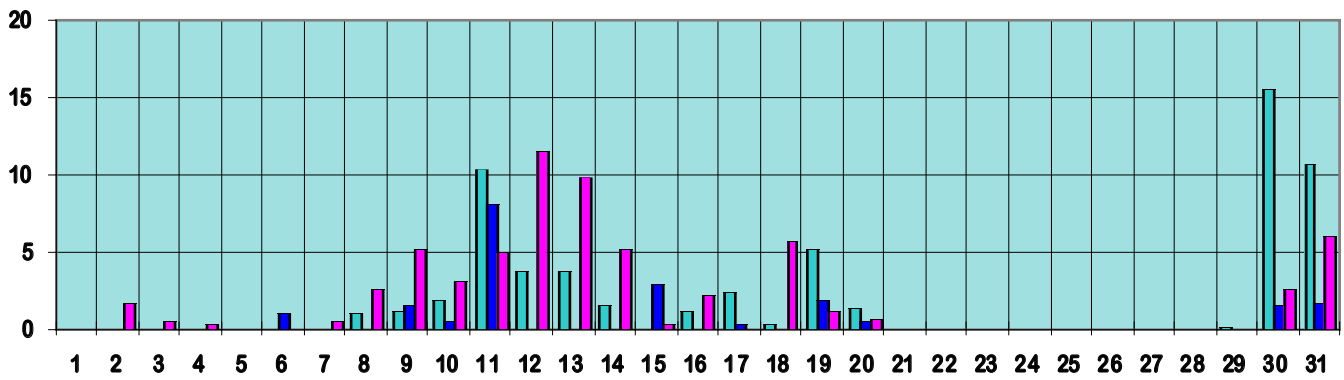
Wind and elements: Mean windspeeds for the month were below normal everywhere; Dublin Airport's mean monthly windspeed of 8.3 knots (*15km/h*) was its lowest for March since 1953. Winds were light for most of the month, but there were spells of windy weather between the 9th and 11th and on the 31st. Knock Airport recorded the highest gust of 59 knots (*109km/h*) on the 31st. Snow was recorded between the 11th and 15th, while hail was observed in the periods 9th to 13th and 18th to 19th. Thunder was very infrequent during the month. Fog was most widespread during the spells of relatively calm and settled weather during the month.

Extreme values

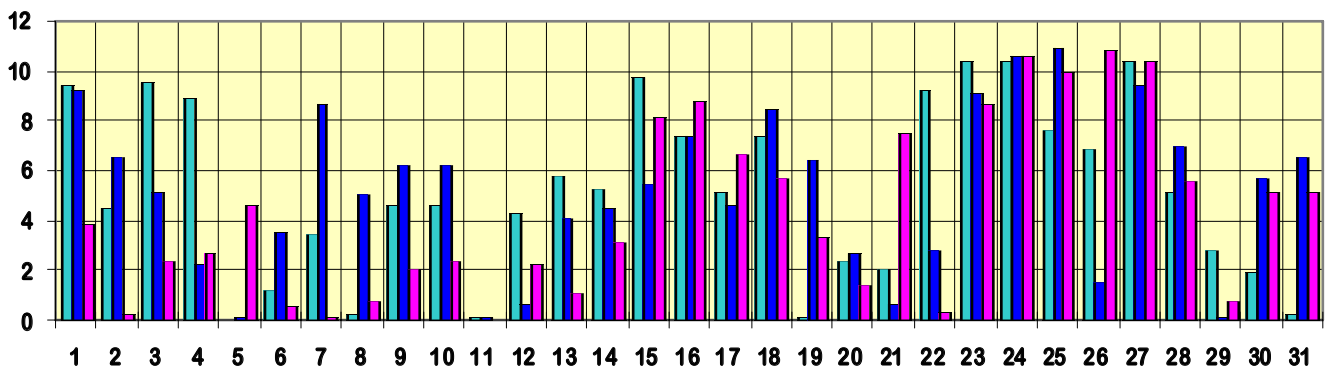
Rainfall	Highest total: 63.5mm at Belmullet Lowest total: 15.0mm at Casement Aerodrome (<i>its driest March since 1997</i>) Highest daily rainfall: 16.2mm at Claremorris on 11th
Temperature	Highest mean monthly temperature: 8.1°C at Belmullet Lowest mean monthly temperature: 5.8°C at Dublin Airport Highest temperature: 18.6°C at Valentia Observatory on 24th Lowest air temperature: -5.4°C at Dublin Airport on 3rd Lowest grass minimum temperature: -10.2°C at Casement Aerodrome on 3rd
Sunshine	Highest monthly total: 161.7 hours at Shannon Airport (<i>its sunniest March since 1955</i>) Lowest monthly total: 103.7 hours at Knock Airport Highest daily sunshine: 10.9 hours at Dublin Airport on 25th and at Cork Airport on 22nd and 23rd (<i>Dublin's sunniest March day since 1982</i>)

March 2011 Daily values at selected synoptic stations

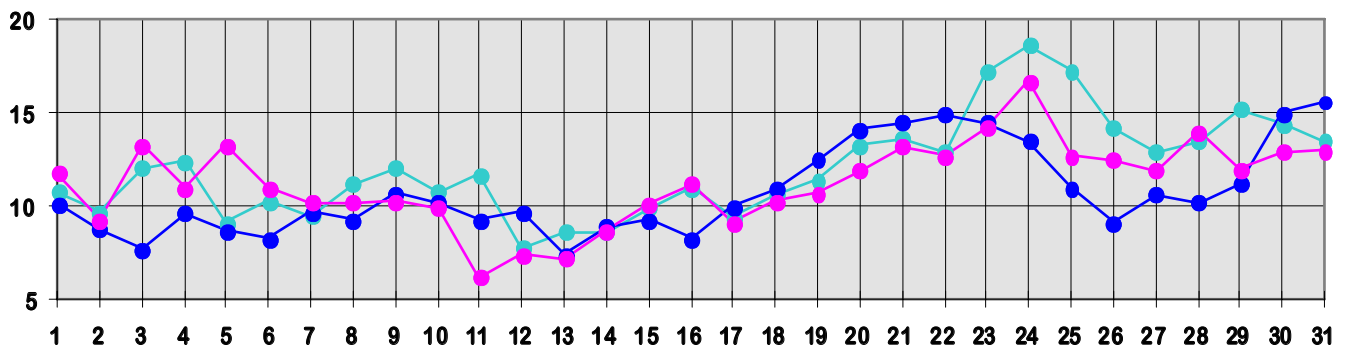
Rainfall (mm)



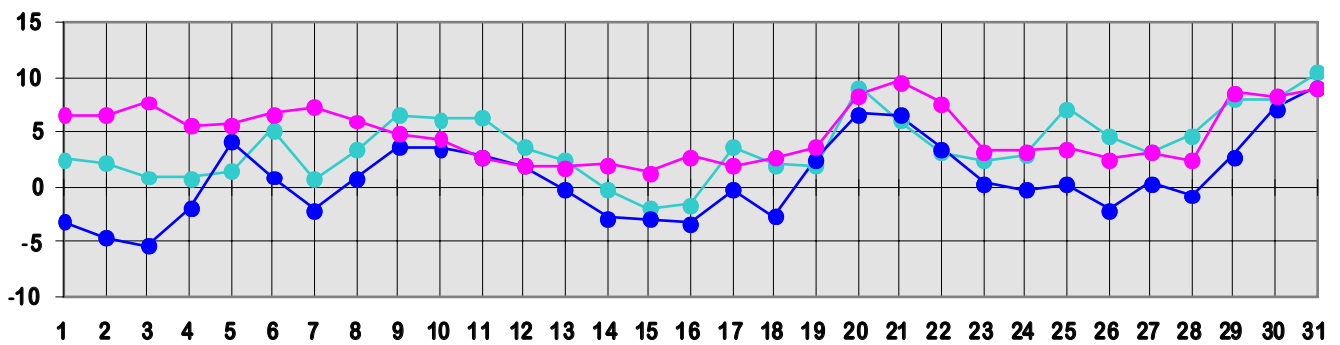
Sunshine (hours)



Maximum temperature (°C)



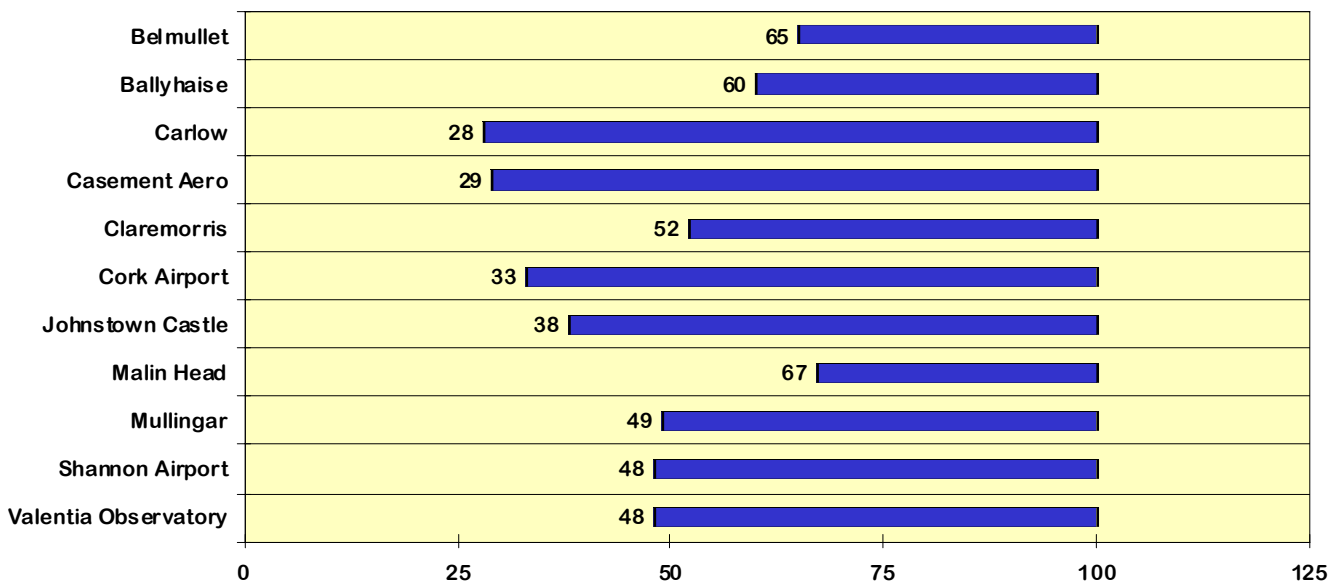
Minimum temperature (°C)



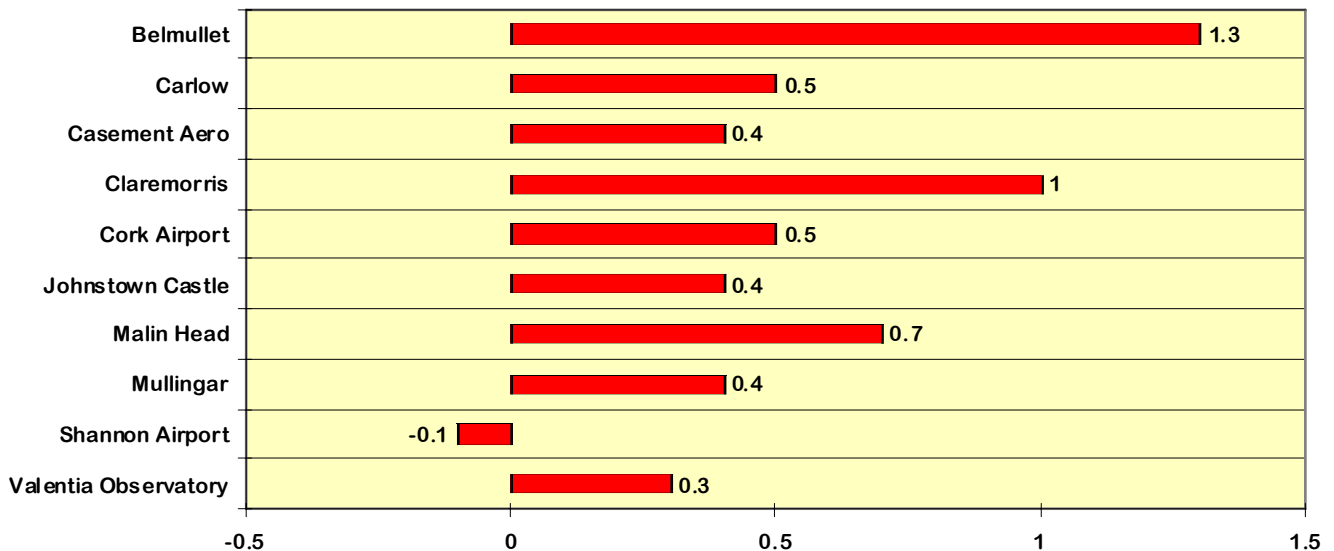
● Valentia Observatory ● Dublin Airport ● Belmullet

March 2011 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)

