

The Weather of Spring 2011

(March, April and May summary)

Warmer, sunnier than normal everywhere; very dry in east and southeast

Mean air temperatures were above normal for the season, by between one and two degrees across the country. Periods of high pressure dominated during the three-month period, bringing the warmest spring on record since 1997 to the west of the country, while Casement Aerodrome had its warmest spring since records began there in 1964. Overall, the mean temperature values for spring were between 8.8°C and 10.5°C. Unusually for spring, the highest daily values at most stations were measured during April, with the highest spring temperature of 22.7°C recorded at Shannon Airport on the 21st of that month. All minimum temperatures for spring were recorded during March, with the lowest air temperature of -5.4°C recorded at Dublin Airport on March 3rd. There was an above normal number of ground frosts recorded during the season, with a total of between 10 and 36 at most stations, the vast majority of which were recorded in March.

Rainfall totals for spring were below normal almost everywhere, with the exception of stations near the Atlantic coast. Dry weather dominated during March and April, but May was a wet month except in the east and southeast. Dublin Airport had its driest spring since 1990, recording only 84.9mm of rainfall during the three-month period. The heaviest daily falls during the season were measured in the south during the first week of May, with Valentia Observatory recording the highest daily fall of 43.6mm on May 7th, its highest daily fall for spring since 2005. Between 24 and 49 wetdays were recorded during the three-month period, with a slightly above average number of wetdays in the south and west, whilst the number of wetdays over the remainder of the country was below average.

Sunshine totals for the season were above normal everywhere. The highest daily value for spring was recorded at Belmullet on May 2nd, with 14.3 hours of sunshine. With sunnier than average spring seasons over the past few years, however, 2011 was the dullest spring in over five years in Belmullet in the west of the country.

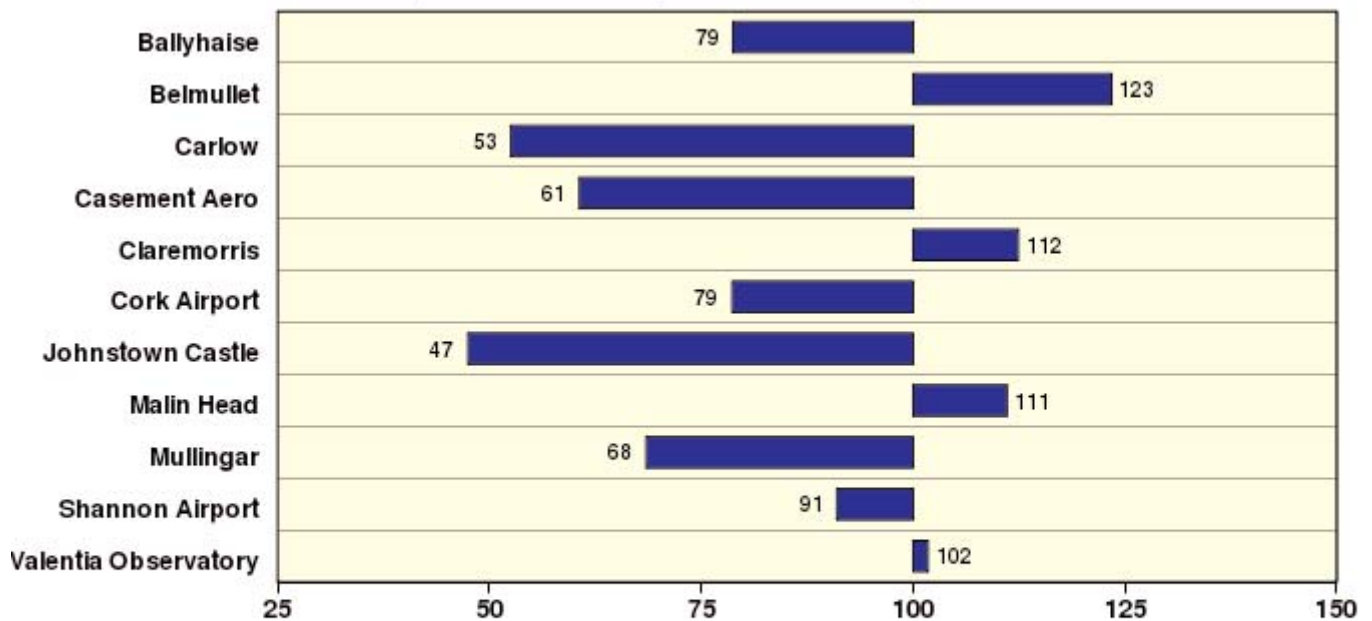
Mean windspeeds for spring were about average for the season. Spells of windy weather during the three-month period brought gusts of over 40 knots in most areas, but the highest mean windspeeds were measured in May. The highest gust, 78 knots (144km/h), was measured at Belmullet on May 23rd, its highest spring value since 1986.

Extreme seasonal values at synoptic stations

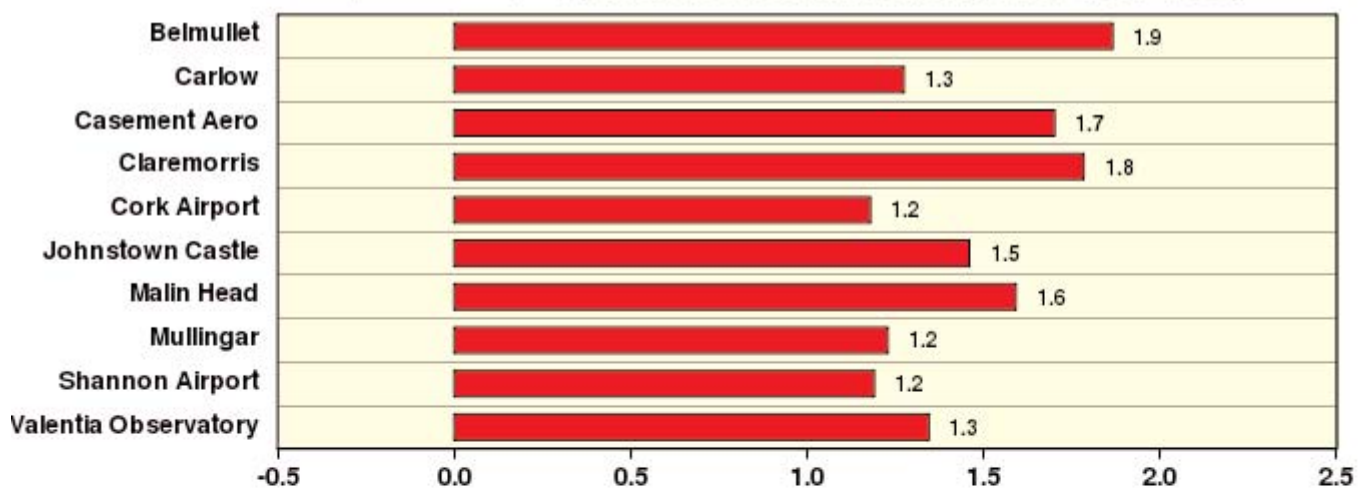
Rainfall	Highest seasonal total: 292mm at Valentia Observatory Lowest seasonal total: 85mm at Dublin Airport (<i>its lowest spring total since 1990</i>) Highest daily rainfall: 43.6mm at Valentia Observatory on May 7th (<i>its highest recorded for spring since 2005</i>)
Temperature	Highest mean seasonal temperature: 10.5°C at Valentia Observatory (<i>highest spring value since 1997</i>) Lowest mean seasonal temperature: 8.8°C at Knock Airport (<i>equalling its highest seasonal value for spring in 1997</i>) Highest temperature: 22.7°C at Shannon Airport on April 21st Lowest air temperature: -5.4°C at Dublin Airport on March 3rd Lowest grass minimum temperature: -10.2°C at Casement Aerodrome on March 3rd
Sunshine	Highest seasonal total: 560 hours at Dublin Airport Lowest seasonal total: 438 hours at Knock Airport Highest daily sunshine: 14.3 hours at Belmullet on May 2nd

Spring 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)



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This report is based on preliminary data from the synoptic weather stations operated by Met Éireann

A detailed summary is available in the **Monthly Weather Bulletin**

For more information, contact Met Éireann at 01-8064200 or e-mail: climate.enquiries@met.ie website: www.met.ie/climate