

# The Weather of Winter 2010/11

## (December, January and February summary)

### **Cold, dry and very sunny in places**

Despite mild weather during February, mean air temperatures for the season were well below normal everywhere, by between one and two degrees generally. December was one of the coldest months on record in Ireland, while cold spells also dominated during January. Overall, mean temperature values for winter were between 2.5°C and 5.8°C, among the lowest in recent years, but at no station was it as cold as last winter, when temperatures remained below normal throughout almost all of the season. The lowest temperatures this winter were measured between December 21st and 25th almost everywhere, when minimum air temperatures fell below -15°C at some stations; maximum temperatures were below freezing on eight successive days in some midland areas. There was a total of between 52 and 67 ground frosts during the season at most stations, almost twice the normal number for winter in places.

Rainfall totals for winter were below normal everywhere and were well below normal in the south. While February was a wet month everywhere, totals for both December and January were well below average amounts. Both Dublin Airport and Valentia Observatory had their driest winters since 2005/06. The precipitation during most of December was in the form of snow, giving accumulations of over 20cm of snow at some eastern stations. The heaviest daily falls of rain during the season were in the south and southwest on December 26th/27th, coinciding with the end of the exceptionally cold spell; other stations had their wettest days of the season in the period between February 5th and 7th. Most stations recorded between 32 and 44 wetdays during the 3-month period, well below the normal range for winter of between 35 and 55 wetdays.

Sunshine totals for the season were above normal everywhere and were well above normal at some southern and western stations, by as much as 75% at Belmullet, where it was the sunniest winter since the station opened in 1956. The same station's daily sunshine of 9.3 hours on February 17th was its highest winter value since 2004.

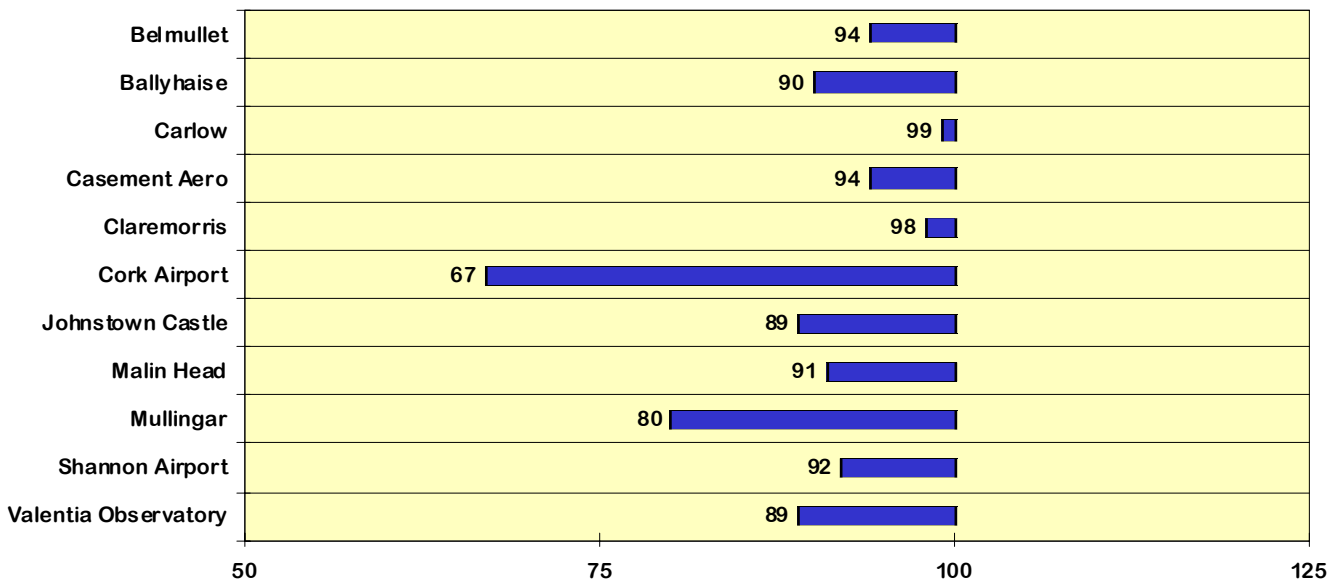
Mean windspeeds of between 5 and 14 knots (*9 and 26km/h*) were the lowest on record for winter at many stations. A spell of windy weather during early February brought gusts of over 50 knots in most areas, but windspeeds during both December and January were exceptionally low. The highest gust, 72 knots (*133km/h*), was measured at Belmullet on February 3rd.

### **Extreme seasonal values at synoptic stations**

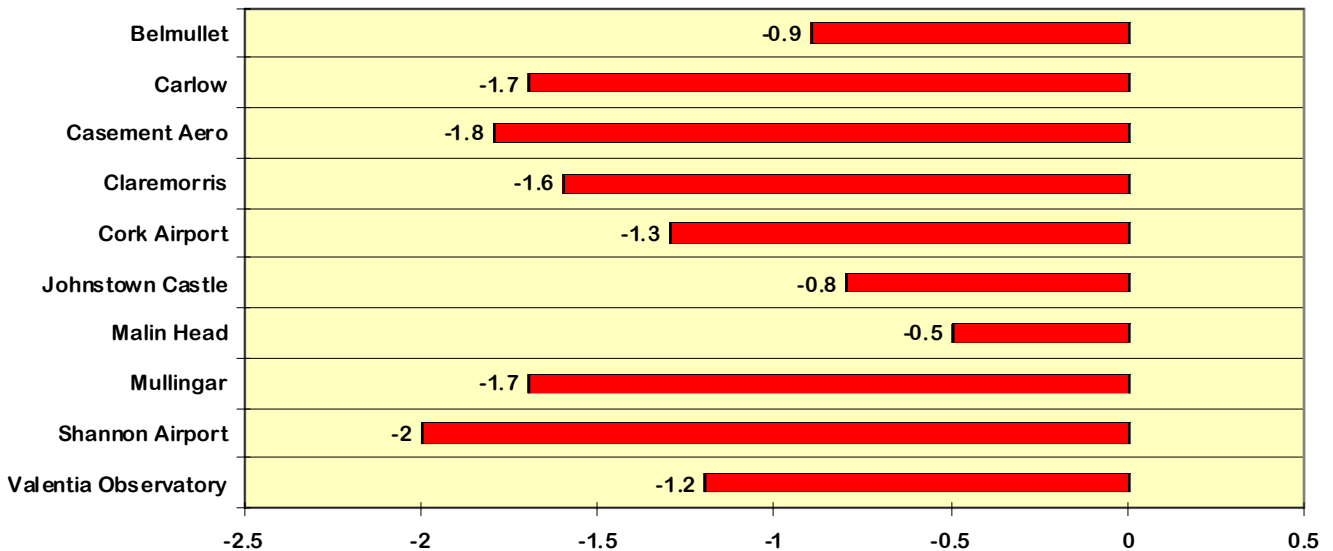
<b>Rainfall</b>	Highest seasonal total: 404mm at Valentia Observatory Lowest seasonal total: 163mm at Dublin Airport Highest daily rainfall: 49.2mm at Valentia Observatory on December 26th
<b>Temperature</b>	Highest mean seasonal temperature: 5.8°C at Valentia Observatory Lowest mean seasonal temperature: 2.5°C at Ballyhaise Highest temperature: 15.0°C at Shannon Airport on February 24th Lowest air temperature: -15.7°C at Casement Aerodrome on December 25th <i>(its lowest such value since temperature records began there in 1958)</i> Lowest grass minimum temperature: -17.3°C at Gurteen on December 21st
<b>Sunshine</b>	Highest seasonal total: 258 hours at Belmullet <i>(its sunniest winter on record)</i> Lowest seasonal total: 188 hours at Shannon Airport Highest daily sunshine: 9.3 hours at Belmullet on February 17th <i>(its highest daily value for winter since 2004)</i>

# Winter 2010/11 Percentage / Difference from 1961-90 monthly normals

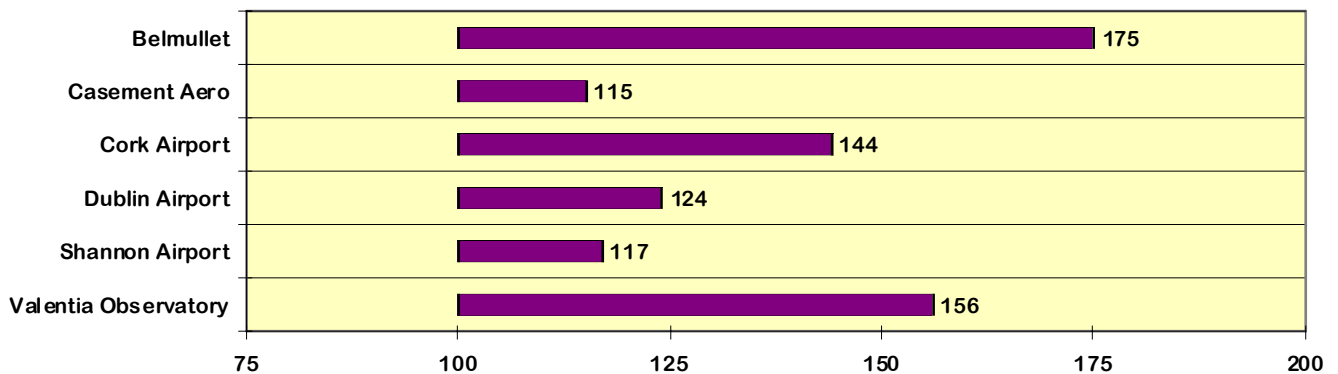
## Rainfall (% of normal for period 1961-1990)



## 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**

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