

The Weather of December, January and February

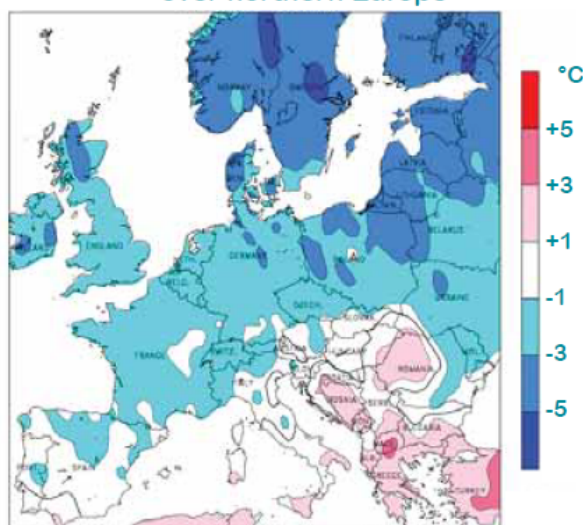
COLDEST WINTER FOR BETWEEN 13 AND 18 YEARS IN PLACES

Mean air temperatures for the season were around two degrees lower than average for the 1961-90 period and it was the coldest winter since 1962/3 everywhere. The season began with relatively mild weather, but each of the winter months was colder than normal. The season's lowest temperatures were measured in the periods December 24th to 25th and January 7th to 9th, when air temperatures fell below -10°C in places and several stations recorded their lowest winter values for more than 20 years. There was a total of between 70 and 80 ground frosts during the season at inland stations, while Valentia Observatory's total of 62 ground frosts was almost three times its average winter figure of 22.

Rainfall totals (including snowfall) for the season were below normal almost everywhere, with only around half of the seasonal totals recorded in some places. At most stations it was not as dry as the winter of 2005/6, but at Shannon Airport it was the driest since 1963/4. The season's heaviest falls were during December and mid-January, particularly on December 29th/30th and on January 12th in the south. There were between 20 and 30 days with snow in many places, mainly in the form of showers, but snowfall accumulations were generally slight except on high ground. The total number of raindays during the 3-month period was between 44 and 62 generally, around 10% lower than normal for the season.

Sunshine totals for the season were above normal everywhere and they were exceptionally high in the west and south. It was the sunniest winter on record at stations in these areas, including Valentia Observatory, where over a century of sunshine records exist. Another notable feature of the winter's weather was the infrequency of strong winds. Mean windspeeds for the season of between 5 and 11 knots (9 and 20km/h) were below normal everywhere and were the lowest on record for winter at many stations. The highest gust of the season, 62 knots (115km/h) was measured at Valentia Observatory on January 12th.

Exceptionally cold winter over northern Europe



Winter 2009/10- Mean seasonal temperature difference from normal
(image: NOAA Climate Prediction Centre, US Dept of Commerce)

County/ Station	RAINFALL (mm)				TEMPERATURE ($^{\circ}\text{C}$)				SUNSHINE (HOURS)				NO. OF DAYS WITH:					
	Total	% of average	Most in a day	date(s)	Mean	diff. from average	Extremes Highest	Lowest	Daily mean	% of average	Most in a day	date(s)	Rain	Snow	Air frost	Hail	Thunder	Fog
CO. CARLOW Carlow (Oak Park)	188.0	84	20.1	4 Feb	2.6	-2.2	11.8	-12.1					49	50				6
CO. CAVAN Ballyhaise	143.5	59	14.2	30 Dec	1.9		11.4	-9.7					44	52				7
CO. CLARE Shannon Airport	134.3	51	18.1	29 Dec	2.9	-2.9	12.4	-11.2	2.55	134	8.2	17 Feb	48	12	50	0	0	25
CO. CORK Cork Airport	317.7	81	39.3	30 Dec	3.4	-2.0	10.9	-5.6	3.50	176	9.3	11 Feb	47	10	42	0	0	28
CO. DONEGAL Roche's Point	246.2	77	29.8	12 Jan	4.7	-1.9	11.3	-2.7					45		24			23
CO. DUBLIN Malin Head	212.9	72	28.2	26 Feb	4.5	-1.1	10.8	-3.7					62	19				37
CO. DUBLIN Dublin Airport	150.2		28.4	30 Dec	2.6		13.1	-9.5	2.35	117	8.8	11 Feb	49	21	52	11	1	18
CO. KERRY Casement Aerodrome	182.2	98	40.3	30 Dec	2.4	-2.6	12.6	-12.4	1.98	107	7.2	17 Feb	49	24	51	7	1	18
CO. KERRY Valentia Observatory	425.7	94	58.5	12 Jan	5.1	-1.9	12.6	-4.7	3.21	203	8.4	11 Feb	61	4	33	7	0	1
CO. MAYO Belmullet	317.6	98	20.6	26 Dec	4.6	-1.4	11.6	-5.6	2.67	162	9.0	11 Feb	71	25	29	29	3	3
CO. TIPPERARY Knock Airport	205.9		12.1	13 Jan	2.0		9.9	-6.1	2.42		9.2	11 Feb	59	27	51	5	0	47
CO. WESTMEATH Gurteen	121.7		13.5	12 Jan	2.2		12.1	-8.4					44		53			5
CO. WEXFORD Mullingar	161.1	63	21.6	30 Dec	1.9	-2.4	11.2	-10.0					44		54			2
CO. WEXFORD Johnstown Castle	339.1	114	28.4	30 Dec	4.1	-1.4	11.6	-3.7					48		26			7