



IOWA MONTHLY WEATHER SUMMARY – MARCH 2015

General Summary. Iowa temperatures averaged 36.9° or 1.0° above normal while precipitation totaled 0.60 inches or 1.55 inches below normal. This ranks as the 53rd warmest and ties for 7th driest March among 143 years of records. A drier March was last recorded in 1994 and a drier first one-quarter year in 1988.

Temperatures. The very cold weather pattern that dominated most of February continued into the first six days of March. The coldest day in many areas was the 5th with morning lows down to -17° at Stanley in Buchanan County while Maquoketa, Oelwein, Stanley and Postville recorded daytime highs of only 9°. An extended period of warmer and drier than normal weather prevailed from the 7th through the 22nd. The year's first 70 degree readings were recorded over much of southwestern Iowa on the 10th while Little Sioux reached 81° on the 15th. Temperature soared higher still with Sioux City reaching 90° on the 16th. This reading came six days earlier in the year than any previous 90° temperature in Iowa (old record 92° at Clarinda on March 22, 1910). Another spell of cold weather prevailed from the 23rd to the 28th with Cresco reporting a low of 8° on the morning of the 27th. Finally, mild weather returned for the end of the month with Little Sioux reaching 81° on the 30th and 80° on the 31st. A larger range in monthly temperature extremes from -17 to +90 has been recorded only three times during March (1943, 1959 and 1962). There was also a fairly strong gradient in temperatures across Iowa during March with the month averaging about 5 degrees warmer than normal over the far northwest to about 2 degrees below normal along the Mississippi River.

Heating Degree Days. Home heating requirements, as estimated by heating degree day totals, averaged 4% less than normal and 21% less than last March. Degree day totals for the heating season (since July 1, 2014) are running 3% more than normal but 10% less than last season though the end of March.

Precipitation. Most of Iowa has been unusually dry since the major snow storm of January 31-February 1. There has been a statewide average of only 0.89 inches from February 2 through the end of March compared to a normal total for the period of 3.14 inches. A particularly dry period occurred from March 4th through the 21st when a statewide average of only 0.01 inches of precipitation fell during this 18-day period. Most of March's precipitation came in two events during the fourth week of the month. Heavy snow fell across far northeast Iowa on the night of the 22nd with a foot of wet snow reported at McGregor. The largest event came on the 24th when rain fell statewide. Rain totals exceeded an inch at a few western locations with a maximum total of 1.32 inches reported near New Market in Taylor County. Some of the precipitation fell in the form of freezing rain and snow over northern sections of the state. This event also brought the first thunderstorms of the year to portions of the state. Monthly precipitation totals varied from 0.03 inches at Guthrie Center to 1.77 inches at Monona. No measurable snow fell over much of western and central Iowa during the month while 12.5 inches was reported eight miles east-northeast of Decorah. The statewide average snowfall was 0.9 inches while normal for the month is 4.7 inches. This was the lowest March statewide average snowfall since 1994 and ranks 9th lowest among 128 years of records.

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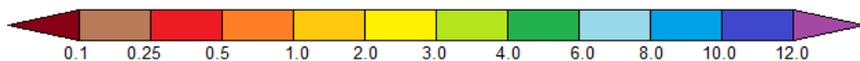
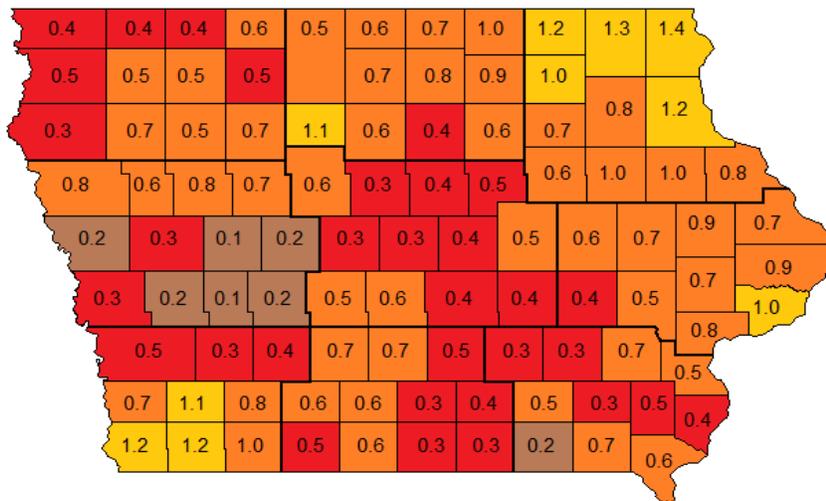
WEATHER BY DISTRICTS

DISTRICT	TEMPERATURE (F)		HEATING DEGREE DAYS				PRECIPITATION (inches)				SNOWFALL Mar 2015 Average
	March 2015		March 2015		Since Jul., 1, 2014		March 2015		Since Jan.1, 2015		
	Average	Departure*	Average	Departure*	Average	Departure*	Average	Departure*	Average	Departure*	
Northwest	36.9	+3.8	864	-125	6701	-54	0.49	-1.39	1.79	-1.40	0.1
North Central	34.2	+1.4	948	-51	6965	+136	0.74	-1.22	2.36	-1.29	1.9
Northeast	32.7	-1.4	994	+38	6942	+388	0.91	-1.06	2.68	-1.41	3.6
West Central	38.6	+2.9	810	-99	6293	+5	0.43	-1.68	1.74	-1.97	T
Central	37.0	+1.1	862	-39	6432	+184	0.44	-1.75	2.34	-1.79	0.2
East Central	35.4	-1.8	912	+50	6429	+463	0.73	-1.55	2.90	-1.87	1.1
Southwest	40.2	+1.8	765	-60	5816	+60	0.83	-1.40	2.27	-1.80	0.2
South Central	39.5	+1.3	783	-47	5956	+188	0.47	-1.82	2.25	-2.17	0.3
Southeast	38.3	-1.2	823	+33	5959	+453	0.44	-2.13	2.83	-2.57	0.9
STATE	36.9	+1.0	865	-36	6417	+194	0.60	-1.55	2.33	-1.79	0.9

* Departures are computed from 1981-2010 normals.

The weather data in this report are based upon information collected by the U. S. Dept. of Commerce, NOAA National Weather Service.

State Climatologist, Iowa Dept. of Agriculture & Land Stewardship
 COUNTY PRECIPITATION ESTIMATES, MARCH 2015 (inches)



State Climatologist, Iowa Dept. of Agriculture & Land Stewardship
 COUNTY SNOWFALL ESTIMATES, MARCH 2015 (inches)

