



## IOWA PRELIMINARY MONTHLY WEATHER SUMMARY – MARCH 2016

General Summary. Iowa temperatures averaged 42.0° or 6.1° above normal while precipitation totaled 2.44 inches or 0.29 inches above normal. This ranks as the 13<sup>th</sup> warmest and 39<sup>th</sup> wettest March among 144 years of records. A warmer March has been recorded only twice in the past 40 years (2000 and 2012) while a wetter one last came in 2009.

Temperature. March began with three unseasonably cold days. Rock Rapids had a daytime high temperature of only 16° on the 1<sup>st</sup> while morning lows dipped to -6° at Elkader and Stanley on the 2<sup>nd</sup>. However, above normal temperatures prevailed every day from the 4<sup>th</sup> through the 17<sup>th</sup>. The warmest days were the 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> when temperatures averaged more than twenty degrees above normal. Sioux City reported the month's highest temperature with an 80° reading on the 7<sup>th</sup>. While not a state record, this was the earliest occurrence of 80 degree weather at Sioux City (old record March 13, 2012). Temperatures were much more seasonal for the final two weeks of the month, averaging 1.2° above normal. Late month temperature extremes varied from a low of 9° at Spencer on the 25<sup>th</sup> to highs of 78° at Shenandoah and Sidney on the 30<sup>th</sup>.

Heating Degree Day Totals. Home heating requirements, as estimated by heating degree day totals, averaged 19% less than last March and 22% less than normal. Heating Degree Day totals thus far this heating season (since July 1, 2015) are running 17% less than last season at this time and 15% less than normal. The last warmer heating season was 2011-2012.

Precipitation. Precipitation was frequent throughout the month with monthly totals about double March normal over parts of north central and northeast Iowa while some portions of southwest and south central Iowa saw less than one-half of normal. March precipitation totals varied from 0.76 inches at Albia to 4.50 inches at Ionia. The largest precipitation events came on the 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup>. The first of these events brought rain statewide with a maximum of 1.50 inches falling at Ionia. The second event brought very heavy snow to parts of northwest Iowa with 15.0 inches at Le Mars and 14.1 inches at Sioux City. Snow also fell across the north one-half of the state on the first day of the month with six inches reported at Allison. Monthly snow totals varied from only trace amounts for much southwest and south central Iowa to 17.0 inches at Algona. The statewide average snowfall was 3.5 inches or 1.2 inches less than normal. Virtually all of the state's heavy snow events this winter have impacted northwest Iowa. At Sheldon a total of 71.6 inches of snow has fallen this season, second only to a 73.7 inch total recorded at that location in the winter of 1961-1962. Meanwhile parts of far southern Iowa have seen less than one-half the typical amount of snow this winter.

Severe Weather. March often marks the beginning of the severe thunderstorm season in Iowa and this month was no exception. The first severe event of the season brought large hail to far southeast and east central Iowa on the evening of the 15<sup>th</sup> along with three confirmed tornadoes in Clinton County. Additionally, there were a few reports of hail and high winds across southwest Iowa on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and hail over parts of west central and central Iowa on the 30<sup>th</sup>.

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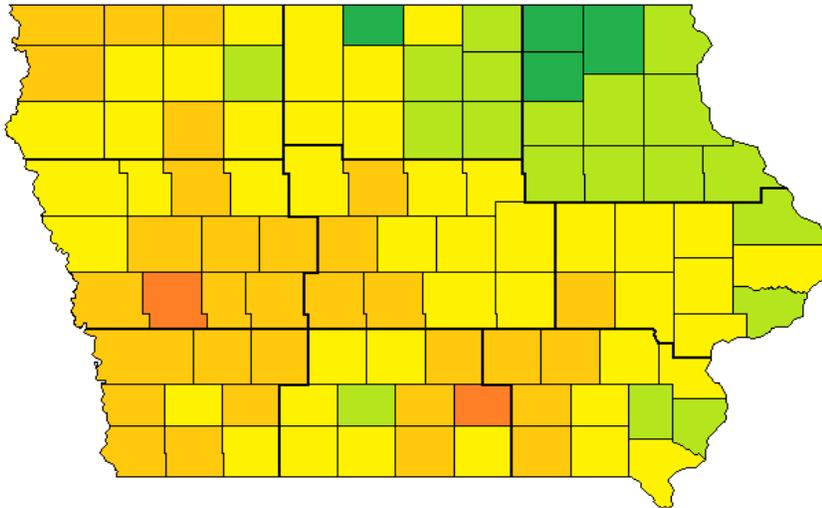
# March 2016

## WEATHER BY DISTRICTS

DISTRICT	TEMPERATURE (F)		HEATING DEGREE DAYS				PRECIPITATION (inches)				SNOWFALL Mar 2016 Average
	March 2016 Average	Departure*	March 2016 Average	Departure*	Since Jul., 1, 2015 Average	Departure*	March 2016 Average	Departure*	Since Jan.1, 2016 Average	Departure*	
Northwest	39.9	+6.8	768	-221	5860	-895	2.23	+0.35	3.78	+0.59	9.2
North Central	38.9	+6.1	798	-201	5848	-981	3.22	+1.26	4.86	+1.21	8.7
Northeast	39.5	+5.4	791	-165	5627	-927	3.70	+1.73	5.27	+1.18	5.5
West Central	42.1	+6.4	712	-197	5505	-783	1.75	-0.36	3.41	-0.30	2.3
Central	41.9	+6.0	691	-210	5291	-957	2.27	+0.08	3.91	-0.22	1.9
East Central	42.4	+5.2	686	-176	5044	-922	2.64	+0.36	3.63	-1.15	1.4
Southwest	45.5	+7.1	603	-222	4873	-883	1.67	-0.56	3.05	-1.03	0.1
South Central	44.4	+6.2	620	-210	4844	-924	2.03	-0.26	3.85	-0.57	0.1
Southeast	44.6	+5.1	625	-165	4615	-891	2.38	-0.19	3.82	-1.58	0.7
STATE	42.0	+6.1	705	-196	5317	-906	2.44	+0.29	3.97	-0.15	3.5

\* Departures are computed from 1981-2010 normals. Monthly estimates are preliminary and are likely to change.  
 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  
 PRELIMINARY COUNTY PRECIPITATION ESTIMATES, MARCH 2016 (inches)



State Climatologist, Iowa Dept. of Agriculture & Land Stewardship  
 PRELIMINARY COUNTY SNOWFALL ESTIMATES, MARCH 2016 (inches)

