

University of Waterloo Weather Station Monthly Summary - January 2006

Welcome to the March... whoops! make that the January weather summary (but seriously, the temperatures we saw this month were more typical of March). Needless to say it was the warmest January ever experienced in the eight year history of the weather station and warmest by a large margin. The average daytime high was 5.4 degrees higher than average and the average nighttime low was a phenomenal 6.8 degrees above what we would expect for January. The previous warmest January was in 2002 when it was 3.7 degrees above average.

The month was not only warm for January, but it was also the most that any month has ever been above its average in the history of the weather station. The previous record was in March of 2000, when the temperature was 5.1 degrees above the average for that month (8.3 °C was the measured average daily high temperature compared to an average of only 3.2 °C).

The warm temperatures were very consistent as the highest temperature for the month was only 8.4 °C; we have seen temperatures above this in about half of the previous 8 winters. The temperature was colder than average for only 4 of the 31 days of January.

This warm temperature trend was seen all across North America, while Europe and Russia experienced record breaking cold temperatures. This is a result of the arctic air mass that usually stays over northern Canada for the winter, moving over Greenland during January.

Overall there was an above average amount of total precipitation for the month, 90.3 mm compared to the average of 64.4 mm. However, the big story is the form of the precipitation, we saw only half the regular amount of snowfall and almost 3 times the average amount of rain. This meant that there wasn't a lot of snow left to shovel that wasn't washed away by the rain. We would typically expect there to be about 15 cm of snow on the ground at the end of January, obviously there is none out there at the moment.

Environment Canada prediction of temperature for the month: Above Average

Actual Temperature: Above Average

Summary for January 2006:

Maximum Temperature 8.4 °C

Minimum Temperature -15.6 °C

Average Daily High Temperature 2.3 °C (Long term average -3.1 °C)

Average Daily Low Temperature -4.3 °C (Long term average -10.5 °C)

Total Precipitation 90.3 mm (Long term average 64.4 mm)

(Long term averages based on 1970-2000 data for the Waterloo Wellington Airport)

Get the monthly summary by e-mail, sign up here:
http://weather.uwaterloo.ca/summary_signup.htm