

# *The Pennsylvania Observer*

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## **March 2009 – Pennsylvania Weather Recap**

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For the month of March the saying, “In like a lion and out like a lamb” really fit the pattern quite well. The month began with a Nor’ Easter and then gradually made the transition from wintry precipitation and cooler temperatures to dry and warmer temperatures. Temperatures for the month of March averaged about 1-3 degrees warmer than normal in most of the state. Places in northern and western Pennsylvania hit 3-5 degrees above normal, and places in the extreme southeast were 1-2 degrees below normal. Precipitation throughout the state was one-sided with most of the state receiving 1-2 inches less than normal. Williamsport was 2.13 inches below their typical average for the month. The extreme northwestern portion of the state near Lake Erie was the only location receiving more than the normal amount of precipitation, on the order of 1-2 inches above.

The eastern portion of the Commonwealth saw its first snow of the month and in some places the heaviest of the winter as a Nor’ Easter slid up the coast on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>. Stations in eastern and southeastern Pennsylvania reported average snowfall totals ranging from 4-7 inches, with isolated areas northeast of Philadelphia near Norristown receiving 8-12 inches. In the wake of the storm, brisk winds carried cold air from Canada into the region bringing lake effect snow showers to much of the Commonwealth from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup>, and drove overnight lows into the low teens and single digits. Laurel Summit recorded a low temperature of -2°F during the early morning hours on the 3<sup>rd</sup>.

After the passage of a warm front on the 6<sup>th</sup>, temperatures started to increase, signaling the beginning of a more spring like pattern. A stalled front over the Commonwealth caused some rain in western and northern Pennsylvania. On the 7<sup>th</sup> much of the region saw highs reach the 60’s in the north and into the lower 70’s farther south. State College (KUNV) reported a new record high temperature of 70°F on the 7<sup>th</sup>. A steady stream of storm systems continued to pass to the northwest of the region through the 11<sup>th</sup> keeping temperatures mild and producing little precipitation across the southeast half of the Commonwealth.

Pleasant, yet dry weather and slightly above normal temperatures prevailed throughout the region from the 12<sup>th</sup> through the 15<sup>th</sup>. Light rain moved into central and southern portions of the state on the 16<sup>th</sup>, but pleasant weather again followed. A cold front passed through the Commonwealth on the evening of the 18<sup>th</sup> bringing light rain and snow showers to the region. Rainfall amounts averaged between a trace and 0.25 inches and snowfall accumulations were less than an inch in northern Pennsylvania. Before the cold front passed through on the 18<sup>th</sup>, State College (KUNV) reported a new record high temperature of 73°F.

High pressure dominated the region from the 20<sup>th</sup> through the morning of the 25<sup>th</sup> once again bringing dry, pleasant weather to Pennsylvania. During this period temperatures were cool on the 20<sup>th</sup>, but then returned to normal or slightly above normal for March.

Rain associated with an approaching cold front moved into the Commonwealth during the night on the 25<sup>th</sup>. This began a four day span from the 26<sup>th</sup> to the 29<sup>th</sup> where at least some part of Pennsylvania received precipitation each day. The precipitation was associated with three separate low pressure systems. Total precipitation for this period averaged 1-1.6 inches in western PA, 0.65-1.45 inches in central PA, and 0.75-1.5 inches in eastern PA. During these few days, high temperatures generally remained in the 50’s and low 60’s throughout the Commonwealth. During the evening of the 29<sup>th</sup>, convection developed in southeastern Pennsylvania prompting 22

hail reports and 6 high wind reports as shown in the Storm Prediction Center's records. There was a large amount of golf ball sized hail reported and the National Weather Service confirmed that an EF0 tornado did occur in Lancaster County associated with one of the storm cells.

The Commonwealth finished out its last two days of the month with relatively breezy days helping to dry out from the recent rain.

Here are the weather extremes across Pennsylvania (**observations taken at 8AM EDT**) during March 2009 from the NWS Cooperative & ASOS Networks. The extremes occurred in the 24-hour period prior to the date listed.

Parameter	Location	Value	Date (8 AM EDT)	County
Highest Temperature	Point Marion Lock	<b>76°F</b>	March 8 <sup>th</sup>	Greene
Lowest Temperature	Laurel Summit	<b>-2°F</b>	March 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Somerset
Greatest Cumulative Liquid Precipitation	Slippery Rock	<b>3.82"</b>	-	Butler
Greatest Daily Snowfall	Safe Harbor Dam	<b>11"</b>	-	Lancaster

## ***Weather Stories***

### [Strong to Severe Storms Across Parts of the Delaware Valley](http://www.examiner.com/x-4645-Wilmington-Weather-Examiner~y2009m3d29-Strong-to-Severe-Storms-Across-Parts-of-the-Delaware-Valley)

<http://www.examiner.com/x-4645-Wilmington-Weather-Examiner~y2009m3d29-Strong-to-Severe-Storms-Across-Parts-of-the-Delaware-Valley>

### [National Weather Service Confirms Pa. Tornado](http://www.ldnews.com/news/ci_12035833)

[http://www.ldnews.com/news/ci\\_12035833](http://www.ldnews.com/news/ci_12035833)

### [First Two Months of 2009 Set Record for Driest Start to Year](http://www.readingeagle.com/article.aspx?id=128139)

<http://www.readingeagle.com/article.aspx?id=128139>

### [Unusually Dry Winter May Mean Summer Drought](http://www.philly.com/philly/news/local/20090330_Drought_not_flooding_the_Delaware_Valley_spring_worry.html)

[http://www.philly.com/philly/news/local/20090330\\_Drought\\_not\\_flooding\\_the\\_Delaware\\_Valley\\_spring\\_worry.html](http://www.philly.com/philly/news/local/20090330_Drought_not_flooding_the_Delaware_Valley_spring_worry.html)

### [Central PA Winter 2008-2009 Wrap-Up](http://www.accuweather.com/mt-news-blogs.asp?partner=accuweather&blog=Weathermatrix&pgurl=/mtweb/content/Weathermatrix/archives/2009/03/central_pa_winter_20082009_wrapup.asp)

[http://www.accuweather.com/mt-news-](http://www.accuweather.com/mt-news-blogs.asp?partner=accuweather&blog=Weathermatrix&pgurl=/mtweb/content/Weathermatrix/archives/2009/03/central_pa_winter_20082009_wrapup.asp)

[blogs.asp?partner=accuweather&blog=Weathermatrix&pgurl=/mtweb/content/Weathermatrix/archives/2009/03/central\\_pa\\_winter\\_20082009\\_wrapup.asp](http://www.accuweather.com/mt-news-blogs.asp?partner=accuweather&blog=Weathermatrix&pgurl=/mtweb/content/Weathermatrix/archives/2009/03/central_pa_winter_20082009_wrapup.asp)