# The Pennsylvania Observer

## December 2013 - Pennsylvania Weather Recap

*By: Arthur Person*

A southward shifting and strengthening jet stream joined forces with 10 small and large storms to produce a potpourri of weather across the Keystone State for this twelfth month of 2013.  After a below normal start to the month, a mild southerly flow of air sailed northward ahead of advancing cold air in the Rocky Mountains.  Snow cover north of I-80 and around the Pittsburgh area quickly melted as above normal temperatures took hold for December 2-6.  A cold front brought an end to the mild weather on December 6 with soaking rains of 0.5 inches across the north to 1.5 inches across the south.  Cold air moved across Pennsylvania into New England and became the catalyst for an unusual snow event across southeastern Pennsylvania on December 8, breaking 1989 records at Neshaminy Falls with 3.2 inches, New Park with 6.4 inches, and Philadelphia with 8.6 inches of snow.  Several more inches of snow fell on December 10 breaking more records as a second disturbance slipped by to the south of Pennsylvania.  Unseasonably cold air maintained its grip as a third and more potent storm crossed the state on December 14 leaving several inches of snow across southern portions of Pennsylvania and greater than 9 inches across portions of north-central and north-eastern Pennsylvania and breaking more records.

Cold weather and record snowfall seemed certain to guarantee the holidays would be white.  However, a large scale trough of low pressure developed over the western U.S. and once again buoyed mild air northward toward Pennsylvania.  By December 20, temperatures across the state were well above normal accompanied by clouds and rain showers.  By December 22 and 23 new high temperature records were being set as any remaining snow in Pennsylvania melted away.  On December 22 Pittsburgh recorded a high temperature of 72, breaking the old record of 67 in 1949.  Other records broken on December 22 included Harrisburg 70, Philadelphia 68, Scranton 66, Tionesta 65, Williamsport 64, Lewistown 64, Bradford 61 and Wellsboro 59.  Colder air returned by December 24 and 25 allowing a storm aloft to produce some ground-whitening snow over western and northern portions of the state, but it didn't last long.  By December 28 temperatures were again 5-10 degrees above normal, and a storm from the south brought 0.5 to 1.5 inches of rainfall to the southeastern half of the state with lighter amounts in the northwest.  All Pennsylvania snow melted except for a few regions in the far north.

The snowy, cold conditions during the month were offset by the warm spells to produce an average temperature within 2 degrees of normal for most of the state except for the extreme southwest which was

2-3 degrees above normal.  Precipitation was as much as 1.75 times normal for the southwestern half and extreme northeast areas of Pennsylvania while the rest of the state was near normal.  Snowfall was above normal across the entire state except for the extreme southwest and northwest counties where it was below normal.  Erie, however, recorded its eighth largest December snowfall in 88 years of records, 47.9 inches, which is 174% of normal.

Here are the weather extremes across Pennsylvania (**observations taken at 8AM EDT**) during December 2013 from the NWS Cooperative & ASOS Networks of which our office receives routine observations. The extremes occurred in the 24-hour period prior to the date listed.

| Parameter | Location | Value | Date (8 AM EDT) | County |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Highest Temperature | Uniontown 1 Mi. NE | **74°F** | December 22$^{nd}$ | Fayette |
| Lowest Temperature | Oswayo 1 Mi. ENE | **-10°F** | December 17$^{th}$ | Potter |
| Greatest Cumulative Liquid Precipitation | York Haven | **6.76"** | December 1$^{st}$-December 31$^{st}$ | York |
| Least Cumulative Liquid Precipitation | Roulette 1.8 Mi. NNE | **1.78"** | December 1$^{st}$-December 31$^{st}$ | Potter |
| Greatest Cumulative Snowfall | Erie Intl Airport | **47.9"** | December 1$^{st}$-December 31$^{st}$ | Erie |

## Links to Pennsylvania Weather Stories during December, 2013

**Record snowfall in Philadelphia turns Eagle game into a snow bowl**
http://www.philly.com/philly/blogs/weather/Snow-record.html
**Call it climate change or whatever, Coyotes are now a wanted animal in PA**
http://www.philly.com/philly/news/science/20131212_Pa__house_passes_bill_authorizing_coyote_bounty.html
**Fishing for a science lesson...so to speak**
http://www.post-gazette.com/sports/outdoors/2013/11/03/Pa-coordinator-of-Trout-in-the-Classroom-sees-ongoing-changes-in-the-program/stories/201311030108