

## March Weather Wrap

By Bill Kappel

March is typically one of our more active weather months as we often experience wild swings, sometimes over just a few hours. This year was no exception as several storms rolled through producing snow interspersed by sunshine and mild conditions. Overall, temperatures were slightly warmer than normal, mainly because overnight lows were generally mild. In fact, we never managed to dip into the single digits during the months, which is definitely unusual. Precipitation was right at average for the month, a good sign as we head into spring.

The month started off with a quick shot of spring-like snow, as 3-6 inches accumulated from the afternoon of the 1st through the morning of the 2nd. Temperatures were not very cold with this storm, with very little snow accumulating below about 7,000 feet. This added to the already good snowpack over the area left over from a snowy February, providing for a beautiful wintry scene. However, quiet weather moved in over the next few days, quickly melting the snow. Temperatures warmed as well, with highs mainly in the 50s and dry conditions from the 3rd to the 7th.

A quick-moving but relatively warm system moved through the region from the afternoon of the 8th through the early morning of the 9th. This produced a few rain showers on the afternoon of the 8th, then a quick shot of snow just after midnight on the 9th. Again, snow accumulated only around the higher portions of the Palmer Divide, with just some wet snow falling elsewhere. If you weren't up early on the 9th, you probably didn't even notice.

Clear skies returned over the next couple of days, with temperatures warming again into the 50s and low 60s. But this only lasted until the evening of the 12th, as a cold front rolled in with low clouds and fog that evening. Temperatures were chilly on the 10th, with highs only reaching into the 20s. Light snow fell off and on, accumulating 1-2 inches during the day. Cooler than normal conditions stuck around for the next couple of days, with areas of fog, freezing drizzle, and flurries at times.

After a couple of days of back and forth between fog and sun, the next storm began to affect the region late on the 18th. This turned out to be a big storm for the area, with heavy snow on the 19th. This combined with winds to produce blizzard conditions from late morning through the afternoon of the 19th. Of course, this storm wasn't quite as strong as the one that blasted through just over a year ago, but it still produced



**Above:** On March 19, the Tri-Lakes area was enveloped by a blizzard, with over 10 inches of wet snow and high winds creating hazardous travel conditions. Those who ventured out encountered slick and slushy road conditions and poor visibility as seen by these cars and headlights barely visible on Gleneagle Drive. Photo by David Futey.

wind gusts over 60 mph and heavy snow. Accumulated snow fell from mid-morning through evening, with 8-12 inches accumulating during the day and high temperatures only reaching the low 20s. The snow and wind made for some tough travel, but of course there weren't a lot of cars on the roads this year.

Once this storm cleared the region, generally quiet conditions returned for most of the remainder of the month. Temperatures reached the upper 40s to low 60s from the 21st through the 27th. A quick-moving yet powerful storm moved through the region from late on the 27th through the 28th. However, this storm developed just far enough north that the main areas of precipitation and wind occurred just to our north and east.

We did receive a couple inches of wind-driven snow, but had this storm set up about 100 miles farther south, we would have been hit by a lot of worse conditions. Spring-like weather stuck around for the rest of the month, with generally mild conditions and areas of afternoon clouds and a few rain and snow showers.

### A look ahead

April is known for a wide range of weather conditions in the region and is on average our snowiest month of the year. We can see 70° temperatures one afternoon and blizzard conditions the next. Several recent years

have seen over 50 inches of snow accumulate during the month. Of course, it also melts very quickly, often adding beneficial moisture to the soil and helping the vegetation, which is just getting started.

### March 2020 Weather Statistics

Average High	49.9° (-0.3°)
100-year return frequency value max	57.9° min 38.0°
Average Low	24.1° (+2.9°)
100-year return frequency value max	27.0° min 12.0°
Highest Temperature	63° on the 11th, 26th
Lowest Temperature	13° on the 21st
Monthly Precipitation	1.54"
	(-0.5", 2% below normal)
100-year return frequency value max	4.29" min 0.22"
Monthly Snowfall	21.8"
	(+1.5", 7% above normal)
Season to Date Snow	118.8"
	(+27.9", 24% above normal)
	(the snow season is from July 1 to June 30)
Season to Date Precip.	7.62"
	(+1.28", 17% above normal)
	(the precip season is from Oct 1 to Sept 30)
Heating Degree Days	869 (-44)
Cooling Degree Days	0

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## Letters to Our Community

Guidelines for letters are on page 31.

**Disclaimer:** The information and opinions expressed in Letters to Our Community are the responsibility of the letter writers and should not be interpreted as the views of OCN even if the letter writer is an OCN volunteer.

**Note:** The letters this month are arranged in alphabetical order by the submitter's last name.

### Domestic cats are the No. 1 killer

I read with growing dismay and incredulity Janet Sellers' article regarding bird mortality due to anthropogenic sources. She cites a USFS study dated from 2005 which concluded that "... annual bird mortality from anthropogenic sources may easily approach 1 billion

birds a year in the U.S. alone." A more recent study published in *Nature Communications* in 2013 says, "We estimate that free-ranging domestic cats kill 1.3-4.0 billion birds and 6.3-22.3 billion mammals annually" and, "Our estimate of bird mortality far exceeds any previously estimated U.S. figure for cats, as well as estimates for any other direct source of anthropogenic mortality, including collisions with windows, buildings, communication towers, vehicles and pesticide poisoning."

The 2005 study underestimated all sources of bird mortality, but especially the mortality due to domestic cats. Domestic cats are the No. 1 killer, by far. [www.nature.com/articles/ncomms2380](http://www.nature.com/articles/ncomms2380).

Nathan Kettner

### Great job, Safeway

I want to thank Safeway in Monument for handling this coronavirus scare with grace and kindness. During this time of uncertainty, all the employees have created a sense of calm and security. From explaining when supplies will be in store to gentle words of encouragement during checkout and even a sense of humor, all this have been appreciated by me very much. Keep up the great work and thank you very much. You are the heart of the community.

Diane Kokes

### A Perspective on Our Community

## Hindsight: It's a small world

By Lisa Hatfield

This is a sampling of assorted headlines from around the world about the "novel" (new) coronavirus (COVID-19) over the past few months, watching it grow from an outbreak to a pandemic. It was compiled from various sources to give a general overview of "the beginning."

- Dec. 27—China alerts World Health Organization (WHO) to several mysterious pneumonia cases.
- Jan. 7—U.S. public starts to hear about coronavirus (specifically named SARS-CoV-2) in Wuhan, China. It is "novel" because it is a new virus, and the human population has no immunity to it.
- Jan. 13—WHO reports first case outside of China, in Thailand.
- Jan. 20—WHO Situation Report 1: total confirmed

- cases 282, all but four of which are in China.
- Jan. 21—First U.S. case reported in Everett, WA.
- Jan. 2—City of Wuhan placed under effective quarantine.
- Jan. 25—Wuhan rushing to build two hospitals in two weeks, sets up 11 temporary hospitals, others for influx of patients.
- Jan. 31—Delta, United, American Airlines suspend all flights to mainland China.
- Feb. 4—Diamond Princess cruise ship in Japan quarantined after passenger diagnosed with coronavirus.
- Feb. 7—Dr. Lee Wenliang dies of "novel" coronavirus. (On Dec. 30, Lee sent a warning to colleagues in the medical profession that doctors in Wuhan had treated seven patients with a

- SARS-like illness after they had visited a seafood market in the city. But local police quashed him, accusing him of spreading "illegal and false information.")
- Feb. 8—Panic-buying of toilet paper begins in Hong

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