

March 2021

The averaging period used for the following assessment was 1981-2010.

The first week of March was cold but largely settled, followed by a disturbed spell of weather from 9th to 12th. Many areas were predominantly dry during the second half of the month, although western and northern areas saw persistent rain during 24th to 30th. The second half of the month was also much warmer, especially the last three days.

The provisional UK mean temperature was 6.4 °C, which is 0.9 °C above the 1981-2010 long-term average, with the milder second half more than making up for the initial cold spell. Both mean maximum and minimum temperatures were rather above average generally. Many areas had a rather dry month, with rainfall 89% of average overall, although some parts of western Scotland, north-west England, and north Wales exceeded their average rainfall amount. Sunshine was 100% of average, but rather below average in Northern Ireland and the Western and Northern Isles.

The UK monthly extremes were as follows: A maximum temperature of 24.5 °C was recorded at Kew Gardens (Greater London) on the 30th. A minimum temperature of -8.5 °C was recorded at Braemar (Aberdeenshire) on the 6th. In the 24 hours ending at 0900 GMT on the 29th, 177.2 mm of rain fell at Seathwaite (Cumbria). A wind gust of 86 knots (99 mph) was recorded at Needles (Isle of Wight) on the 13th. A snow depth of 3 cm was recorded at Tulloch Bridge (Inverness-shire) on the 13th.

Weather impacts

The start of March was predominantly settled, with no reported impacts in the first week.

Around the 9th, the Western Isles and western parts of Scotland saw windy weather, with some schools closed in the north-west Highlands, and thousands of properties across Skye and North and South Uist being left without power. In Northern Ireland on the 10th and 11th a number of fallen trees impacted road transport. Fallen trees also caused temporary road closures in Wales, with speed restrictions imposed on the M48 Severn crossing, Britannia Bridge and Cleddau Bridge, and the A5 Ceiriog viaduct was closed for a time; up to 3000 homes were without power overnight. In north-west England the A66 was closed to high-sided vehicles, and fallen trees caused disruption with some flooding on the M60 and the A592. In the north-east of England speed restrictions were placed on the Humber Bridge and flooding affected the rail line between Hebden Bridge and Todmorden. In the Midlands there were fallen trees, delays to some rail services, and a lorry blew over on the A53. In London and the south-east there were reports of impacts to travel services, with strong winds causing delays to trains and buses with some road closures due to fallen trees and trampolines. The Woolwich Ferry was suspended and some local amenities were closed due to blowing debris. The QE2 Bridge had a 30mph speed restriction and some operations in Dover and Southampton were delayed due to strong winds. In the south-west a lorry overturned on the A417 and fallen trees blocked some roads; power supplies were restored to 69,000 homes by the 12th.

The last warning of the month covered north-west Scotland, with heavy persistent rain causing flooding on the A85, A82 and a number of other main roads on the 28th and 29th.

England diary of highlights

March began mostly settled, but rather cold. From the 9th onwards it turned rather milder but also unsettled and windy. The second half of the month was mostly settled, although with periods of rain from 23rd to 28th which became heaviest in the north-west, while the month ended very warm in many areas.

The mean temperature for March was provisionally 0.8 °C above the 1981-2010 long-term average, with the north-east being the warmest district relative to average. Rainfall was 78% of average, but it was a rather wet month in Cumbria and Lancashire. Sunshine totals amounted to 103% of average.

1st to 7th

Central and northern parts saw mist, fog and frost on the 1st, the fog slow to clear in some spots, especially in the east, but southern and north-western counties became sunny. The north-west began the 2nd clear and frosty, but low cloud, mist and fog affected most other places, the cloud slowly burning off except on the east coast, and showers moving into the Isles of Scilly by dusk. The 3rd began cold, with frost in the north-west, the overnight minimum temperature -6.6 °C at Shap (Cumbria), and a maximum temperature of only 1.8 °C at Emley Moor (West Yorkshire); it was mainly cloudy, with morning fog mainly over southern areas but sunny spells in a few places later, while showers developed in central and south-western areas. Fog in the south on the 4th lasted until afternoon in some spots, while showers persisted across the north, wintry and giving a light covering of snow over higher ground, and showers also for East Anglia for a time. The 5th was generally cloudy, with showers along the east coast, but brighter in the south by afternoon. Frosty in some areas early on the 6th, then any brightness restricted to the north-east and the south-west, and showers around the Thames estuary. Many areas started cold and frosty on the 7th, then there was patchy rain for the north, but cloud broke by afternoon to allow sunshine for many.

8th to 17th

After a frosty start across the south on the 8th, rain over the north moved south-east through the day across central and eastern counties, turning lighter and patchier, with the south-west staying dry. The 9th again started clear and cold in central and southern areas, with more cloud elsewhere giving patchy rain, with thicker cloud spreading eastwards during the afternoon, and rain in western counties by dark. Most areas were wet and windy on the 10th, with bands of rain, heaviest and most persistent in the north, mainly clearing eastwards by late afternoon, and isolated gales developing in exposed parts. Rain across many parts during the morning of the 11th cleared away eastwards, but blustery showers followed, becoming widespread and locally heavy, with hail and thunder in places. All areas were windy and showery on the 12th, with isolated thunderstorms. The south-east started bright on the 13th, but rain or showers spread across the country, affecting all parts through the day, and it was windy, with a gust of 86 knots (99 mph) at Needles Old Battery (Wight). Central and south-eastern counties started fine on the 14th, with a few showers elsewhere, but more general rain spread steadily south and east from late morning, affecting all parts during the afternoon, turning heavy in some areas. The 15th was a little milder, with variable amounts of cloud, and showers in parts of the Midlands and south-east, then rain spread into the north by dusk. The 16th saw early fog in some western districts, with rain over the south-east clearing, so all areas became dry, and it turned brighter from the north. The 17th started fine for most, with very isolated fog patches, as patchy rain in the far north slipped southwards, becoming heavier and more widespread in the east, but clearing later on, with some areas brightening up.

18th to 23rd

The 18th began with frost and mist over some central and south-western areas, and became generally cloudy with rain, heavy at times, for the east Midlands, East Anglia and the south-east. The far south-east was sunny on the 19th, but other areas were dull with outbreaks of mainly light rain or drizzle in places. Most of the country was cloudy on the 20th, with morning mist in the far north, but turning brighter over the north-east for a time. The 21st was fine, often rather cloudy for most places but brighter during the afternoon. After a frosty start, the 22nd was fine, with sunshine in some areas. The 23rd started frosty in the south-east, but soon all areas were cloudy, with patchy rain or drizzle in places, and it brightened up again over the south-east later.

24th to 31st

Central, southern and eastern parts started cloudy on the 24th, with patchy rain, this drifting eastwards through the day, while brighter weather spread to most parts, but strengthening winds and rain moved into the far north and north-west from mid-afternoon onwards. Chilly for some southern coastal counties to start the 25th, with variable cloud through the day and scattered showers in some areas, but central parts stayed mainly dry and bright. Most areas began dry and cloudy on the 26th, but a band of heavy rain crossed west to east through the day, stalling over the south-east, with scattered showers following from the west. The 27th started largely fine, though with showers in a few areas; cloud increased generally by the afternoon, showers dying out in the north but persisting over the south-west, and further rain into the north-west by dusk. The north-west had persistent and locally heavy rain during the 28th, with 177.2 mm of rainfall at Seathwaite (Cumbria), other areas remaining cloudy with patchy light rain at times. Localised fog in the south-west on the 29th cleared, with some rain and drizzle for the north-west, while other areas became sunny and rather warm. The south-east began the 30th quite chilly, and a few western locations had early fog, then it was generally bright or sunny, with 12.1 hours of sunshine at Shoeburyness (Essex), and very warm in places, maximum temperature 24.5°C at Kew Gardens (London), but the south-west and the West Midlands saw more cloud and isolated showers from mid-afternoon. After a mild night, temperatures not dropping below 12.7°C at Wych Cross (East Sussex), the 31st was fine and warm for most areas, though fog lingered over the Isles of Scilly, and southern areas clouded over with patchy rain, while eastern coasts saw low cloud and the odd (s)pot of drizzle.

Wales diary of highlights

The first part of the month was mostly settled and cold, with some foggy mornings. The weather was much more disturbed from the 9th until mid-month, followed by a second half which was more settled and also warmer, albeit with spells of rain between the 23rd and 28th.

Mean temperatures for the month were provisionally 0.7 °C above average. Rainfall for the month was 83% of average, though parts of the north were slightly wetter than average. Sunshine totals were 104% of average, with northern counties faring best relative to average.

1st to 7th

The 1st began with mist, fog and frost across the north and east, the fog and low cloud persisting in places into the afternoon, but was otherwise bright or sunny. Frost and fog in the north early on the 2nd, then the west was bright or sunny, while the east stayed dull and cloudy. The 3rd began with isolated pockets of rural frost, with a few fog patches, then was mainly cloudy with isolated showers, though with brighter spells in parts of the north-west, and a band of showery precipitation across southern counties, heavy in places, tracking north and west and tending to die away. The 4th was cloudy, with patchy light rain reaching the north-east late in the day, and cold, with a maximum temperature of only 2.7 °C at Libanus (Powys). The 5th started cloudy but it brightened

up across western areas through the day. Many places started frosty on the 6th, then cloud dissipated and most places turned bright or sunny. After a widespread frost to start the 7th, with minimum temperatures of $-7.7\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ at Sennybridge and St Harmon (both Powys), it was mostly cloudy, but brighter in central and southern parts in the afternoon.

8th to 14th

After a widespread slight frost, the 8th was bright or sunny in the south, but rain or showers over the north moved slowly and erratically south, dying out during the afternoon. After another frosty start in the south on the 9th, with cloud and showers further north, it became fine and bright everywhere, but cloud increased through the afternoon with rain along the north coast by dusk. The 10th started dull and wet, with rain sweeping across most counties, heavy at times, mainly clearing eastwards by late afternoon, with strong winds developing, and a gust of 75 knots (86 mph) at Capel Curig (Gwynedd). Widespread rain during the morning of the 11th cleared away, to be replaced by frequent and locally heavy blustery showers. The 12th was blustery and wet with widespread showers, wintry at times, with widespread blustery showers or longer spells of rain again on the 13th. The 14th started cloudy with isolated showers, briefly turning dry ahead of rain spreading from the north to all parts during the afternoon, persisting into the evening.

15th to 23rd

The 15th was milder with variable amounts of cloud and isolated showers. A band of rain with mist and fog moved south during the morning of the 16th, clearing all parts to leave brighter weather for the afternoon. On the 17th, after a chilly start, the north saw a little light rain in late morning, then it was fine and dry, but breezy in exposed places. The 18th began with patchy frost and fog, and was generally cloudy with occasional rain or drizzle. The 19th was cloudy, with fog lingering along the west coast, and a few patches of drizzly rain. The 20th was cloudy but mainly dry. Much of the 21st was rather cloudy too, with patchy light rain, but it brightened up later. After frost and patchy fog in places, the 22nd was generally cloudy, but a bit brighter across the east and south, with 10.9 hours of sunshine at St Athan (South Glamorgan). The 23rd was cloudy with occasional light rain.

24th to 31st

The 24th was mainly sunny and dry, but winds increased in the north. There were variable amounts of cloud on the 25th, with scattered showers. The 26th started with a band of rain, locally heavy, which cleared away eastwards by midday to leave scattered showers, some turning heavy during the afternoon, and sunny intervals. The 27th began fine, but cloud increased through the morning with scattered showers. The 28th saw persistent and locally heavy rain for the north, with 64.4 mm of rainfall at Capel Curig (Gwynedd), but lighter and patchier rain for the south. The 29th started mild, with overnight minimum temperatures of $10.9\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ at Hawarden Airport and Rhyl (both Clwyd), and was rather cloudy with patchy rain or drizzle in places. Patchy fog in southern parts on the 30th cleared by mid-morning, then it was mostly sunny, and warm in places, maximum temperature $21.7\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ at Llanfynydd Broderi (Clwyd), but cloud increased later. The 31st started mild in places, minimum temperature $10.9\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ at Mumbles (West Glamorgan), and was mostly sunny and dry, though fog lingered along far western coasts, and very isolated showers appeared later over southern and central counties.

Scotland diary of highlights

The month began settled but cold, then from the 7th it started to become much more unsettled. Most of the rest of the month was mild, and it was much drier from the 16th to 22nd before spells of rain returned.

The mean temperature for the month was 1.1 °C above the long-term average, and it was warmest relative to normal towards the eastern side. Scotland had 100% of average rainfall and 98% of average sunshine. The west and north-west were rather wet, while some southern and eastern parts were rather dry and also slightly sunnier than average.

1st to 6th

The 1st started frosty across the south, with patchy fog in central areas clearing by lunchtime, then it was mostly sunny but low cloud remained on the east coast. The 2nd began frosty in numerous places, with patchy mist and fog, then was generally cloudy; the cloud steadily decreased in many places, but lingered along the east coast. After a frost in many places on the 3rd, moderate for some, with a minimum temperature of -8.5 °C at Braemar (Aberdeenshire), and early fog in the far south-west, it was mainly cloudy, dry, and cold, with isolated showers over the Shetland Islands and North Sea coastal counties later, and temperatures not exceeding 1.3 °C at Dalwhinnie (Inverness-shire). It was generally cloudy on the 4th, with showers in many places during the day. The north started frosty on the 5th, and was bright at times, but the south remained dull and cloudy. Many places started frosty on the 6th, which was generally cloudy, with showery rain in the north during the afternoon.

7th to 15th

Rain fell in all but central and south-western parts on the 7th, the worst of it over the north and east. The 8th was dry in the north, with rain elsewhere turning lighter and more showery through the afternoon. The 9th was dull and misty, with patchy fog in places, and outbreaks of rain and drizzle, easing by lunchtime, ahead of rain reaching the west, heavy at times, spreading to all but the north-east by early evening; it became windy, with a maximum gust of 63 knots (73 mph) at Fair Isle (Shetland). Central and northern areas started bright on the 10th, but the south was cloudy with patchy rain at first, then showers, ahead of bands of rain sweeping across most counties through the day, heavy at times, with only Shetland remaining largely dry; winds increased through the day, with gales in exposed parts. Showers on the 11th were widespread, blustery, and locally heavy, with isolated hail and thunder, only the north-east avoiding the worst of them. Eastern fringes were mainly bright or sunny on the 12th, with frequent, locally heavy, blustery showers, giving sleet, snow, hail and the occasional thunderstorm, and 3 cm of snow lying at Tulloch Bridge (Inverness-shire). Northern areas started frosty on the 13th, then the north-east was bright for a time, but showers, already widespread across the west and south, became widespread in all places by the afternoon. Showers persisted across the far north on the 14th, with rain over western and southern counties clearing away south by the evening. Early showers over the north and east on the 15th, but brighter elsewhere, ahead of rain reaching the north-west, spreading steadily south and east to all parts by evening.

16th to 23rd

Rain along the east coast early on the 16th soon cleared, then it turned mostly sunny and mild. The 17th started quiet, rain in a few places soon stopping, then it was bright and dry, though clouding over in the north-west from mid-afternoon. After early fog for some central and western parts on the 18th, it was cloudy with occasional rain or drizzle, but brightened up over many places during the afternoon, becoming warm in places, maximum temperature 19.3 °C at Grangemouth (Stirling). The western half had sunshine on the 19th, but it was overcast further east with occasional light rain or drizzle. Northern and eastern parts started misty on the 20th, then became bright or sunny for a time, but the west and south stayed cloudy, and all areas clouded over later with light rain in central and eastern parts from teatime onwards. Cloudy for most in the morning on the 21st, turning sunnier for most places by mid-afternoon, with 11.1 hours of sunshine at Glasgow, Bishopton (Renfrewshire), but then clouding over again from the west late in the day. The 22nd was generally fine but rather cloudy, with some rain in the far north during the morning.

Fine and frosty to start in the north-east on the 23rd, but dull and cloudy elsewhere with occasional rain or drizzle, and a band of more significant rain reaching the west late in the afternoon.

24th to 31st

Many places started fine on the 24th, but with scattered showers in some north-western locations, then more widespread showery precipitation moved in from the west around midday, some heavy with thunderstorms at first, moving north and east but dying away later; windy in exposed places. Breezy again on the 25th, with showers or spells of rain for most places through the day. On the 26th, widespread and locally heavy rain for most parts cleared east before midday, but showers soon arrived and became widespread, locally heavy and with hail and thunder. The 27th started sunny in the east, with showers over the west, then cloud and rain spread from the west to all parts before dark. The 28th brought persistent rain for most, but it was more showery over the north and west, with the rain, heavy at times, covering all parts by mid-afternoon, giving 85.8 mm of rainfall at Tyndrum (Perthshire). Rain over western and southern parts early on the 29th moved erratically north and east through the morning, becoming heavy and persistent across the west and north, but only patchy light rain in the north-east; murky further south, and warm towards the east, with a maximum temperature of 19.3 °C at Aboyne (Aberdeenshire). Some places started very mild on the 30th, overnight temperatures not dropping below 12.7 °C at Kinloss (Morayshire), then cloudy for most, with fog for some southern parts, and rain for the west and north, persistent and heavy at times. The 31st began cloudy generally, with rain, some heavy for a time, for central and northern parts; becoming brighter in the Western Isles, parts of the Northern Isles, and the south, as the rain area moved south-east and turned patchier, reaching parts of the Central Belt, with murk and drizzle for some eastern parts later.

Northern Ireland diary of highlights

There was a chilly and settled spell for the first week, after which the weather became much more disturbed. From mid-month it was more settled again, but the last several days were unsettled once more; it was milder during the second half, particularly at the end of the month.

The mean temperature for March was 1.0 °C above the 1981-2010 average. It was a rather dry but also duller than average month, with 78% of average rainfall and a sunshine figure of 75% of average.

1st to 7th

The 1st began with fog and frost, particularly across western parts, fog not clearing until the afternoon in some spots, but otherwise was generally fine and bright. It was generally cloudy, cold and misty on the 2nd, with patchy morning fog in the south. The 3rd was broadly cloudy and dry, and the 4th was dull with patchy light rain. Overcast again with patchy rain or drizzle on the 5th, and still cold, no higher than 3.5 °C at Killylane (County Antrim). The 6th continued with low cloud and patchy rain or drizzle. Some places started frosty on the 7th, with a minimum temperature of -5.8 °C at Katesbridge (County Down); it remained cloudy once again, with light rain or showers through the day.

8th to 14th

The 8th was cloudy with showers and spells of rain throughout. The 9th became wet and windy, as rain, heavy at times, spread from the west to all parts by late afternoon, with 26.2 mm of rainfall at Trassey Slievenaman (County Down). The 10th began cloudy, with rain becoming more widespread and persistent through the morning, heavy in places, clearing eastwards after lunch, then frequent blustery showers with isolated thunderstorms, and windy for many, with a gust of 54 knots (62 mph) at Killowen (County Down). The 11th was windy with frequent and locally heavy,

blustery showers, and isolated thunderstorms. It was another wet and windy day on the 12th, showers widespread and locally heavy, with sleet, snow, hail and occasional thunder. The 13th was similar with frequent showers, locally heavy and wintry. Most places started dry on the 14th but rain quickly spread to all parts, locally heavy at times, becoming more showery during the afternoon.

15th to 22nd

After a sunny morning on the 15th, cloud increased to give patchy light rain. After coastal fog patches early on the 16th cleared, it was mostly fine, bright and mild, with 9.4 hours of sunshine at Magilligan (County Londonderry). The 17th began with frost and patchy fog for some, and the odd spot of rain, then became brighter, but cloud increased in the afternoon. The 18th had patchy mist and fog around coasts, and was generally cloudy with the odd patch of drizzle. There was patchy mist and fog for a few places on the 19th, some lingering on the north coast, with variable amounts of cloud. The 20th was similar, the mist and fog slow to clear in some places, mostly cloudy but staying dry. After a cloudy start on the 21st, it became largely sunny by lunchtime, but cloud increased again later. The 22nd was overcast with drizzle in places.

23rd to 31st

The 23rd started cloudy with patchy light rain, then an organised band of rain crossed the Province from mid-afternoon. The 24th started fine, but for isolated showers in the south and west, ahead of increasing cloud which brought showery precipitation for most areas through the middle of the day, with scattered showers following during the afternoon, and it was windy at times. The 25th was cloudy with scattered showers or longer spells of rain at times. The 26th was bright and breezy, with showers becoming widespread and locally heavy, some with thunder and hail by the afternoon. The 27th started fine, but cloud increased, bringing rain to all parts by late afternoon. It was dull and wet on the 28th with rain for most of the day, some heavy, turning more showery later. The morning of the 29th was wet, particularly in the north, then the afternoon was just dull and drizzly. The 30th started very mild, having not dropped below 11.6 °C overnight at Belfast Newforge (County Down) and Castlederg (County Tyrone); the morning was cloudy but mainly dry, the afternoon sunnier towards the south and becoming warm, with a maximum temperature of 18.0 °C at Giants Causeway (County Antrim), albeit cloudy with patchy rain in the north. The 31st was mainly cloudy, with persistent rain in some western and northern counties, this moving eastward but tending to stall and fizzle out, with eastern and southern counties remaining largely dry.