## CUIMATHC HIGHULGETS

Record warm weather spread eastwards across the country early in April, sending daytime temperatures soaring into the record mid to high twenties. In Winnipeg, Manitoba, the first week in April was the warmest ever recorded for this time of the month, and records date back to 1872. At Petawawa, Ontario, the thermometer registered a record $29^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ on April 7, rapidly melting the snow cover.

However in eastern Canada, it was the April precipitation that was most noteworthy. Farmers in southern Ontario were unable to venture onto their saturated fields to prepare for seeding. There was too much precipitation in the south and perhaps not enough in north, as one weather system after another crossed the Lower Great Lakes. The pattern was very similar to that of March, and as a result, southern Ontario endured one of the wettest springs on record. In excess of 100 mm of rain, caused some of the worst flooding in 60 years, in some parts of southern and central Ontario, especially along the Trent-Severn Waterway northeast of Toronto. In Mus-
koka, this was the wettest April on record, 145 mm or two and a half times the normal.

In Quebec it was much the same story, as this month's frequent rainfalls and melting snow combined to produce flooding along the rivers leading to the St. Lawrence and Ottawa Valleys. The Eastern Townships, east of Montreal, were particularly susceptible to high water levels. The most significant floods occurred in the Beauce region, where the Chaudière River caused the worst flooding since 1957.

In northern New Brunswick, the St. John River overflowed its banks near Edmundston because of ice jams. Towns were put on alert, but luckily, precipitation was not heavy enough to aggravate the situation.

On the Prairies by mid-April, spring soil moisture levels were lower than they had been in the last two years, and ranchers were worried about the future of their about to be seeded grain crops. Luckily, during the final week of the month, Mother Nature was able to turn the situation around, as a major spring storm arrived, dumping copious amounts of timely precipitation on the Prairies. The driest areas, southeastem Alberta and southwestern Saskatchewan, received amounts ranging between 25 to 60 millimetres, washing away most farmers concems, at least for the time being. Lloydminster was buried under 80 cm of new snow, providing ample moisture to start off the growing season.

SWIFT CURRENT


Below normal accumulated precipitation during the winter months rose sharply at the end of April.


## Across the country

## Yukon and Northwest Territories

In Canada's northern Territories, winter was gradually coming to an end. By the end of the month winter roads and ice bridges were being closed for the season, and ice started to breakup on some of the more southern rivers.

Total precipitation was below normal except in the Keewatin district, where amounts were double the monthly average. Coral Harbour was the wettest area, 41.4 mm , which is more than triple the normal.

Sunshine was abundant across the Territories, with the exception of the Keewatin. Resolute Bay had 375.8 hours of bright sunshine, almost 100 hours more than the long term average.

In the Yukon, it was an unusually warm and dry month. The highest temperature was, $17.0^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$, which was tied at a number of Yukon locations. April is generally the driest time of the year in the Yukon, and this year was no exception. Many stations received less than half their normal precipitation, and in fact, some had no precipitation at all.

At Whitehorse, this was the fifth warmest April on record and also the fifth driest, with total precipitation amounting only to 2.0 mm . In the southern Yukon, the warm temperatures and plentiful amounts April sunshine brought spring flowers into bloom on most south facing slopes.

## British Columbia

Although the month began on a unseuled note, the weather had improved by midmonth. With the exception of some coastal island communities, temperatures averaged above normal. Although there were no monthly temperature records broken, many stations did set individual daily records.

Pacific weather systems crossed the province during the first ten days of the month, bringing heavy rain to the south coast and southern interior. A more pleasant spring weather pattern became established by the middle of the month. Precipitation was more than twice the April normal in Victoria and Vancouver.

In contrast, in the far north and the Peace River districh, precipitation was well below average. Fort St. John reported a record low April amount of only 1.0 mm , breaking the old record of 2.5 mm set in 1960 . Spotty snowfalls still occurred in the interior valleys.

A very active Pacific storm on April 3, provided Victoria with their total monthly precipitation allotment in just 12 hours, and set a new one day precipitation record of 53.2 mm . Victoria received 81.7 mm of rain in the first seven days of the month, which is only 23 mm short of the wettest April on record. Coastal locations also received heavy rainfalls, some coming close to breaking their one-day maximum rainfall records for the month. By month's end drier conditions coupled with warm temperatures resulted in the first "high" forest fire hazard ratings. A couple of minor fires were reported. Milder temperatures began melting the snowpack at higher elevations, and some minor river flooding was reported at Quesnel and Williams Lake in central B.C.

Sunshine was plentiful across of the province, with some areas reporting 20 to 30 percent more sunshine than normal. Several locations came close to establishing new records.

On the April 3, Prince George clocked winds gusting to $76 \mathrm{~km} / \mathrm{h}$. On the 5 th , Kamloops recorded gusts to $96 \mathrm{~km} / \mathrm{h}$. A roof was blown off a building in Clinton. Strong winds were also reported in the west Kootenays the same day, with reports of minor damage in the south Slocan area.

## Alberta

Temperatures this month were above normal , with the Peace River district having the greatest departures. Heaviest precipitation fell in eastern and central Alberta; Lloydminster received 94 mm of precipitation and almost 80 cm of snow, while central portions of the province received 40 to 55 millimetres, more than twice the average. Northern Alberta was the driest. The town of High Level received only 0.2 mm of precipitation for the whole month.

On April 6, a storm dumped 40 cm of snow in the Edmonton region, with a new 24-hour April precipitation record being set, 39.8 mm . On the 10 th , another storm


## CLIMATIC EXTREMES IN CANADA - APRIL, 1991

## Mean Temperature:

Highest

Deepest Snow on the Ground on April 30, 1991

Greatest number of Bright Sunshine Hours:

| Lytton, B.C. | $10.9^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ |
| :--- | :--- |
| Eureka, N.W.T. | $-25.7^{\mathrm{C}} \mathrm{C}$ |
| Petawawa, ON. | $29.0^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ |
| Mould Bay, N.W.T. | $-38.5^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ |
| Amphitrite Point, B.C. | 245.8 mm |
| St. Anthony, NFLD | 81.8 cm |
| Cartwright, NFLD. | 191 cm |
| Point Inlet A, N. W. T. | 410 Hours |

produced more snow; 10 cm in the Edson area and as much as 35 cm of the white stuff at Waterton on the April 11. The fourth week, saw another major spring storm move in from the Dakotas. Eastern regions of Alberta were hardest hit, with precipitation on April 27 and 28, totalling 33 mm at Medicine Hat and 83 mm at Lloydminster, the bulk of which fell as snow. The heavy precipitation was welcomed by farmers, who required this moisture in order to ensure germination of their newly seeded crops.

## Saskatchewan and Manitoba

April came in like a lamb and went out like a lion. Very warm, record-breaking temperatures during the first week of the month saw daytime readings soar into the twenties across the south and into the mid to high teens in the north. During the latter half of the month, cool temperatures and cloudy skies were accompanied by drenching rains and heavy snowfalls.

Precipitation was more than double the normal across the southern half of Saskatchewan, and at few locations in southern and central Manitoba. One
weekend rain/snowstorm accounted for most of the total April precipitation in Saskatchewan. Between April 26 to 28, amounts of 40 to 80 millimetres soaked southern Saskatchewan. Lloydminster recorded the most, 83.5 mm , which includes 78.7 cm of snow. Two days later another system moved northward through eastern Manitoba, dumping 15 to 30 mm of precipitation, mostly in the form of wet snow. Storm winds frequently gusted over $80 \mathrm{~km} / \mathrm{h}$. This month, Winnipeg received 79.3 mm of precipitation, more than twice the April normal. In addition, snowfall was more than double the monthly average of 11.3 cm .

In contrast, precipitation amounts in the north were below normal. Churchill tallied only 10.4 mm , which is half of the monthly normal.

## Ontario

April was a mild month featuring heavy rainfalls in the south, but relatively drier conditions across portions of the north. Generally, this was the warmest April since 1987, and the warmest ever in 20 years of records at St . Catharines. The
highest maximum readings occurred on April 7, as many localities approached the unseasonably hot 30 s.

Monthly precipitation totals in southern and central Ontario, were at record high levels. Muskoka's 145 mm total made this the wettest April ever in cottage country, with weather records dating back to 1938. Flooding became a problem especially northeast of Toronto and near Peterborough. The city of Toronto, received 134 mm , making this the wettest April since 1929. Toronto's Pearson Airport, set a new April record of 115 mm . In Ottawa, it was the wettest April in 52 years of records, 131 mm . Other notable precipitation totals include: Kitchener, 134 mm - the most since 1933; and Peterborough, 114 mm the highest April total ever recorded. Overall most cities, from Windsor to North Bay topped the 100 mm mark, compared to the more normal 60 to 80 millimetres.

The remainder of the province was quite dry, with the exception of a corridor from Geraldton to Kenora. At Thunder Bay this was the wettest April since 1974. Kapuskasing's 19 mm was the lowest April precipitation since 1972, and Red Lake and Moosonee both recorded less than 25 mm in total. The dry weather in the north was largely the result of a lack of snow. While April usually sees 20 to 30 cm across the north, this month there was less than 10 cm , with Thunder Bay's meagre trace of April snow the least in 50 years. The exception however was in the Sault Ste. Marie - Timmins area, where an early spring snowstorm dumped 15 to 30 cm of snow on April 10 and 11.

Not surprisingly, hours of bright sunshine were disappointingly low in southem and central Ontario, 20 to 50 hours below average, while northem Ontario recorded 10 to 40 hours more April sunshine than normal.

## Quebec

A mild and rainy regime dominated southwestern Quebec weather during April, while colder and much sunnier weather was prevalent over eastern and northern Quebec.

During a brief warm spell between April 4 and 7, numerous daily high
temperature records were broken across southern Quebec.

Precipitation totals exceeded 100 mm in the southwest portion of the province, and new monthly rainfall records were established at Ottawa, Mirabel and Dorval Airports. Snowfalls were minimal this month, with only a trace of snow recorded at Dorval, and only 0.2 cm at Mirabel, equalling records dating back to 1945 and 1988, respectively. Sherbrooke's 1.8 cm total snowfall broke the record low amount of 3.2 cm set in 1981 .

An intense low-pressure system tracking north along the New England coast on April 21 and 22, produced 25 to 40 mm of rain and strong winds over southern Quebec. Wind gusts, ranging from 65 to $106 \mathrm{~km} / \mathrm{h}$, were recorded in the St . Lawrence Valley.

There was spring flooding in a number of districts during the second week of the month. The most extensive flooding since 1957 occurred along the Chaudière River, between April 7 and 10. Beauceville was the first locality to be hit, followed by the towns of St. Joseph-de-Beauce, ValleeJunction, Ste. Marie-de-Beauce and ScottJunction. One thousand inhabitants had to be evacuated, and flood damage surpassed 10 million dollars.

## Maritimes

The region experienced a generally sunny and warm month. On April 24 and 26, daytime temperatures soared to the twenties, approximately 10 degrees above normal.

Overall precipitation this month was near or somewhat below normal. Sydney,
N.S., recorded only half their average monthly precipitation. Total monthly snowfalls were also well below normal in most areas, with many localities receiving less than one half their normal monthly allotment. Halifax received 7 cm of snow compared to a normal April value of 24 cm . The only exception was Yarmouth, N.S., where 11 cm fell compared to a normal of 7 cm .

Sunshine was plentiful everywhere, with most locations recording 30 to 50 hours more sunshine than normal. Charlo, N.B., recorded 222.3 hours of bright sunshine compared to a normal of 162.2 hours.

Several major storms affected the region, producing a variety of weather conditions. On April 1, a significant snowfall covered Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and southern New Brunswick. Thunderstorms moved through Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island on April 10, with several areas being hit by lightening strikes, which caused power outages and some damage to buildings.

During the middle of the month the icechoked waters of the St. John river overflowed their banks. Evacuations were necessary in northwestern New Brunswick, and towns were put on alert. Highways were closed and even a stretch of rail line was swept away.

Copious amounts of rain fell on April 21 and 22, as an intense storm crossed the region. Northern New Brunswick received a mixture of freezing rain and snow. Twoday precipitation amounts ranged from 33 to 67 millimetres. Strong winds which accompanied the storm reached $95 \mathrm{~km} / \mathrm{h}$ at Saint John, N.B. - the strongest gust at that location since January 1987.

## Newfoundland

April's weather was generally cool, with minimal amounts of rain. Most localities reported mean temperatures several degrees below normal except along the south coast, where near normal readings prevailed. Deer Lake set new minimum temperature records on five successive momings during the middle of the month, with the reading on the 13 th dropping down to $-19.2^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$.

Precipitation was well below normal over southern sections of the Island and above normal in the north. At St. Lawrence, 47.6 mm of recorded precipitation is less than half the monthly normal, which is mostly due to the very low rainfalls over southern Newfoundland this month. Eastern areas of the Island received significant amounts of freezing precipitation, occurring on eleven separate days at Gander.

Sunshine was above normal on the west coast, 164.3 hours at Stephenville compared to a normal 131.1 hours, but near or slightly below on the east coast. It was also a less windy than normal month.

In Labrador, April was generally a sunny and cold month, with litule precipitation. Snowfall was well below normal over inland areas ( 19.4 cm at Goose Bay; normal 48.6 cm ), but slightly above normal near the coast. Rainfall was below normal throughout Labrador. Sunshine was abundant at inland localities such as Churchill Falls, which received 243.6 hours of sunshine compared to a normal of 154.6 hours.


|  | 1991 | 1990 | NORMAL |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| BRITSH COLUMBIA |  |  |  |
| Kamloops | 3398 | 3237 | 3541 |
| Penticton | 3295 | 3027 | 3267 |
| Prince George | 4884 | 4397 | 4934 |
| Vancouver | 2694 | 2567 | 2732 |
| Victoria | 2768 | 2662 | 2789 |
| YUKON TERRITORY |  |  |  |
| Whitehorse | 6419 | 6050 | 6441 |
| NORTHWEST |  |  |  |
| TERRITORIES |  |  |  |
| Iqaluit | 9382 | 9178 | 8821 |
| Inuvik | 9112 | 9042 | 9274 |
| Yellowknife | 8216 | 7951 | 7931 |
| ALBERTA |  |  |  |
| Calgary | 4573 | 4312 | 4920 |
| Edmonton Mun. | 4796 | 4581 | 5117 |
| Grande Prairie | 5516 | 5048 | 5728 |
| SASKATCHEWAN 5516 |  |  |  |
| Eastvan | 5033 | 4797 | 5145 |
| Regina | 5200 | 5046 | 5494 |
| Saskatoon | 5506 | 5307 | 5683 |
| MANITOBA |  |  |  |
| Brandon | 5643 | 5548 | 5732 |
| Churchill | 8361 | 8272 | 8204 |
| The Pas | 6189 | 6426 | 6349 |
| Winnipeg | 5276 | 5489 | 5555 |
| ONTARIO |  |  |  |
| Kapuskasing | 5938 | 5937 | 5931 |
| London | 3500 | 3766 | 3834 |
| Ottawa | 4128 | 4426 | 4411 |
| Sudbury | 4808 | 5106 | 5048 |
| Thunder Bay | 5249 | 5388 | 5295 |
| Toronto | 3482 | 3777 | 3842 |
| Windsor | 3075 | 3320 | 3412 |
| QUÉBEC |  |  |  |
| Baie Comeau | 5573 | 5699 | 5471 |
| Montreal | 4006 | 4306 | 4276 |
| Québec | 4688 | 4979 | 4804 |
| Sept-lles | 5835 | 6012 | 5576 |
| Sherbrooke | 4397 | 4710 | 4850 |
| Val-d'or | 5570 | 5843 | 5691 |
| NEW BRUNSWICK |  |  |  |
| Charlo | 5075 | 5223 | 5071 |
| Fredericton | 4225 | 4620 | 4370 |
| Moncton | 4326 | 4590 | 4335 |
| NOVA SCOTA |  |  |  |
| Sydney | 4008 | 4385 | 3996 |
| Yarmouth | 3380 | 3782 | 3637 |
| PRINCE EDWARD |  |  |  |
| ISLAND |  |  |  |
| Charlottetown | 4196 | 4597 | 4218 |
| NEWFOUNDLAND |  |  |  |
| Gander | 4701 | 4917 | 4475 |
| St. John's | 4277 | 4457 | 4188 |



## 50-kPa ATMOSPHERIC CIRCULATION

April 1991


Mean geopotential heights

- 5 decametre interval -


Normal geopotential heights for the month

- 5 decametre interval -


Mean geopotential height anomaly

- 5 decametre interval-


Mean heights difference w/r to previous month - 5 decametre interval -

# Colder than Normal Temperatures over Northeastern Canada during the 1980's 

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## Introduction

Recent scientific papers by Jones and Wigley (1990) and by Pearce (1991) draw attention to a number of high latitude, circumpolar areas which have experienced a net negative temperature anomaly during the 1980's. These include some of the Soviet Arctic islands, Greenland and northeastern Canada (Fig. 1). This situation is in contrast to the general global situation of higher than normal air temperatures during the decade, which included also six of the warmest years of record over extensive areas. According to the greenhouse global warming theory, warmer temperatures are to be expected, with the greatest heating over sub-polar regions. The cool areas appear to register a contradiction to this theory, though historical analogues of climatic change and some climate system models indicate that such discontinuities are not unreasonable. However, to test the validity of the apparent cool anomaly in the northeastern Canadian territory an 11- year set of tabulations was prepared by P. Lee and A. Shabbar, of the Extended Range Forecast Division of the Canadian Climate Centre. These data are compared to other available data, and correlated with sea-ice and atmospheric circulation information.

## A Chilly Eastern Arctic over the Decade

Fig. 2 indicates that most of Canada west and south of Hudson Bay was nearly 1 C warmer than the long term average during the 1980 's, while the northeast including most of Baffin Island, the Ungava region of Quebec, Newfoundland and Labrador, was correspondingly cool. An examination of individual years, however, shows that


Fig. 1 Average temperature anomalies during the 1980s (1980-89) compared to prevailing temperatures during the 1950-79 period. Shaded areas represent negative temperature anomaly (After Jones and Wigley)


Fig. 2. Observed temperature anomaly during 1980-1990 over Canada. Shaded areas represent negative values.


Fig. 3. Observed temperature anomaly during 1985. Shaded areas represent negative values.
the cool anomaly does not occur each year. In 1981 the entire country experienced warmer than normal conditions, which changed completely in 1982 to abnormally cool. In 1985, (Fig. 3), there is a second flip-flop, where a warm anomaly was established over the Northeast, with corresponding cool conditions over the rest of the country, except for parts of the northwest. The year 1984, by contrast, mirrored the decadal mean pattern (Fig. 4). Lee and Shabbar prepared anomaly maps similar to Figs. 3 and 4 for each year, and a second set of maps for each winter (December through February). The rest of this paper is concemed with the 1980-1990 winter maps. Table 1 expresses the regional observed surface temperature anomaly over the decade. The cold season, of course, has a temporal relation with the occurrence of maximum sea-ice distribution, and the last column of the table presents sea-ice anomaly values from the paper by Agnew and Silis published in the March issue of CP.

As Table 1 shows, the decade began with relatively mild conditions, becoming

|  | BAFFIN |  |  | ISLAND OF | DAVIS STRAIT |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| WINTER | ISLAND | UNGAVA | LABRADOR | NEWFOUNDLAND SEA ICE ANOMALY |  |
| 80 | + | + | + | + | + |
| 81 | + | + | + | + | - |
| 82 | + | - | - | + | + |
| 83 | - | - | - | + | + |
| 84 | - | + | - | - | + |
| 85 | + | + | - | - | +- |
| 86 | - | - | - | - | + |
| 87 | - | - | - | - | + |
| 88 | - | - | - | - | + |
| 89 | - | - | - | + |  |
| 90 | - | - | - | + |  |
| 91 | - | - | - | + |  |

Table 1. Observed temperature anomaly for Baffin Island, Ungava region of Quebec, Labrador and Newfoundland and sea ice anomaly in Davis Strait for 1980-1991 winters compared to 1950-1979 mean.
cooler than normal by 1982. Warm temperatures resumed in 1985, lasting until the end of 1987, when an intense cold regime returned, with a corresponding increase in ice cover. It is noted that 1982/83 and 1986/87 experienced marked El NinoSouthern Oscillation (ENSO) activity.

## Relations with Atmospheric Circulation

One way of highlighting atmospheric circulations responsible for cooler than normal periods is to find the difference field between a series of months with colder than normal, and warmer than normal temperatures. This was the procedure used by Agnew and Silis to identify 100 kPa patterns associated with extensive ice conditions. In this instance, we computed the 50 kPa height difference pattem between the ten coldest and ten warmest months during 1980-1990 (Fig. 5). The difference field shows a negative anomaly centred over Greenland which would induce stronger than normal northerly and northwesterly flow. This is in good agreement with the findings of Agnew and Silis.

Referring to Fig. 6, we can see that cold months, as depicted, are associated with a negative height anomaly over Baffin Bay, a feature which draws cold air from the northwest. By contrast, the composite map for the warm months (Fig. 7), shows a positive anomaly over Greenland. This would be associated with "warm" southeasterly and easterly winds from the Atlantic Ocean, impeding the southward migration of sea-ice.

## Summary

The observed negative temperature anomaly in the Northeast over the 1980's decade has an apparent relationship to a frequent strong northwesterly airflow from the surface to 50 kPa . This has the effect of dislodging ice from the polar pack, and driving it south and east by the Labrador Current through Davis Strait and into the Labrador Sea. Persistently cool temperatures in northeastern Canada, though paradoxical, could be a stage in the global


Fig. 4 . Observed temperature anomaly during 1984. Shaded areas represent negative values.


Fig. 5. Differences in 50 kPa height between cold and warm months during 1980-1990.
warming process, as the climate system adjusts to a change in forcing. These are complex matters, involving feedback processes in energy exchanges over terrestrial and oceanic surfaces, and contrasting thermal gradients over the surface (World Meteorological Organization, 1990). However, as noted by Mysak and Manak (1989), the quantity of ice in the Labrador Sea (and sea-surface temperatures) could be affected also by changes in long distance salinity transfers from the Greenland Sea.

A more rigorous study of atmospheric and oceanic circulations as they may affect air and sea surface temperature and ice distribution, conducted over a greater expanse of the hemisphere, and a longer climatological period is warranted in order to shed further light on the causes of "The Great Northeastern Refrigerator".

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Fig. 6. 50 kPa "COLD" winters anomaly


Fig. 7. 50 kPa "WARM" winters anomaly
APRIL 1991


8

## APRIL 1991



1. AGROCLIMATOLOGICAL STATIONS


