



Monthly Weather Summary

The Weather of May 2006

Wettest May for more than 20 years in west and southwest; mild with sunshine totals near normal

Rainfall totals were well above normal everywhere, particularly in the west and southwest, where more than twice the normal totals for the month were recorded. Here it was the wettest May for at least 20 years, while some long-term stations measured their highest totals for a much longer period: Birr had its wettest May since 1916, while at Valentia Observatory the total of 208mm was its highest for May since records began in the area in 1866. There were no exceptionally high daily falls, but Valentia recorded 9 days during the month with daily values of over 10mm, mainly in the period 13th to 21st. At Malin Head there were 13 wetdays during the month (days with 1mm or more rainfall), around normal for May, but elsewhere there were between 17 and 20 wetdays generally. Mean air temperatures were close to normal in the south and southwest, but were around a degree higher than normal at some stations elsewhere. Daytime temperatures rose above 20°C for a short spell between the 10th and 12th, although southern coastal stations were cooler. Although there was no air frost recorded during the month, there were between 5 and 10 ground frosts observed at inland stations, higher than the average number for May. Much of the month was relatively dull, but some high daily sunshine values brought totals above normal over the northern half of the country; the periods 10th to 11th and 29th to 31st were particularly sunny.

1st to 8th: Bands of rain crossed the country associated with depressions to the west or northwest of Ireland, bringing heaviest falls on the 2nd, 6th and 8th. Temperatures were near or a little above normal, while winds were generally from a southerly direction and were strong at times, especially on the 3rd.

9th to 12th: A ridge of high pressure over Ireland gave mainly dry and clear conditions with slack winds. Long sunny spells, especially on the 10th and 11th, brought daytime temperature values above 20°C in many places, although southern coastal areas were cooler due to onshore breezes. These high temperatures generated widespread thunderstorms during the afternoons of both the 11th and 12th, giving heavy downpours locally and causing some interference to power and communication networks.

13th to 27th: A spell of very unsettled weather, dominated by areas of low pressure moving close to or over the country. Rain or showers each day brought some heavy falls in many areas, especially in the southwest and west, where river flooding became extensive; heaviest falls were on the 14th, 17th and 21st. A tornado developed in Buncrana, Co. Donegal, on the 16th, a day of extensive shower activity. Dull overall and becoming cool late in the period. Gale or strong gale gusts were widely recorded on the 17th and 18th.

28th to 31st: A large Atlantic anticyclone moved eastwards towards Ireland, bringing mainly dry and clear conditions in a west to northwesterly airstream, later veering northerly. Daytime temperatures were close to normal but nights were cool under clear skies, with ground frost at inland stations.

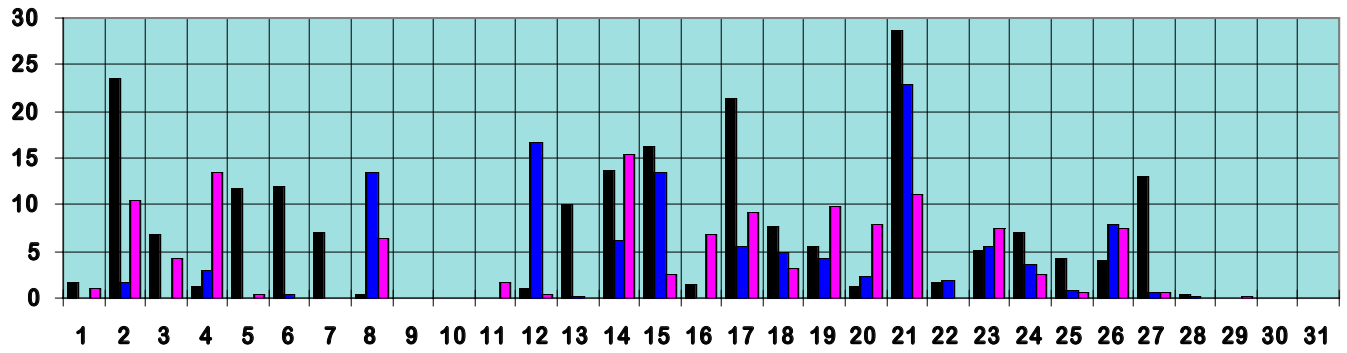
Wind and elements: Mean windspeeds for the month of between 7 and 12 knots generally (13 and 22 km/hour) were close to normal for May. The strongest winds of the month were measured on the 3rd and in the period 17th/18th, with the highest gust of 54 knots (100 km/hour) recorded at Belmullet on the 3rd. Thunder was frequent during the month; it was recorded on the 3rd-4th, 7th, 10th-13th, 14th-18th and 23rd. Hail showers were observed on the 2nd and between the 22nd and 24th. Most fog was recorded in the periods 9th to 10th and 25th to 27th.

Extreme values

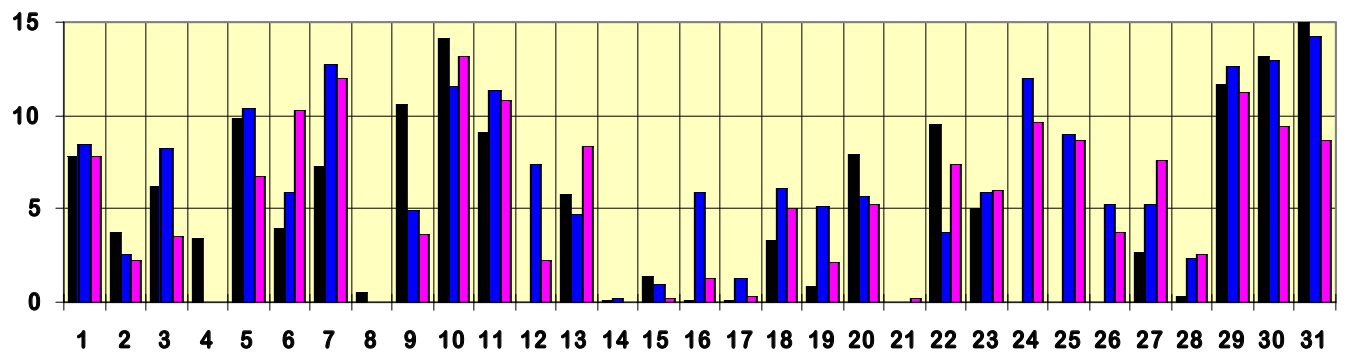
Rainfall	Highest total: 208mm at Valentia Observatory (<i>its wettest May on record</i>) Lowest total: 74mm at Malin Head Highest daily rainfall: 30mm at Cork Airport on 21st (<i>its highest May daily value since 1993</i>)
Temperature	Highest mean monthly temperature: 11.5°C at Rosslare and Shannon Airport Lowest mean monthly temperature: 9.8°C at Knock Airport Highest temperature: 22.5°C at Birr on 11th Lowest air temperature: 0.5°C at Mullingar on 23rd Lowest grass minimum temperature: -3.6°C at Kilkenny on 23rd
Sunshine	Highest monthly total: 232 hours at Malin Head (<i>its sunniest May since 2000</i>) Lowest monthly total: 148 hours at Birr Highest daily sunshine: 15.0 hours at both Rosslare and Valentia Observatory on 31st

May 2006 Daily values at selected synoptic stations

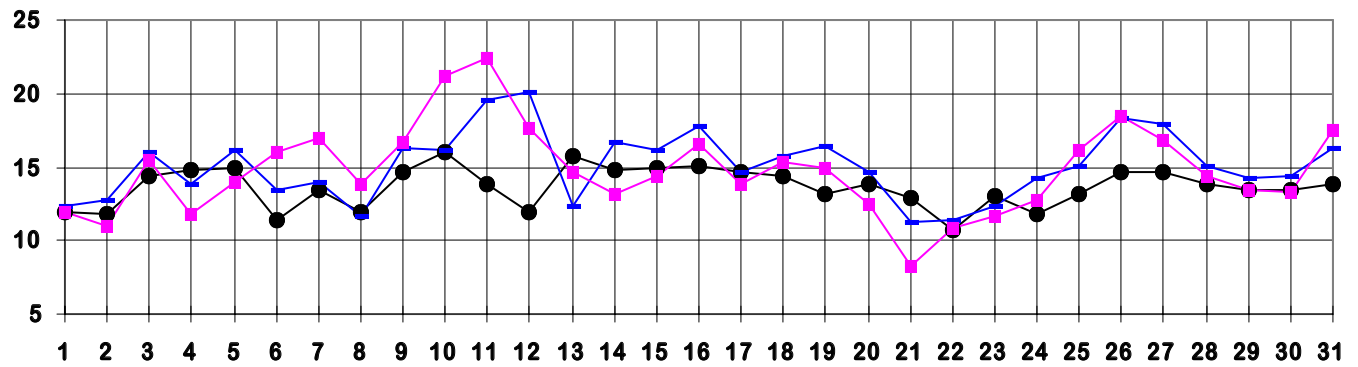
Rainfall (mm)



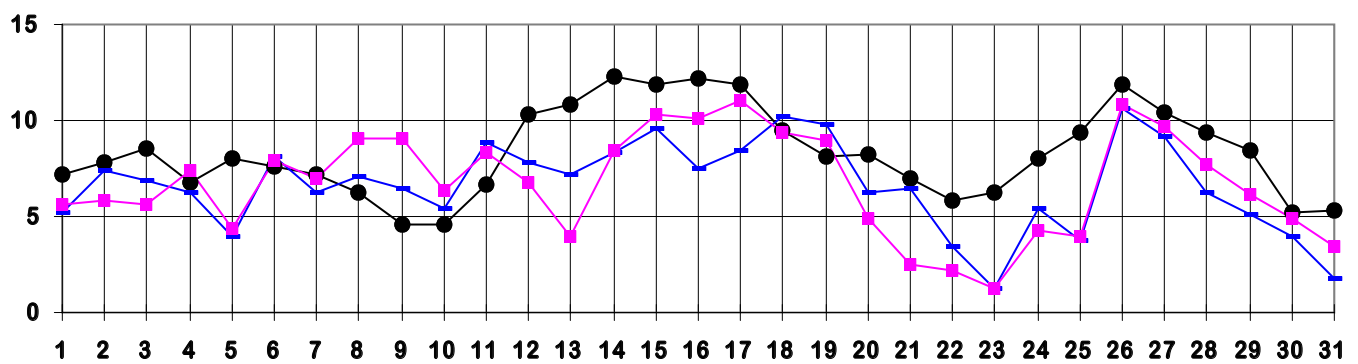
Sunshine (hours)



Maximum temperature (°C)



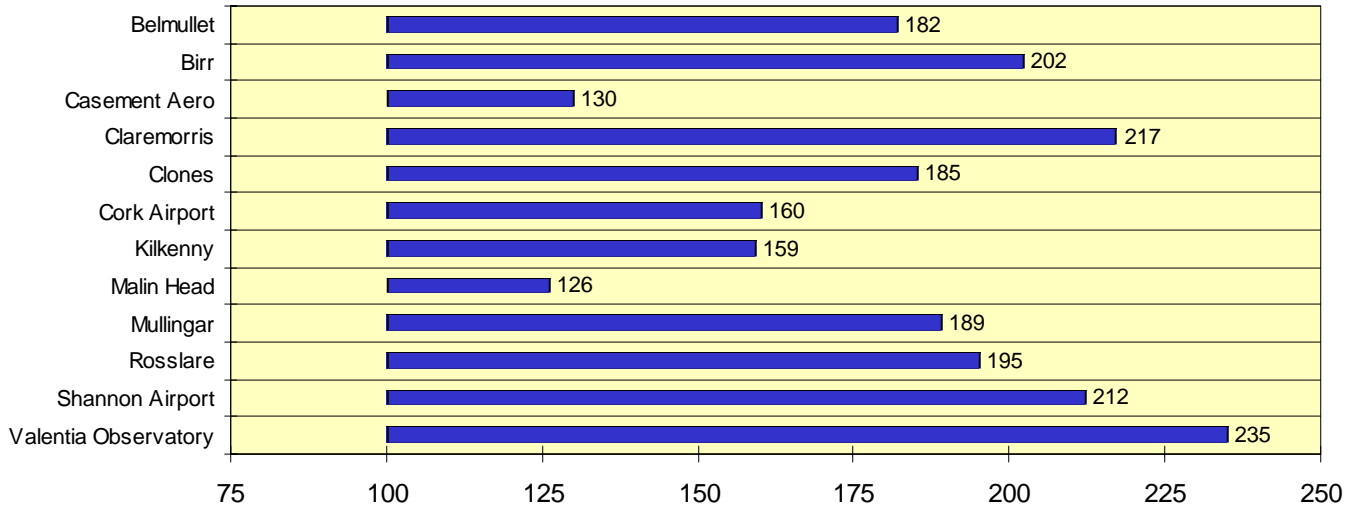
Minimum temperature (°C)



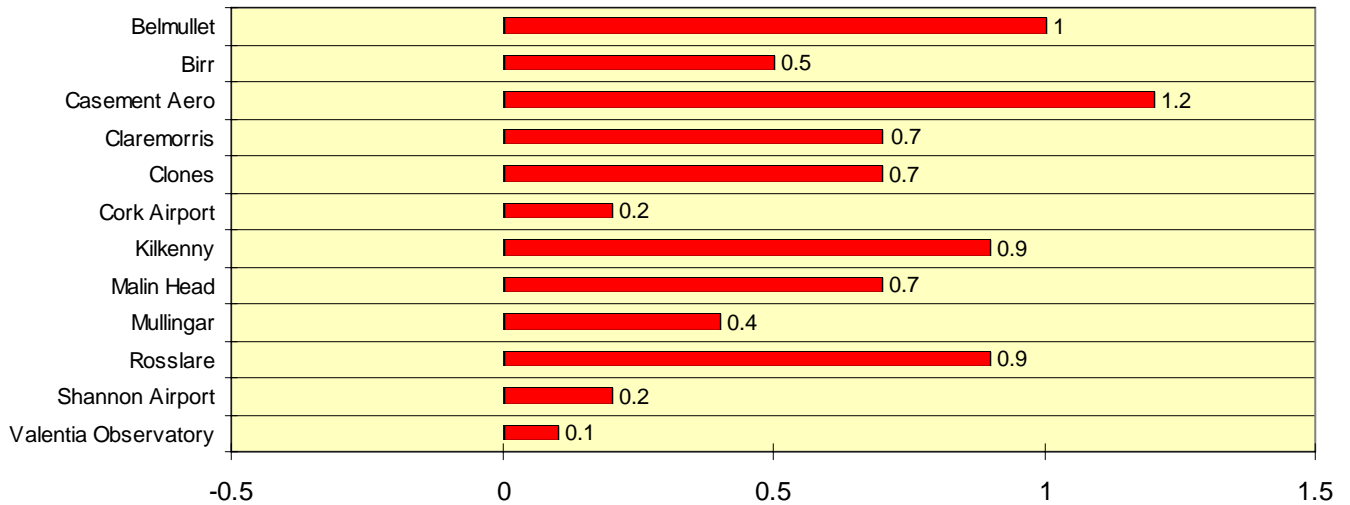
● Valentia Observatory - Dublin Airport ■ Clones

May 2006 Percentage / Difference from 1961-90 monthly normals

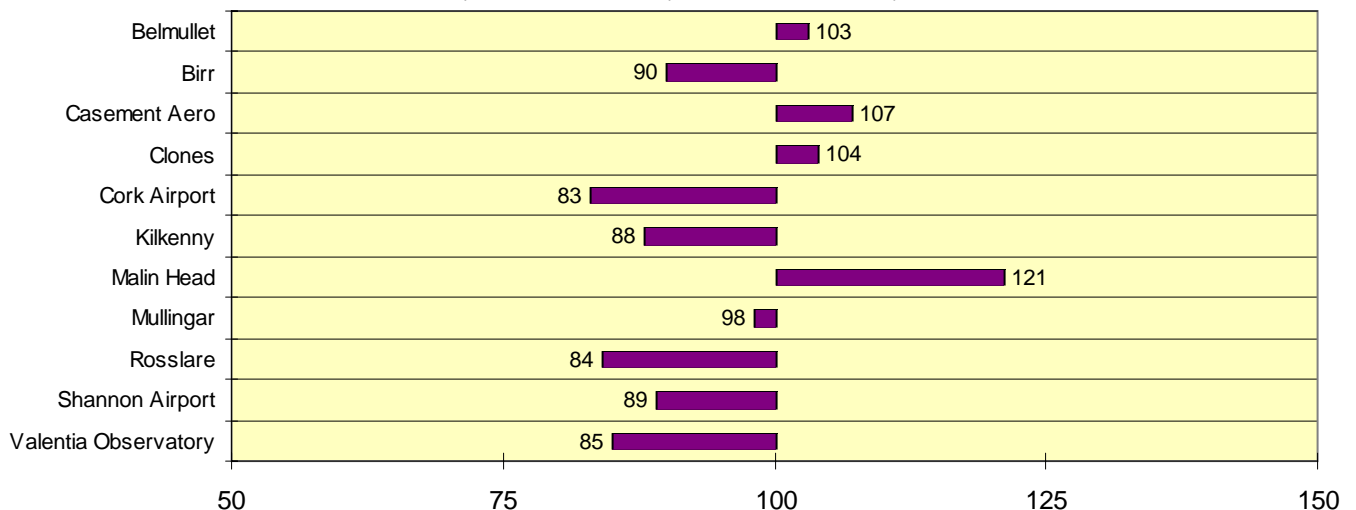
Rainfall (*% of normal for period 1961-1990*)



Temperature (*°C difference from normal for period 1961-1990*)



Sunshine (*% of normal for period 1961-1990*)



Issued by the Climatology and Observations Division of Met Éireann on Thursday 1st June 2006
 This report is based on preliminary data from the synoptic weather stations operated by Met Éireann

A detailed summary is available in the **Monthly Weather Bulletin**

For more information, contact Met Éireann at 01-8064200 or e-mail: climate.enquiries@met.ie website: www.met.ie/climate