



The Hoosier Observer

Indiana CoCoRaHS monthly e-newsletter

April 2020

March 2020 Statistics

Total observers reporting	381
Observers with no missing reports	194
Percent of total	51
Average Daily Reports per Day	284
Max # of Daily Reports and Day	322 / 29
Significant Weather Reports	13
Condition Monitoring Reports	23
E-T Reports	12
Max Daily Rainfall (County)	3.44" (Brown)

Another wet and active month for central Indiana. We appreciate all the reports received over the course of March. Our numbers are steadily increasing as the temperature continues to warm. If you haven't started back up for the season, now is a great time!

Indiana had a successful March Madness for recruitment. Unfortunately, we did not win, but with 27 new observers, that put us 14th across the country which is much better than the 26th place we were this time last year.

To those 27 new observers, thanks for joining the team! They represent 18 unique counties across Indiana!

March Precipitation in Indiana

The March 2020 statewide precipitation was 4.55 inches -- 1.31 inches above the 1981-2010 average. Snowfall was slightly below normal throughout most of the state, with the greatest departures in the northern counties. Liquid precipitation (including snow water equivalent) was above normal across much of the state with the greatest departures (up to 4 inches above normal) in the southern regions. Of the observers that provided data every day, one observer ((KC9RPX) ELLETTSVILLE 0.5 W [Monroe County]) saw 8.12 inches for March! However, the one-day maximum record occurred in Clay County (JASONVILLE 4.0 ENE) with 3.38 inches on March 20th! The lowest March total was 1.61 inches, observed in Elkhart County (ELKHART 4.8 SW).

Information for New Observers

This monthly newsletter contains observing and reporting tips each month to help keep all of our observers "on their game". When you signed up for CoCoRaHS one thing you received was a lot of information from CoCoRaHS headquarters. It can be overwhelming at the start, but information on how to make and report your observations and many other aspects of CoCoRaHS are always available on the CoCoRaHS web site. Even if you use the mobile app to submit your observations, you owe it to yourself to spend some time on the CoCoRaHS web site (best viewed on a desktop PC or tablet). If you have questions, the answers can usually be found there. There is also a great CoCoRaHS community on Facebook where you can post your observations, photos, and ask questions.

Our primary means of communication with our observers is by email, so please be sure you have whitelisted the cocorahs.org domain on your email program so that you get our email. If you don't get the monthly newsletter from CoCoRaHS headquarters ("The Catch"), or at least one email a month from Indiana, then check your junk mail box or spam mail box to be sure email is not getting directed there.

Also, it looks like we are done with the colder weather and spring is here. This is a great time to get your rain gauge installed and to start reporting!

Indiana Training Webinars -- Early May

The Indiana CoCoRaHS state coordinators are offering training webinars for those interested in a refresher on some basics. Each webinar is the same material so you should only sign up for one of them. If you can't make either, then a recording will be made available on the Indiana state page within cocorahs.org.

May 7th, 2020: WebEx Indiana Training

1 PM ET / Noon CT:

[REGISTER](#)

Event number: 616 750 401

Event Password: CoCoRaHS

6 PM ET / 5 PM CT:

[REGISTER](#)

Event number: 610 567 545
Event password: CoCoRaHS

A Rain Gauge Reminder

New volunteers to CoCoRaHS often ask if they can use the automatic rain gauge they received with their digital weather station (e.g., Davis, Peet Bros, LaCrosse, Oregon Scientific, etc.) for CoCoRaHS. You can, but not for your official CoCoRaHS observation.

The 4-inch plastic gauge is the required rain gauge for CoCoRaHS observations. Why? In simple terms, we know that when we all make observations using the 4-inch gauge we are comparing "apples with apples". Unfortunately, we know that rain gauges are not all created equal and do not all report the same.

While the standard 8-inch National Weather Service and CoCoRaHS gauges compare quite well with each other, the majority of automated rain gauges, when summed over several months or years, report less precipitation than actually fell by a significant amount - sometimes 25% or more. Much of this has to do with the mechanics of the gauge. Also, none of the automated gauges work well in areas that receive snow.

If we're all using different kinds of gauges with different abilities to catch precipitation, it's too hard to determine if differences in rain or snowfall are "real" or due to the kind of instrument that was used to report the measurement. We have asked our observers to please set up a CoCoRaHS 4-inch gauge along with their automated gauge and compare for themselves. Many observers are convinced to use the 4-inch gauge for their daily measurement when they see the results, and then use their automated gauge as a backup when they are gone. It is very good to use the two in combination, especially to determine when precipitation has occurred.

There are a variety of online dealers for this rain gauge. One that is advertised on the cocorahs.org home page is WeatherYourWay.com. Another is Ambient Weather.

Back to Basics - Observation Time

When you signed up for CoCoRaHS you selected an observation time. This is the time that automatically appears in the Observation Time field on the Daily Report form, and for the many of us this is 7:00 a.m. The time is automatically entered into the field as a convenience since we assume that's when you will regularly take your observation. However, if for some reason you make your observation at an earlier or later time other than the "standard" time you chose, be sure to enter that actual observation time in the Observation Time field. This is especially important when we have rain occurring at the time of observation. A difference of 30 minutes could make a big difference between what you measure and what surrounding stations measured 30 minutes earlier. So if your observation time is more than 5 minutes either side of your chosen time, enter the actual observation time in the field. Also, the observation time is the time you make your measurement, NOT the time you enter it on the web. For example, if you make your measurement at 7:00 a.m. but don't enter it on the web until 3:00 p.m., your observation time remains as 7:00 a.m.

It is important that your observation time be as consistent as possible from one day to the next. Do not change observation time each day, for example, 8:00 a.m. one day, 2:00 p.m. the next day, and 11:00 a.m. the following day. If the default observation time you chose is not convenient for you, contact me or CoCoRaHS headquarters to have it changed to another time that will work better for you.

The rainfall your report each morning is the total that has accumulated since the previous day's observation. The total is reported on the day of the observation, not necessarily the day the rain fell. For example, let's say you had 1.23 inches rain on the afternoon of April 1st, and your next regular observation is the morning of April 2nd. Your observation for the morning of April 2nd would be 1.23 inches, representing all of the rain that fell since your last regular observation (the morning of April 1st). It would be helpful if you noted when the rain fell in your comments.

Condition Monitoring Reports Wanted

Condition monitoring is the regular recording of weather and its impacts on people, plants, and animals. CoCoRaHS Condition Monitoring Reports (CMR) are a valuable resource for U.S. Drought Monitor authors, agriculture, natural resource managers, and others. These are pretty easy to do, and once you get into the habit (as with most things) it becomes second nature. The idea behind these is to describe the general moisture conditions at your location, and the impacts, whether it be too dry or too wet. They don't (and shouldn't) need to be done every day. They are valuable when you can submit on a regular basis (weekly) so that users can see the changes occurring. We recommend submitting the CMR on Saturday or Sunday so that they are available for input into the Drought Monitor on Monday, but if not the weekend pick a day that works for you and stick with it. These aren't for just when conditions change - it's also useful to know week-to-week if conditions are unchanging in your area.

With the onset of warmer spring weather, these reports will be helpful to National Weather Service hydrologists and others for monitoring spring flooding, or in areas where it has been very dry this winter, perhaps the further development of drought. It's most helpful when we can get reports from all parts of the state. Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists - this is right up your alley! If this is something that interests you, there is an online guide,

a list of Frequently Asked Questions, and other information at http://cocorahs.org/Content.aspx?page=condition_are.

If you Move or Change your Email Address

If you are moving to a new home and want to continue to participate in CoCoRaHS, please let us know as soon as possible. Your observations are tied to a specific location, so we don't want observations from your new location associated with your previous location. The value of the observations are increased by their continuity at that location, so consider suggesting to the buyer or new tenant of your home that they participate in CoCoRaHS! We have a brochure that you can download, print and give to them.

When you know your new address, let us know. When you are ready, we will close your old station and open a new station at your new address (DO NOT sign up for CoCoRaHS again). Once that's done, you can enter observations from your new location. If you are moving to a different state, we can help you get in touch with that state coordinator so you can get started there.

Let us know if you change your email address so that your record is up to date. You can update your email address in the CoCoRaHS database yourself by logging in and clicking on My Account in the top line menu. Click on Edit in the My Information box. Make any corrections, then click save.

Please also send a message to andrew.j.white@noaa.gov with the email change as well, so we can update your address on our newsletter mailing list. This list is maintained separately from the main CoCoRaHS database.



Andrew White (andrew.j.white@noaa.gov)

Kacie Hoover (kacie.hoover@noaa.gov)

Kyle Brown (kyle.brown@noaa.gov)

Beth Hall (bethhall@purdue.edu)