March 2014 Weather Summary

Weather in the Kenai Fjords area was dominated by sunny skies for most of March, resulting in another month of below normal precipitation. Near mid-month, a week of storms added snow to the snowpack, but not nearly the amount required to bring snow depths up to normal. March was the third month in a row to experience an above normal monthly average temperature. This continues the warmer-than-normal trend we have been experiencing since June 2013 (with the exception of December, which was colder than normal and August which was normal).

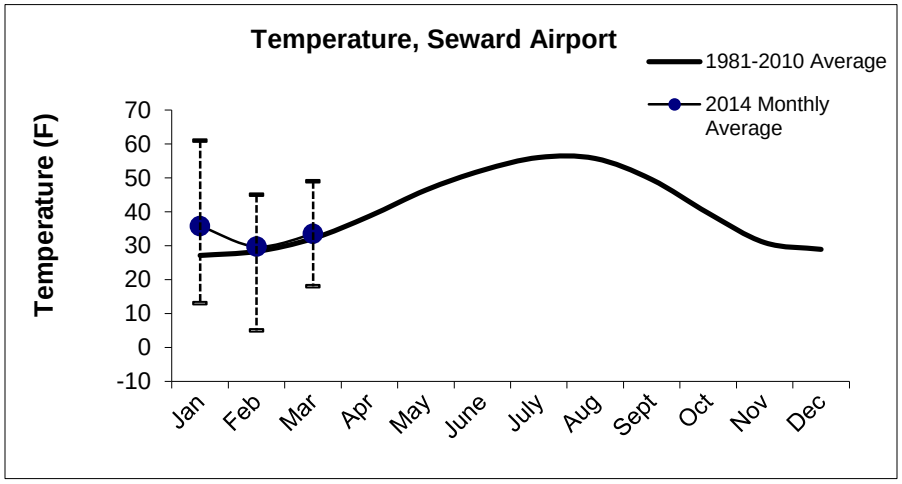
As recorded at the Seward airport, the monthly average temperature for March was 33.5 degrees F; 1.4 degrees F above the 30-year normal. The total precipitation was 2.4 inches (54% of normal), 2.02 inches below the 30-year normal (1981-2010) for the month. Winds were variable throughout the month with a maximum daily average wind speed of 23 mph recorded on March 8th. The maximum wind gust of 47 mph was also recorded on March 8th.

Also of note:

- The National Weather Service Climate Prediction Center's three month weather outlook (April-May-June) favors above-normal temperatures and normal precipitation for the Kenai Fjords area.
- The journal *Geophysical Research Letters* published new research indicating that the Arctic melt season is increasing by five days per decade.
- A March 11th press release from NASA reports that climate change will likely continue as predicted, despite the recent slowdown in the rate of global warming.
- Research published in *Global Change Biology* reports that moose are adapting to warmer temperatures by using thermal shelters in the boreal forest. The report also identifies 68°F as the threshold beyond which moose behavior changes significantly.
- Check out the National Snow and Ice Data Center's new website, Satellite Observations of Arctic Change (SOAC) to explore how conditions in the Arctic have changed over time.
- The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) has released a media-rich website and white paper to share key messages about climate change.
- Check out NOAA's website to learn more about the challenges presented by climate change and ocean acidification to fisheries.
- The journal *Conservation* reports on recent research looking at how changes to the timing of snow cover affect animals (i.e., snowshoe hare) that turn white to camouflage during the winter.
- NOAA climate services portal serves as a single point-of-entry for NOAA's extensive climate information, data, products, services, and the climate science magazine *ClimateWatch.*

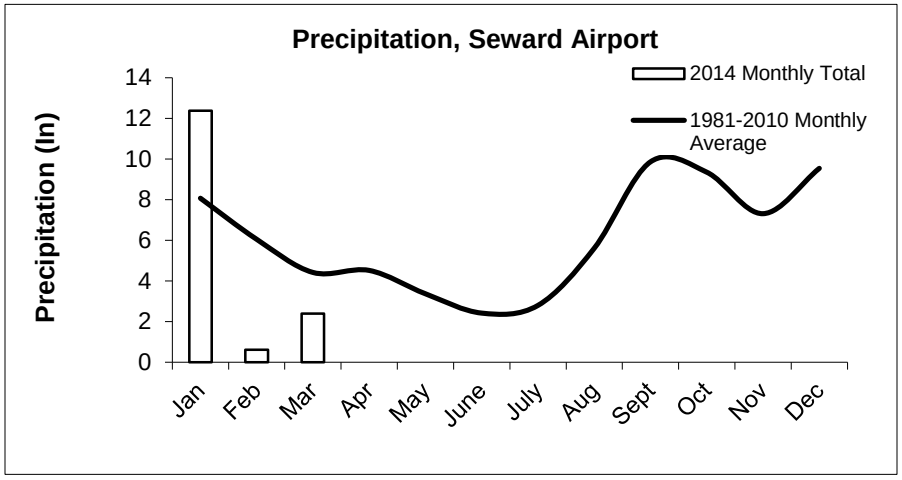
Read more to find out about the local climate for March 2014

Seward Airport Temperature, March 2014 (station 26438)



Monthly and 30-year average temperature (F) at Seward airport. The range of maximum and minimum daily temperatures for each month are shown with a dashed vertical line.

Seward Airport Precipitation, March 2014 (station 26438)

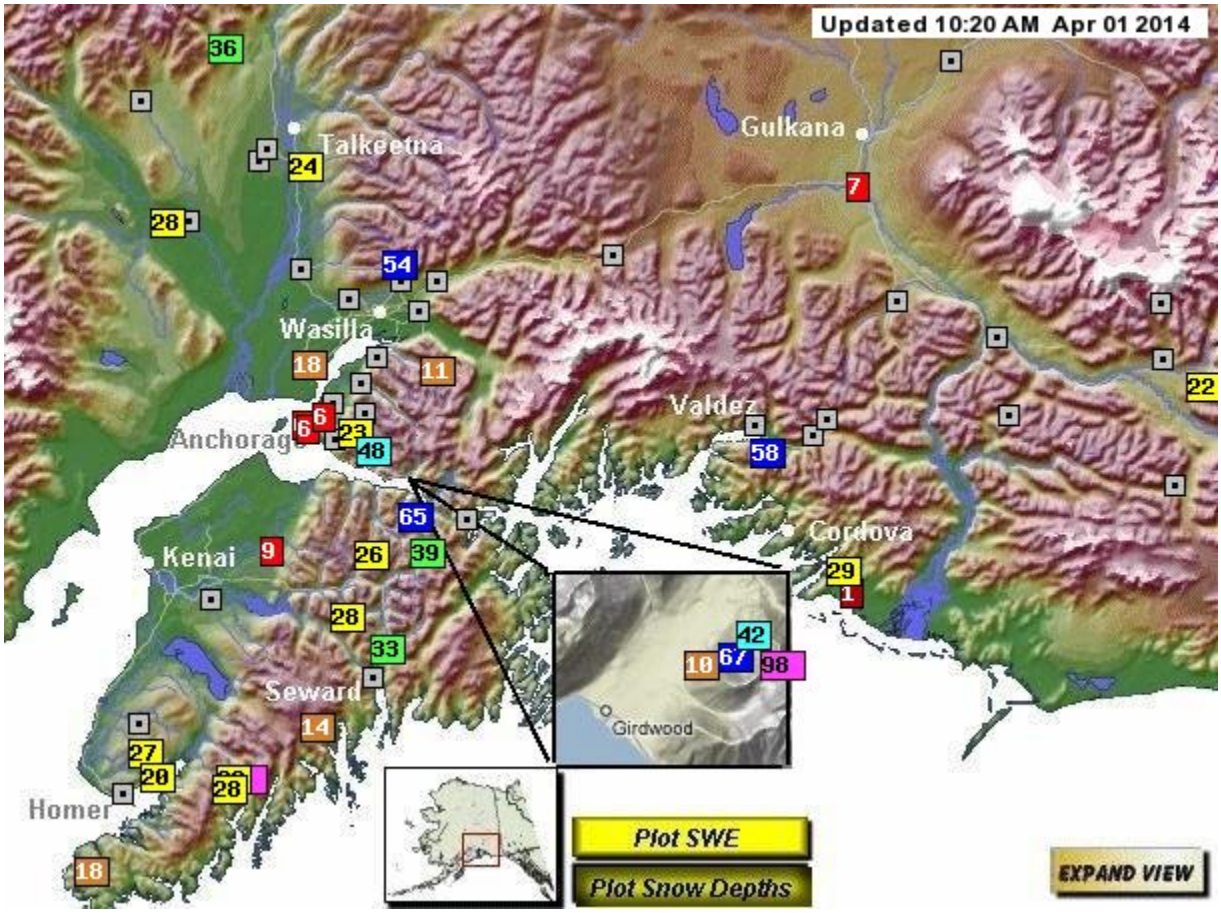


Monthly and 30-year average precipitation (inches) at Seward airport.

Rivers

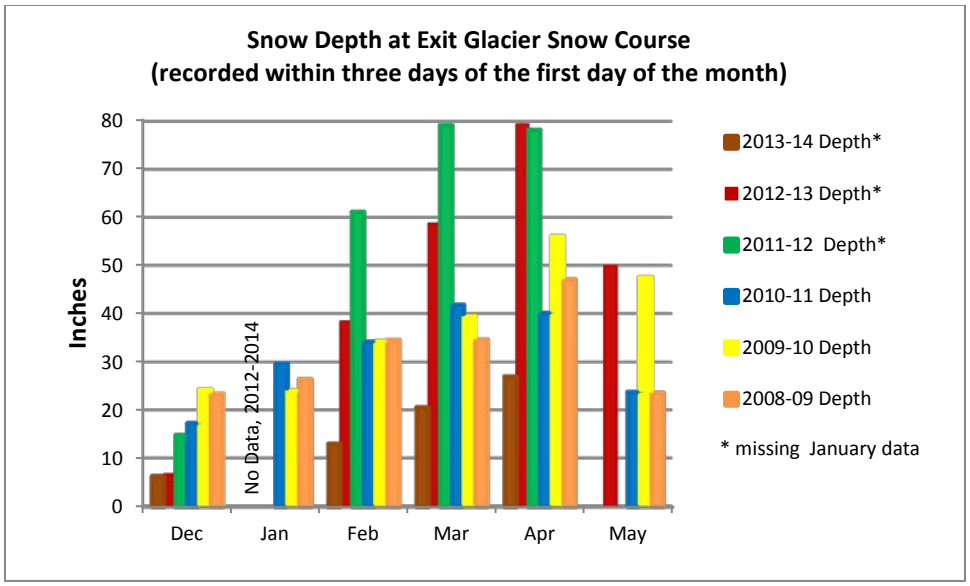
Resurrection River *at Exit Glacier Bridge is monitored by the Alaska-Pacific River Forecast Center:*
http://water.weather.gov/ahps2/index.php?wfo=pafc.
Exit Creek *water level (stage height) data is only collected during the summer, beginning in May and ending in August.*

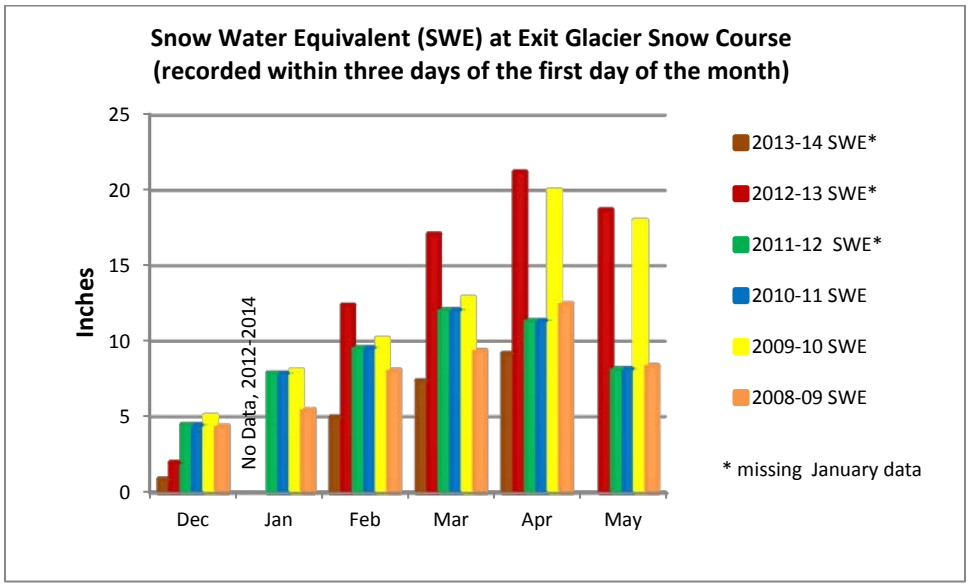
Snow & Ice



Snow depths reported across southcentral Alaska on April 1, 2014: http://aprfc.arh.noaa.gov/sd_pafc_sites.html. Snow is monitored by the Natural Resources Conservation Service: http://www.ambcs.org/ with most measurements and reporting taking place December to May.

Results of snow depth monitoring at the Exit Glacier snow course on March 26th indicate the snowpack was 27 inches deep, the lowest April 1st snow depth recorded at Exit Glacier since monitoring began in winter 1987-88. The snow depth is 51% of normal for this time of year, 52 inches less than this time last year. Snow water equivalent of the April 1st snowpack was 9.2 inches, 12 inches less than this time last year.





Weather Station data (map of [some] stations Western Region Climate Center or MesoWest)

Seward Airport
Grouse Crk Divide
Exit Glacier SNOTEL
McArthur Pass
Pilot Rock
Seward Hwy MP#12
Exit Glacier
Harding Icefield
Nuka Glacier
Buoy 76-Cape Cleare
Pedersen Lagoon

Weather Forecasts

Seward Summary
Marine Forecast
Graphical Forecast
4-8 Day Forecast
Surface Map