

Storm Data and Unusual Weather Phenomena - March 2013

Location	Date/Time	Deaths & Injuries	Property & Crop Dmg	Event Type and Details
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TEXAS, South Panhandle

(TX-Z021) PARMER, (TX-Z022) CASTRO, (TX-Z023) SWISHER, (TX-Z026) CHILDRESS, (TX-Z027) BAILEY, (TX-Z028) LAMB, (TX-Z029) HALE, (TX-Z030) FLOYD, (TX-Z033) COCHRAN, (TX-Z034) HOCKLEY, (TX-Z035) LUBBOCK, (TX-Z036) CROSBY, (TX-Z037) DICKENS, (TX-Z038) KING, (TX-Z039) YOAKUM, (TX-Z040) TERRY, (TX-Z041) LYNN, (TX-Z042) GARZA, (TX-Z043) KENT, (TX-Z044) STONEWALL

03/01/13 00:00 CST	0	Drought
03/31/13 23:59 CST	5M	

Drought conditions during the month of March were largely unchanged although a slight worsening did occur in the U.S Drought Monitor. Swisher County joined Hall, Briscoe, Cottle, and Motley Counties with drought levels below D2 (Severe). The worst drought conditions persisted in the southwestern Texas panhandle and northwestern South Plains as well as the southern Rolling Plains.

Temperatures during the month of March varied from well below normal to much above normal with several systems affecting the area. Very little to no precipitation was recorded throughout the entire month. Both Lubbock and Childress recorded only a trace of precipitation. Most systems brought strong winds and dry weather to the region with only scattered precipitation. The time of year between winter and spring is within the climatological maximum for wildfire activity due to dry conditions. Keetch-Byram Drought Index values worsened from the beginning of the month due to the persistent lack of precipitation. By the end of March, values between 400 and 600 covered much of the South Plains and Rolling Plains. The southern Texas panhandle saw values ranging from 200-400 with the southwestern panhandle less than 200.

The effects of the lack of precipitation were beginning to show across the region. One significant wildfire was observed which rapidly spread from strong winds. Fuel conditions worsened although fuel load compared to the past two years is lower due to the drought. Dryland winter wheat crops that emerged in the fall of 2012 were reported to be in good condition but those that developed in the winter were rated to be poor due to the timing of precipitation in January and February. Precipitation that fell in the first couple months of the year improved rangeland and pastures but additional precipitation was needed to keep these lands in good conditions.

Economic losses due to drought through March since the drought began were estimated near \$2.6 billion.

(TX-Z022) CASTRO, (TX-Z036) CROSBY

03/04/13 22:00 CST	0	High Wind (MAX 52 kt)
03/05/13 00:10 CST	0	

On the evening of the fourth through the early morning hours of the fifth, a strong cold front moved through the area which created high winds. Two instances of high wind gusts were recorded with this front. The first was 58 mph near Dimmitt (Castro County) while a second observation of 61 mph was made near White River Lake (Crosby County). These observations were recorded by the Texas Tech University West Texas mesonet.

(TX-Z021) PARMER, (TX-Z041) LYNN

03/08/13 18:50 CST	0	High Wind (MAX 53 kt)
03/09/13 13:35 CST	0	

A strong upper level storm system moving across the Desert Southwest created light virga showers across the South Plains and southern Texas Panhandle during the evening of the eighth. Very dry air at the surface cause these showers to create gusty winds. A gust to 61 mph was recorded by a Texas Tech Mesonet site near Friona. Scattered thunderstorms developed after this wind gust but none were reported as severe. As the upper level system moved closer to the region the next afternoon, additional virga showers developed over the South Plains and Rolling Plains. An additional wind gust to 61 mph was recorded at a mesonet site near Tahoka.

(TX-Z023) SWISHER

03/10/13 01:05 CST	0	High Wind (MAX 52 kt)
03/10/13 01:05 CST	0	

A strong polar cold front moved through the area during the early morning hours of the 10th which brought gusty northerly winds in its immediate wake. A KVII-TV schoolnet site at Tulia High School reported a wind gust to 60 mph.

CASTRO COUNTY --- 0.9 NE HART [34.39, -102.11], 3.5 N HART [34.43, -102.11]

03/17/13 16:28 CST	0	Thunderstorm Wind (MG 58 kt)
03/17/13 16:35 CST	0	Source: Broadcast Media

Measured by a KVII schoolnet site at the Hart Elementary School. At 1635 CST, a Texas Tech University West Texas mesonet located 3N Hart measured a 62 mph gust.

LAMB COUNTY --- 1.1 E AMHERST [34.02, -102.40], 4.2 N HART CAMP [34.09, -102.14]

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	03/17/13 16:30 CST		0	Thunderstorm Wind (MG 54 kt)
	03/17/13 16:35 CST		0	Source: Mesonet

Measured by a Texas Tech University West Texas mesonet located 1NE Amherst. At 1635 CST, another Texas Tech University West Texas mesonet located 6S Olton measured a gust to 61 mph.

FLOYD COUNTY --- 1.5 SSE SOUTH PLAINS [34.20, -101.31]				
	03/17/13 17:25 CST		1K	Thunderstorm Wind (EG 56 kt)
	03/17/13 17:25 CST		0	Source: Law Enforcement

Law enforcement reported power lines down along Highway 207.

BRISCOE COUNTY --- 6.8 ESE SILVERTON [34.43, -101.19]				
	03/17/13 17:30 CST		0	Thunderstorm Wind (MG 51 kt)
	03/17/13 17:30 CST		0	Source: Mesonet

Measured by a Texas Tech University West Texas mesonet station.

HOCKLEY COUNTY --- 6.4 WSW ROUNDUP [33.73, -102.20]				
	03/17/13 17:45 CST		0	Thunderstorm Wind (MG 50 kt)
	03/17/13 17:45 CST		0	Source: Mesonet

Measured by a Texas Tech University West Texas mesonet station.

LUBBOCK COUNTY --- 3.7 ENE WOLFFORTH [33.51, -101.96], 3.4 SSW DOUD [33.52, -101.95]				
	03/17/13 19:15 CST		0.50K	Thunderstorm Wind (EG 52 kt)
	03/17/13 19:20 CST		0	Source: NWS Employee

An NWS employee in southwest Lubbock estimated wind gusts of 55 to 60 mph from a virga shower. These winds snapped a 20-foot antenna and caused sporadic minor damage to property fences in far southwest Lubbock.

Despite minimal low-level moisture and instability, strong lift accompanying a short wave trough helped generate a line of showers and thunderstorms along a surface trough late this St. Patrick's Day afternoon. Very high-based thunderstorms developed rapidly shortly before 1500 CST in far eastern New Mexico before increasing in coverage as they entered the western Texas Panhandle and northwest South Plains. Virga and strong downdrafts were so prevalent with these storms that a large haboob quickly developed and overspread much of the South Plains. Some area residents photographed very tall gustnadoes along the leading edge of this haboob; however, none of these were tornadic and did not create any known damage. North of a line from Levelland to Floydada, deeper instability and lift resulted in several severe thunderstorm wind gusts. Near South Plains, these severe winds downed a few power lines along Highway 207. Additional virga showers around sunset in Hockley and Lubbock Counties created a second round of strong convective winds that caused sporadic instances of minor property damage primarily in the southwest sections of Lubbock.

(TX-Z021) PARMER, (TX-Z022) CASTRO, (TX-Z027) BAILEY, (TX-Z028) LAMB, (TX-Z029) HALE, (TX-Z030) FLOYD, (TX-Z033) COCHRAN, (TX-Z034) HOCKLEY, (TX-Z035) LUBBOCK, (TX-Z036) CROSBY, (TX-Z039) YOAKUM, (TX-Z042) GARZA				
	03/23/13 15:15 CST		54K	High Wind (MAX 67 kt)
	03/23/13 19:50 CST		0	

(TX-Z021) PARMER, (TX-Z022) CASTRO, (TX-Z023) SWISHER, (TX-Z027) BAILEY, (TX-Z030) FLOYD, (TX-Z033) COCHRAN, (TX-Z034) HOCKLEY, (TX-Z035) LUBBOCK				
	03/23/13 16:10 CST		0	Dust Storm
	03/23/13 17:40 CST		0	

(TX-Z034) HOCKLEY				
	03/23/13 18:00 CST		50K	Wildfire
	03/23/13 19:30 CST		0	

Late this afternoon, a compact upper low exited northern New Mexico and tracked over the northern Texas Panhandle. South of this low, an already tight pressure gradient intensified even further ahead of an unseasonably strong Polar cold front. The result was a widespread high wind event and dust storm that at times produced zero visibility in some rural areas on the Caprock. In Muleshoe, high winds measured up to 77 mph caused scattered property damage. These intense winds damaged some roofs, fences, lofted small stones that shattered several vehicle windows, and reportedly blew a motorcycle into the side of a building causing damage to both items. Elsewhere on the South Plains, sporadic damage such as downed trees, damaged fences, minor roof damage, and brief power outages were reported. Farther east, areas off the Caprock escaped high winds thanks to a layer of stable air that prevented high winds aloft from mixing to the surface.

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Combined with very low relative humidity values of two to five percent and dry fuels, the high winds rekindled a burn pile about four miles east of Smyer that was improperly extinguished the day prior. Fire Departments from Smyer, Shallowater and Wolfforth responded to the blaze early in the evening along Highway 114. The fire spread rapidly southeastward consuming roughly 100 acres and destroying three structures; one of which was inhabited. Fortunately, the owner was able to evacuate the mobile home safely. Smoke from this wildfire became so dense that Highway 114 was closed for at least 90 minutes.

High wind reports from the Texas Tech University West Texas mesonet and Automated Surface Observation System are as follows:

Muleshoe (Bailey County)...77 mph, Dimmitt (Castro County)...69 mph, Floydada (Floyd County)...65 mph, Friona (Parmer County)...65 mph, Graham (Garza County)...64 mph, Ralls (Crosby County)...64 mph, Plains (Yoakum County)...61 mph, Denver City (Yoakum County)...60 mph, Lubbock ASOS (Lubbock County)...60 mph, Levelland (Hockley County)...60 mph, Morton (Cochran County)...59 mph, Abernathy (Hale County)...59 mph, Amherst (Lamb County)...59 mph, Post (Garza County)...60 mph, Reese Center (Lubbock County)...59 mph, and Sundown (Hockley County)...58 mph.



Photo of a large metal storage tank that rolled and damaged a property fence in far southwest Lubbock. Photo courtesy KCBD news.

LUBBOCK COUNTY --- 0.3 NE (LBB)LUBBOCK INTL AR [33.67, -101.82]

03/29/13 14:49 CST

0

Funnel Cloud

03/29/13 14:52 CST

0

Source: Official NWS Observations

A contract weather observer at the Lubbock Preston Smith International Airport observed a funnel cloud just northeast of the terminal as a thunderstorm developed. It lasted three minutes before dissipating.

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FLOYD COUNTY --- 10.2 ESE SOUTH PLAINS [34.14, -101.17]				
	03/29/13 16:55 CST		0.25K	Hail (2.00 in)
	03/29/13 16:55 CST		0	Source: Public
A citizen reported hen egg size hail east of Cedar Hill which broke the windshield of a car.				
LUBBOCK COUNTY --- 3.7 ENE WOLFFORTH [33.52, -101.96]				
	03/29/13 16:55 CST		0	Hail (0.75 in)
	03/29/13 16:58 CST		0	Source: COOP Observer
Penny size hail was reported west of 82nd Street and Milwaukee Avenue in Lubbock. No damage was observed.				
CROSBY COUNTY --- 1.5 NNE CROSBYTON [33.69, -101.24]				
	03/29/13 17:23 CST		0	Hail (1.75 in)
	03/29/13 17:23 CST		0	Source: Trained Spotter
A SKYWARN spotter observed golf ball size hail north of Crosbyton. No damage was reported.				
LUBBOCK COUNTY --- 4.0 S WOLFFORTH [33.44, -102.02]				
	03/29/13 17:27 CST		0	Hail (0.75 in)
	03/29/13 17:27 CST		0	Source: NWS Employee
An off-duty NWS employee observed penny size hail south of Wolfforth. No damage was reported.				
HALL COUNTY --- 1.3 WSW TURKEY [34.39, -100.90]				
	03/29/13 17:42 CST		0	Hail (1.75 in)
	03/29/13 17:52 CST		0	Source: Fire Department/Rescue
Fire department officials reported golf ball size hail lasting for several minutes in Turkey. No damage was observed.				
FLOYD COUNTY --- 5.8 W LONE STAR [34.26, -101.52]				
	03/29/13 19:13 CST		0	Hail (1.75 in)
	03/29/13 19:13 CST		0	Source: Fire Department/Rescue
Fire department officials observed golf ball size hail. No damage was reported.				
GARZA COUNTY --- 7.2 NE POST [33.26, -101.30]				
	03/29/13 19:38 CST		0	Hail (1.00 in)
	03/29/13 19:38 CST		0	Source: Law Enforcement
Law enforcement officials reported quarter size hail northeast of Post. No damage was observed.				
<p>A potent upper level shortwave trough approached from the Desert Southwest, entering the South Plains during the afternoon. A deepening trough, sharpening dryline, and lingering frontal boundary all combined near the surface to produce a triple point. Isolated to scattered thunderstorms developed along this triple point, just west of the edge of the caprock, as deep layer lift was enhanced by the upper-level shortwave trough. These storms moved off to the east producing severe hail from near the edge of the caprock out across portions of the Rolling Plains and extreme southern Texas panhandle.</p>				