SUMMARY OF THE DECEMBER 1980 WEATHER ON THE MONTEREY PENINSULA, CALIFORNIA

General: December 1980 was mild with below normal precipitation and wind, while fog was near average. Several new high temperature records were set during the month.

Temperature: December started off acting like winter, but by mid-month it was summer all over again. The average, 56.1°F, represents the third warmest December in 29 years of record (57.6°F in Dec 1958 and 56.4°F in Dec 1959). The average daily maximum of 66.7°F, along with Dec 59, also stands as the third warmest on record (67.5°F in 1956 and 69.6°F in Dec 1958). Although many nights late in the month were warm, the average daily minimum of 45.6°F was not significantly high.

The high of 85°F on 16 Dec, along with the 85°F on 7 Nov 1953 and 85°F on 7 Feb 1954, is the highest winter-season temperature on record between 3 Dec and 2 April (89°F on 3 Dec 1958 and 87°F on 2 April 1959). In addition, 77°F on 25 Dec and 78°F on 31 Dec are new records for these dates. 10 days with daily maxima in the 70’s and 80’s this past month is not a record for Dec since there were 15 such days in 1958. However, the successive string of 70+ temperatures from 25 Dec through 31 Dec is a record for so late in the season. A unique record was set in 1959 when the first 8 days in Dec and the last 3 days in Nov registered highs equal to or greater than 73°F.

On the low temperature side, the 35°F reading on 8 Dec was the coldest temperature at the climatological station since a reading of 34°F on 3 Feb 1979. All minima after 8 Dec 1980 were in the 40’s and 50’s, with the 31 Dec reading of 53°F matching the warmest 31 Dec minimum set in 1963. The first day with 39°F or below is used as an indicator of the first day of frost. This year the date was 7 Dec – the latest date for this temperature since 1970 when it occurred on 14 Dec.

Precipitation: Rainfall continued to be spotty. The stormy weather on 3-4 Dec (1.43”) was not followed by another rain until light amounts fell on 21, 22, 23 Dec (0.29”). The total of 1.72” is 1.33” below the 29-year normal for Dec, and the season-to-date amount of 2.80” is far below the 6.42” expected by 31 Dec. If it were not for the heavy July rain (0.73”) the rainfall picture would be even more bleak. Both climatology and seasonal outlooks by the National Weather Service suggest below normal rainfall this year.

Dec is the month with the highest frequency of thunderstorms on the Peninsula but none were recorded this Dec. April 1980 was the last month thunder was heard on the Peninsula.

Wind: December winds continued the string of much-below-average winds started in April 1980. The 4.1 miles per hour (mph) average for Dec 80 is 2.1 mph below the recent four-year average for the month. The singular exception to the light winds came with December’s only storm of significance on 3-4 Dec. 62.5 mph was recorded about 6 PM on 3 Dec. This is the highest gust recorded at the climatological station since such records were started in late 1972. The strong winds resulted in light to moderate damage to trees and power outages. Most other gusts were in the teens in December.

Fog: Seven days with fog of various intensity occurred between 17 and 23 Dec. This closely matches a normal of 6 such days in Dec. Local airline schedules were upset by the fog on 22 and 23 Dec.
Supplement: 1980 Weather Summary

29-year Normal Values in ( ).

**Temperature:**
- Overall average: 57.6°F (56.4°F)
- Average daily high: 66.5°F (65.3°F)
- Average daily low: 48.7°F (47.6°F)
- High for the year: 103°F on 1 Oct 1980 (all-time record)
- Low for the year: 35°F on 8 Dec 1980

Last day with temperatures equal to or less than 39°F: 30 Jan 80
First day with temperatures equal to or less than 39°F: 7 Dec 80
(Intervening period considered frost free)

No heavy frosts in 1980 (heavy frosts indicated by temperatures less than 35°F)

**Precipitation:**
- 18.31” (18.33”) in calendar year
- 73 (69) days with precipitation equal to or exceeding 0.01”
- July 1980 rainfall of 0.73” sets new record

**Fog:**
- 153 (139) calendar days with fog of various intensities and durations

**Thunderstorms:**
- 2 (4) calendar days on which thunder was heard

**Wind:**
- (at airport) 5.7 mph compared to 7.1 mph average in the recent four-year period