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SUMMARY OF THE MAY 1990 WEATHER ON THE MONTEREY  
PENINSULA, CALIFORNIA

General:  Temperatures were above normal, rainfall in the heavy category, and fog slightly above normal with seasonal winds.

Temperature:  Like April, the May temperatures exceeded normal with an average of 57.0°F (56.1°F = normal).  Contributions from both daytime and nighttime temperatures contributed to the positive anomaly – 65.1°F vs 64.4°F and 48.9°F vs 47.7°F.  Only two daily temperature records were challenged in May: 44°F minimum on 25 May tied the cool record for the date, set in 1961; and just two days later a minimum of 55°F became the warm minimum record, beating 53°F in 1958.  High for May 1990 is 80°F on 5 May and the low for the month is 44°F, observed on 25 May.

Precipitation:  Big news for the month is the rainfall …. 1.83” of it on five days with measurable rainfall.  For the 39 years of National Weather Service May records, the May 1990 amount is exceeded only by 2.39” in May 1957.  The late season burst of rain brought the current rain year total (since 1 July 1989) to 14.92” which exceeds the rain year totals for the past three years (12.98”, 12.14”, and 14.44” in the most recent past year).  We are still behind normal, which is 18.46” at month’s end.  That puts us at the 81% level – and probably the deep envy of Santa Barbara and San Jose areas!

Using records from the Forest Lake (Pebble Beach) station, currently operated by Cal Am Water Co., it is obvious there have been other high rainfall May’s in this century ... like 1921 with 1.83” (ties May 1990 at NWS Climate Station), and May 1915 with 2.20” and May 1905 with 3.44”.  Forest Lake and the Climate Station have rainfall values which are very similar.  Other more obscure Monterey records before the turn of the century indicate May 1894, 1860 and 1848 with rainfall exceeding May 1990.

Although May 1990 rain gave hope and encouragement to water conservation advocates, the local farmers did not jump for joy!  Strawberries, in particular, suffered considerably from the rain; and, generally, the uncontrolled moisture contributed to decay of crops being harvested.

Normal rainfall for June would only contribute another 0.19” ( = 1% of the annual).

Wind:  The airport hourly average wind (6 AM to 11 PM) was 9.8 miles per hour (mph), which is seasonal but slightly less than the winds in May 1989 and 1988.  The Climate Station average high daily gust for May is 22.5 mph, which is two mph less than the 19 year normal of this element.

Fog:  Fog occurrence continues to exceed normal as it has for 18 of the past 21 months.  May 1990 recorded 15 fog days vice 13 normal.  1989 was the foggiest year (by number of days with fog) on record since adequate record-keeping in 1963.