

National Climate Summary – May 2006

Rainfall: Well above average in Northland, Auckland, and Canterbury; well below average parts of Otago

Temperature: Above average in northern and eastern parts of the North Island; below average in the east of the South Island

Sunshine: Very sunny in North Westland and Southland; rather cloudy in Gisborne and parts of Canterbury

May was very wet, with about 200 percent (twice) of normal rainfall, in parts of Northland and Auckland, and in many coastal areas of Canterbury. The month's weather was rather unsettled in these regions, including Northland, Coromandel, and Bay of Plenty, with six to eight more wet-days (days with rainfall totalling at least 1.0 mm) than average in many locations. Soils in many parts of the country are now saturated. In contrast, May rainfall was less than 50 percent (half) of normal in Central and East Otago. May was warmer than average in much of the north and east of the North Island, and Nelson and the west of the South Island, but cooler than average in parts of Wairarapa, South Canterbury, Otago and Southland. The national average temperature of 11.0 °C was 0.3 °C above the 1971-2000 normal. This was the lowest for May since 1996. May was much sunnier than normal in North Westland and Southland. However, sunshine hours were well below normal in Gisborne and coastal areas of Canterbury. Troughs of low pressure were more frequent than average over the north of the North Island during May. This pattern resulted in frequent easterly winds over the South Island.

Other Highlights:

The highest temperature recorded during May 2006 was 23.6 °C recorded in Henderson, Auckland on the 1st. The lowest temperature for the month was -5.9 °C at Lake Tekapo on the 15th.

On 8 May, lightning struck a tree in Auckland, shattering at least 16 nearby windows, burning out electrical appliances, and resulting in a localised power outage.

On 11 May, a small tornado lifted half a roof off a Ruawai (Kaipara) house.

The highest wind gust recorded during May 2006 was 120 km/h. This was from the south-southwest at Castlepoint on the 15th, and from the northeast at Cape Reinga on the 26th.

Wintry conditions occurred with a cold southerly outbreak during 14-15 May. In Canterbury, snowfall closed Burkes Pass with several vehicles stranded. Snowfall also occurred between Te Anau and Milford, as well as the Cashmere Hills. In the North Island, snowfall closed the Desert Road. The same event produced gale force southerlies with high seas in Cook Strait, and hail in parts of Auckland.

High rainfall events were frequent in May, occurring in various districts on 2, 6, 12-13, 20-22, and 25-26 May. Substantial surface flooding occurred in Silverdale, north of Auckland on 6 May, in parts of Christchurch on 12 May, and in Tasman on 22 May.

Dunedin was the driest, Auckland the wettest, Hamilton the sunniest, and Christchurch the coldest of the main centres. Rainfall was above average in Auckland and Christchurch, near average in Hamilton and Wellington, and well below average in Dunedin. Temperatures were near average in Christchurch and Dunedin, and above average in the three other main centres. Sunshine hours were above average in Hamilton, near average in Auckland, and Dunedin, and below average in the two other main centres.

Rainfall: Rainfall was about 200 percent (twice) of normal in parts of Northland and Auckland, and in many coastal areas of Canterbury. Rainfall was also above normal in parts of Bay of Plenty, coastal Wairarapa, Nelson, and North Otago. In contrast, May rainfall totals were 50 percent (half) or less of normal in Central and East Otago, and also below normal in South Westland, Fiordland, and coastal Southland.

Temperature: Mean temperatures were 0.5 °C or more above average in parts of Auckland, Bay of Plenty, Waikato, Gisborne, Hawke’s Bay, Buller, Westland, Fiordland, and Nelson. In contrast, they were at least 0.5 °C below average in parts of Wairarapa, South Canterbury, Otago and Southland.

Sunshine: Sunshine hours and/or solar radiation were at least 120 percent of normal in North Westland and Southland. In contrast, they were less than 80 percent of normal in Gisborne and coastal areas of Canterbury, and less than 90 percent of normal in Northland and West Otago,

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WET IN NORTHLAND, AUCKLAND, AND CANTERBURY; MUCH DRIER IN PARTS OF OTAGO

Rainfall was about 200 percent (twice) of normal in parts of Northland and Auckland, and in many coastal areas of Canterbury. Rainfall was at least 125 percent (one and a quarter) of normal in parts of Bay of Plenty, coastal Wairarapa, Nelson, and North Otago. In contrast, May rainfall totals were 50 percent (half) or less of normal in Central and East Otago, and 75 percent (three quarters) or less of normal in South Westland, Fiordland, and coastal Southland.

High May rainfall was recorded at:

Location	May Rainfall (mm)	Percentage of normal	Year Records began	Comments
Kerikeri EWS	230	182	1982	Well above average
Kerikeri Airport	237 ^a	181	1978	Well above average
Whangarei Airport	215	203	1937	Well above average
Whangaparaoa	172	207	1989	3 rd highest
Auckland, Owairaka	193	188	1949	Well above average
Auckland Airport	191	209	1962	3 rd highest
Christchurch Gardens	122 ^a	217	1864	Well above average
Lincoln	121 ^a	237	1881	Well above average

^a to 9am 31st May

Near or record low May rainfall was recorded at:

Location	May Rainfall (mm)	Percentage of normal	Year records began	Comments
Dunedin Airport	23	39	1963	Equal 3 rd lowest
Clyde	13	31	1983	Equal 3 rd lowest

ABOVE AVERAGE TEMPERATURES IN PARTS OF THE NORTHERN AND EASTERN NORTH ISLAND; BELOW AVERAGE IN THE EAST OF THE SOUTH ISLAND

Mean temperatures were 0.5 °C or more above average in parts of Auckland, Bay of Plenty, Waikato, Gisborne, Hawke’s Bay, Buller, Westland, Fiordland, and Nelson. In contrast, they were at least 0.5 °C below average in parts of Wairarapa, South Canterbury, Otago and Southland.

VERY SUNNY IN NORTH WESTLAND AND SOUTHLAND, CLOUDY IN GISBORNE AND CANTERBURY

Sunshine hours and/or solar radiation were at least 120 percent of normal in North Westland and Southland. In contrast, they less than 90 percent of normal in Northland and West Otago, and less than 80 percent of normal in Gisborne and coastal areas of Canterbury.

High May sunshine hours were recorded at:

Location	May Sunshine (hours)	Percentage of normal	Year records began	Comments
Hokitika Airport	149	128	1964	Well above average
Invercargill Airport	108	135	1932	Well above average

Low May sunshine hours were recorded at:

Location	May Sunshine (hours)	Percentage of normal	Year records began	Comments
Gisborne Airport	103	69	1905	Well below average
Christchurch Airport	101	71	1949	Well below average

MAY'S CLIMATE IN THE FIVE MAIN CENTRES

Dunedin was the driest, Auckland the wettest, Hamilton the sunniest, and Christchurch the coldest of the main centres. Rainfall was above average in Auckland and Christchurch, near average in Hamilton and Wellington, and well below average in Dunedin. Temperatures were near average in Christchurch and Dunedin, and above average in the three other main centres. Sunshine hours were above average in Hamilton, near average in Auckland, and Dunedin, and below average in the two other main centres.

Location	May. Mean Temp. (°C)	Dep. from normal (°C)		May. rainfall (mm)	% of Normal		May. Sunshine (hours)	% of Normal	
Auckland	14.2	+0.4	Above average	193 ^a	188	Well above average	142	103	Near average
Hamilton	12.2	+0.5	Above average	112	112	Near average	155	118	Above average
Wellington	11.8	+0.3	Above Average	107	92	Near average	108	85	Below average
Christchurch	8.7 ^b	-0.2	Near average	99 ^b	189	Well above average	101 ^b	71	Well below average
Dunedin	9.5	+0.2	Near average	30	43	Well below average	101	101	Near average

^a Owairaka ^b Christchurch Airport

HIGHLIGHTS AND EXTREME EVENTS

Temperature

The highest temperature recorded during May 2006 was 23.6 °C recorded in Henderson, Auckland on the 1st. This was equal 2nd highest temperature there for May, in records which commenced in 1986.

The lowest temperature for the month was -5.9 °C at Lake Tekapo on the 15th.

High winds

The highest wind gust recorded during May 2006 was 120 km/h. This was from the south-southwest at Castlepoint on the 15th, and from the northeast at Cape Reinga on the 26th.

11 May: A small tornado lifted half an iron roof off a Ruawai (Kaipara) house, at about 11.05 am, scattering the debris up to 500 mm away.

High rainfall and floods

There were several high rainfall events during May. These occurred on:

- 2 May 70 mm at Hicks Bay, 74 mm in Kotemaori, Hawke's Bay. Surface flooding in Raupunga and Mohaka. Surface flooding in Auckland, Napier-Gisborne and Napier to Taupo roads closed by slips.
- 6 May Substantial surface flooding in Silverdale, north of Auckland.
- 12 May More than 60 mm in Hoon Hay, Christchurch, 66 mm in Lyttelton. Heavy rainfall and surface flooding occurred in Christchurch, with some rivers (including the Heathcote) burst their banks, and accumulated autumn leaves blocked drains.
- 13 May 70 mm at Milford Sound.
- 20 May 60 mm at Secretary Island, Fiordland.
- 21 May 76 mm at Hokitika.
- 22 May 69 mm in Whangarei, 88 mm at Mapua, 84 mm in Takaka, and 66 mm at Motueka. Surface flooding in the Tasman district.
- 25 May 68 mm at Lake Moeraki, South Westland, and 82 mm at Milford Sound.
- 26 May 95 mm in the Bay of Islands, 158 mm at Takaka, 81 Riwaka, and 70 mm at Lake Moeraki.

Severe lightning

8 May. Lightning struck a tree in Mangere Bridge, Auckland, at about 5.55 am that morning, shattering at least 16 nearby windows, burning out electrical appliances, and resulting in a localised power cut.

Snowfall

14-15 May. Wintry conditions occurred with a cold southerly outbreak during 14-15 May. Snowfall occurred to 400-500 metres in Southland and Otago. In Canterbury, snowfall closed Burkes Pass SH8 with several vehicles stranded. Snowfall also occurred on SH94 between Te Anau and Milford, as well as the Cashmere Hills. In the North Island, snowfall closed the Desert Road, with depths of 15 cm at altitudes of 800 m above mean sea level. In Canterbury, Mt. Hutt received about 10 cm of fresh snow. Gale force southerlies produced 6 m swells through Cook Strait, and hail lay on the ground in parts of Auckland. The Desert Road remained closed until 16 May.

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