

A wet and warm month for many parts of the country.

Rainfall	Rainfall was well above normal (> 149%) or above normal (120-149%) for southern, central and western parts of the North Island, western and northern parts of the South Island, and eastern and inland parts of Canterbury south of Christchurch. Rainfall was well below normal (< 50%) or below normal (50-79%) for Northland, Gisborne, northern Hawke's Bay and coastal North Canterbury.
Temperature	April temperatures were above average (+0.51°C to +1.20°C) for most parts of the country. It was a particularly warm month for West Coast, eastern parts of Canterbury, Kapiti Coast, Manawatu-Whanganui and Taranaki where temperatures were well above average (> +1.20°C).
Soil Moisture	As of 1 May 2015, soil moisture levels were above normal for this time of year for parts of Waikato, Taranaki, Manawatu-Whanganui, eastern Mid-Canterbury, the Mackenzie Country and western Southland. Soil moisture levels were below normal for this time of year for eastern and northern parts of the North Island, and eastern parts of North Canterbury.
Sunshine	Most of the country recorded near normal (90-109%) or below normal April sunshine. The exception was Northland and Dunedin, where April sunshine was above normal (110-125%).

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Overview

April 2015 gave New Zealand its first real taste of winter for the year, with a polar outbreak in the middle of the month that saw temperatures plummet nationwide, and brought snowfall to very low elevations for southern parts of the South Island. Overall, the month was characterised by air pressures which were higher than normal to the northeast of New Zealand and south of Australia. This pressure pattern resulted in a weak north-westerly flow anomaly across the North Island and a weak south-easterly flow anomaly over the South Island. The northward retreat of the subtropical belt of anticyclones allowed numerous fronts to pass over the country during the month, and these delivered bouts of heavy rain to many parts. It was particularly wet for southern, central and western parts of the North Island where rainfall totals for the month were well above normal (> 149% of the April normal). Rainfall was either above normal (120-149% of April normal) or well above normal for

western and northern parts of the South Island, and eastern and inland parts of Canterbury south of Christchurch. In contrast, it was a very dry month for Northland, Gisborne, northern Hawke's Bay and coastal North Canterbury where April rainfall was well below normal (< 50% of the April normal) or below normal (50-79% of the April normal). Rainfall was near normal (80-119% of the April normal) for remaining areas of the country. Such contrasting rainfall was reflected in soil moisture levels that differed considerably between different regions of New Zealand. As of 1 May 2015, soils were notably drier than normal for Northland and northern Auckland, Gisborne, Hawke's Bay, coastal Wairarapa and eastern parts of North Canterbury. Soils were wetter than normal in parts of Waikato, Taranaki, Manawatu-Whanganui, eastern Mid-Canterbury, the Mackenzie Country and western Southland. Elsewhere, soil moisture levels were nearer to normal for this time of year.

Despite the polar outbreak in mid-April, it was a mild month overall, with at least above average temperatures (0.51-1.20°C above the April average) for the majority of the country. The exception was south-eastern parts of the South Island, inland parts of Canterbury and western parts of Waikato where temperatures were typically near average (between -0.50°C to +0.50°C of the April average). It was a particularly warm month for West Coast, eastern parts of Canterbury north of Ashburton, Kapiti Coast, Manawatu-Whanganui and Taranaki where temperatures were well above average (> 1.20°C above the April average). The nation-wide average temperature in April 2015 was 14.1°C (0.9°C above the 1981-2010 April average from NIWA's seven station temperature series which begins in 1909)¹.

It was a sunny month for Northland and Dunedin where April sunshine was above normal (110-125% of the April normal). Remaining parts of the country weren't so lucky, and received either near normal (90-109% of the April normal) or below normal (75-89% of the April normal) sunshine.

Further Highlights:

- The highest temperature was 30.4°C, observed at Cheviot on 7 April.
- The lowest temperature was -4.8°C, observed at Hanmer Forest on 15 April.
- The highest 1-day rainfall was 206 mm², recorded at North Egmont on 8 April.
- The highest wind gust was 170 km/hr, observed at South West Cape on 7 April.
- Of the six main centres in April 2015, Auckland was the warmest and sunniest, Dunedin was the coolest and driest, Hamilton was the wettest and Christchurch was the cloudiest.
- Of the available, regularly reporting sunshine observation sites, the sunniest four centres so far in 2015 (1 January to 30 April) are: New Plymouth (1029 hours), Whakatane (1009 hours), Waipara West (972 hours) and Paraparaumu (970 hours).

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¹ Interim value

² A very heavy rainfall event occurred in Milford Sound on 25 April which is not included in this summary. Please refer to the *Highlights and extreme events* section for further details.

Rainfall: A wet month for many but near-record dry in the far north

April 2015 was a record or near-record wet month in seven locations across New Zealand. It was particularly wet in parts of Whanganui, Manawatu and the Kapiti Coast, where rainfall exceeded three-times the April normal, respectively. In contrast, it was particularly dry in parts of Northland. Kaitaia received just 10% of normal rainfall for the month.

Record³ or near-record April rainfall totals were recorded at:

Location	Rainfall total (mm)	Percentage of normal	Year records began	Comments
High records or near-records				
Paraparaumu	202	308	1945	Highest
Palmerston North	252	420	1928	Highest
Ohakune	208	192	1961	Highest
Whanganui	238	345	1890	Highest
Whatawhata	246	226	1952	3rd-highest
Secretary Island	478	137	1985	4th-highest
South West Cape	137	132	1991	4th-highest
Low records or near-records				
Kaitaia	12	10	1948	2nd-lowest
Kerikeri	60	41	1981	3rd-lowest

Temperature: Above average temperatures for most

April was a warm month overall for most of New Zealand. Relatively few locations observed record or near-record high mean temperatures for the month, which may be largely attributed to a bitter cold snap which struck in the middle of the month. During this period of time a number of record or near-record low April temperatures were observed (see *Highlights and extreme events* for further details). The nation-wide average temperature in April 2015 was 14.1°C (0.9°C above the 1981-2010 April average from NIWA's seven station temperature series which begins in 1909).

Record or near-record mean air temperatures for April were recorded at:

Location	Mean air temp. (°C)	Departure from normal (°C)	Year records began	Comments
High records or near-records				
Cheviot	13.8	2.0	1982	Highest
Masterton	14.8	2.1	1992	2nd-highest

³ The rankings (1st, 2nd, 3rd.etc) in all Tables in this summary are relative to climate data from a *group* of nearby stations, some of which may no longer be operating. The current climate value is compared against all values from any member of the group, without any regard for homogeneity between one station's record, and another. This approach is used due to the practical limitations of performing homogeneity checks in real-time.

Whatawhata	16.6	1.9	1952	3rd-highest
Stratford	14.2	1.8	1960	3rd-highest
Reefton	13.9	2.1	1960	3rd-highest
Christchurch (Riccarton)	14.4	2.0	1863	4th-highest
Low records or near-records				
None observed				

Record or near-record mean maximum air temperatures for April were recorded at:

Location	Mean maximum air temp. (°C)	Departure from normal (°C)	Year records began	Comments
High records or near-records				
Stratford	18.4	1.5	1960	Highest
Auckland (Mangere)	21.5	1.4	1959	3rd-highest
Whatawhata	21.3	1.7	1952	3rd-highest
Cheviot	19.9	1.7	1982	3rd-highest
Kaitaia	22.0	1.0	1985	4th-highest
Mokohinau	20.3	0.8	1994	4th-highest
Te Puke	21.0	1.1	1973	4th-highest
Low records or near-records				
Campbell Island	9.0	-0.6	1991	4th-lowest

Record or near-record mean minimum air temperatures for April were recorded at:

Location	Mean minimum air temp. (°C)	Departure from normal (°C)	Year records began	Comments
High records or near-records				
Masterton	9.7	3.3	1992	2nd-highest
Cheviot	7.7	2.4	1982	2nd-highest
Reefton	9.2	2.7	1960	3rd-highest
Whatawhata	11.9	2.2	1952	4th-highest
Farewell Spit	12.9	2.1	1971	4th-highest
Waipara West	9.2	1.9	1973	4th-highest
Orari Estate	7.2	1.9	1972	4th-highest
Alexandra	5.7	1.8	1983	4th-highest
Low records or near-records				
None observed				

Sunshine: Near normal sunshine for much of the country

April was a rather unsettled month weather-wise which resulted in frequent shifts between sunny periods and cloudy spells for most of the country. The exception was parts of Northland, which received ample April sunshine along with very little rainfall. Kaitaia observed its third-sunniest April on record. Of the available, regularly reporting sunshine observation sites, the sunniest four centres so far in 2015 (1 January to 30 April) are: New Plymouth (1029 hours), Whakatane (1009 hours), Waipara West (972 hours) and Paraparaumu (970 hours).

Record or near-record April sunshine hours were recorded at:

Location	Sunshine hours	Percentage of normal	Year records began	Comments
High records or near-records				
Kaitiāia	186	115	1985	3rd-highest
Low records or near-records				
Cromwell	140	81	1979	2nd-lowest
Takaka	144	78	1985	4th-lowest

April climate in the six main centres

It was a particularly warm month in Auckland (Mangere), where the mean temperature was well above average. Additionally, the city recorded its third-highest mean daily maximum temperature for April on record. Hamilton received twice its normal April rainfall, with 103 mm of its 182 mm monthly total falling on just one day (18 April). Of the six main centres in April 2015, Auckland was the warmest and sunniest, Dunedin was the coolest and driest, Hamilton was the wettest and Christchurch was the cloudiest.

April 2015 main centre climate statistics:

Temperature			
Location	Mean temp. (°C)	Departure from normal (°C)	Comments
Auckland ^a	17.5	+1.3	Well above average
Tauranga ^b	16.6	+1.0	Above average
Hamilton ^c	14.8	+0.6	Above average
Wellington ^d	14.2	+0.5	Near average
Christchurch ^e	13.1	+1.2	Above average
Dunedin ^f	11.7	0.0	Near average
Rainfall			
Location	Rainfall (mm)	% of normal	Comments
Auckland ^a	83	98%	Near normal
Tauranga ^b	116	96%	Near normal
Hamilton ^c	182	208%	Well above normal
Wellington ^d	147 ⁴	173%	Well above normal
Christchurch ^e	64	145%	Above normal
Dunedin ^f	44	86%	Near normal

⁴ Missing one day of data.

Sunshine			
Location	Sunshine (hours)	% of normal	Comments
Auckland ^a	167	103%	Near normal
Tauranga ^b	165	90%	Near normal
Hamilton ^c	133	81%	Below normal
Wellington ^d	150	93%	Near normal
Christchurch ^e	132	81%	Below normal
Dunedin ^f	144	115%	Above normal

^a Mangere ^b Tauranga Airport ^c Hamilton Airport ^d Kelburn ^e Christchurch Airport ^f Musselburgh ^g Ruakura

Highlights and extreme events

Rain and slips

A short burst of heavy rain in Wellington between 3.00 a.m. and 4.30 a.m. on 13 April caused minor surface flooding in some parts of the city.

On 18 April, torrential rain fell throughout Waikato, especially in Hamilton where there was considerable surface flooding on many streets. Hamilton Airport recorded 103 mm of rain between 4 a.m. and 5 p.m., 15 mm more than the average *monthly* rainfall for April there.

On 27 April, heavy rain fell in eastern parts of Canterbury during the afternoon and evening, and minor surface flooding was reported in parts of Christchurch.

A heavy downpour of rain in the early hours of 28 April caused considerable surface flooding in central parts of Wellington. Between 4 a.m. and 5 a.m., 18 mm of rain was recorded at Kelburn. Two car accidents were caused by lifted storm-water drain covers, and a car required towing after becoming stuck in floodwaters by the Basin Reserve.

The highest 1-day rainfall was 206 mm, recorded at North Egmont on 8 April. A very heavy rainfall event occurred in Milford Sound on 25 April, which would be the highest 1-day rainfall total for April 2015 in New Zealand. However, it has not been included in this summary due to conflicting data. Specifically, there was a considerable difference in rainfall totals from two gauges at Milford Sound on 25 April: these observations are being investigated.

Record or near-record April extreme 1-day rainfall totals were recorded at:

Location	Extreme 1-day rainfall (mm)	Date of extreme rainfall	Year records began	Comments
Palmerston North	91	8th	1928	Highest
Secretary Island	164	25th	1985	Highest
Motu	89	27th	1990	2nd-highest
Wanganui	63	8th	1937	2nd-highest
South West Cape	50	25th	1991	2nd-highest

Waione	27	8th	1991	4th-highest
Paraparaumu	64	7th	1951	4th-highest

Temperatures

On 13 April a series of cold fronts passed northwards over New Zealand. At 11.15 a.m. it was just 0.7°C in Queenstown and snowing, whereas in Gisborne it was 21.2°C, demonstrating the considerable difference in temperatures of the air masses preceding and following the cold front. Queenstown only reached a maximum temperature of 3.8°C. This is its lowest ever daily maximum temperature for April, in records which began in 1871. The previous lowest daily maximum temperature for April in Queenstown was 4.7°C, recorded on 26 April 1958.

The highest daily maximum temperature for the country was 30.4°C, observed at Cheviot on 7 April. This was followed by 29.6°C at Waipara West on 7 April, and 29.4°C at Rangiora observed on 4 April.

The lowest daily minimum temperature for the country was -4.8°C, observed at Hanmer Forest on 15 April. This was followed by -4.4°C at Snowdon and Pukaki Aerodrome, on 29 April and 16 April, respectively.

Record or near-record daily maximum air temperatures for April were recorded at:

Location	Extreme maximum (°C)	Date of extreme temperature	Year records began	Comments
High records or near-records				
Puysegur Point	23.2	6th	1978	Highest
Cheviot	30.4	7th	1982	Highest
Waipara West	29.6	7th	1973	Highest
Mokohinau	23.8	2nd	1994	2nd-highest
Masterton	27.4	7th	1992	2nd-highest
Hawera	23.5	7th	1977	2nd-highest
Lake Tekapo	24.9	7th	1925	2nd-highest
Waione	27.4	6th	1991	Equal 2nd-highest
Whatawhata	25.8	6th	1952	3rd-highest
Takaka	24.5	4th	1978	3rd-highest
Mt Cook Village	23.8	3rd	1929	3rd-highest
Wanaka	24.3	7th	1955	3rd-highest
Cromwell	26.8	7th	1949	3rd-highest
Auckland (Whenuapai)	25.8	10th	1945	4th-highest
Martinborough	25.4	3rd	1986	4th-highest
Kaikoura	27.1	7th	1963	4th-highest
Christchurch (Riccarton)	28.8	4th	1863	4th-highest
Tara Hills	25.3	7th	1949	4th-highest
Lauder	26.0	7th	1924	4th-highest
Auckland (Airport)	25.4	10th	1959	Equal 4th-highest
Mahia	24.6	7th	1990	Equal 4th-highest
Low records or near-records				
Puysegur Point	8.2	13th	1978	Lowest

Ranfurly	4.2	13th	1975	Lowest
Dunedin (Airport)	5.8	13th	1972	Lowest
Manapouri	4.5	13th	1973	Lowest
Queenstown	3.8	13th	1871	Lowest
Lumsden	4.2	13th	1982	Lowest
Alexandra	7.2	13th	1983	Lowest
South West Cape	7.3	12th	1991	Lowest
Ohakune	6.7	14th	1972	Equal lowest
Whangaparaoa	14.1	14th	1982	2nd-lowest
Greymouth	10.9	13th	1972	2nd-lowest
Balclutha	6.1	13th	1972	2nd-lowest
Westport	11.5	13th	1966	Equal 2nd-lowest
Gore	6.2	13th	1972	Equal 2nd-lowest
Tiwai Point	9.1	13th	1972	Equal 2nd-lowest
Waione	12.1	14th	1993	3rd-lowest
Reefton	9.5	13th	1972	3rd-lowest
Secretary Island	10.2	13th	1989	3rd-lowest
Lauder	4.9	13th	1924	3rd-lowest
Nugget Point	6.8	13th	1972	3rd-lowest
Campbell Island	4.8	13th	1991	3rd-lowest
Warkworth	14.8	14th	1966	4th-lowest
Mahia	11.6	14th	1990	4th-lowest
Cromwell	8.0	13th	1949	Equal 4th-lowest

Record or near-record daily minimum air temperatures for April were recorded at:

Location	Extreme minimum (°C)	Date of extreme temperature	Year records began	Comments
High records or near-records				
Masterton	18.4	8th	1992	Highest
Castlepoint	19.0	8th	1972	Highest
Hawera	17.6	8th	1977	Highest
Farewell Spit	18.1	8th	1972	Highest
Reefton	17.8	8th	1972	Highest
Nelson	18.3	8th	1943	Highest
Blenheim	17.6	8th	1972	Equal highest
Rotorua	17.3	9th	1972	2nd-highest
Stratford	16.9	8th	1972	2nd-highest
Westport	17.9	8th	1966	2nd-highest
Greymouth	17.6	8th	1972	2nd-highest
Motueka	17.3	8th	1972	2nd-highest
Dunedin (Airport)	15.1	26th	1972	2nd-highest
Lumsden	14.7	3rd	1982	2nd-highest
Nugget Point	14.0	3rd	1972	2nd-highest
Tauranga	19.5	9th	1941	Equal 2nd-highest
New Plymouth	18.6	9th	1944	Equal 2nd-highest

Secretary Island	15.5	26th	1988	Equal 2nd-highest
Port Taharoa	18.7	9th	1974	3rd-highest
Paraparaumu	17.9	7th	1972	3rd-highest
Takaka	17.2	8th	1978	3rd-highest
Appleby	18.0	8th	1941	3rd-highest
Gore	14.3	3rd	1972	3rd-highest
South West Cape	14.1	3rd	1991	3rd-highest
Hicks Bay	18.9	9th	1972	Equal 3rd-highest
Mokohinau	19.5	8th	1994	4th-highest
Taupo	16.4	9th	1950	4th-highest
Ohakune	15.3	9th	1972	4th-highest
Alexandra	13.0	26th	1983	4th-highest
Wellington (Airport)	17.7	8th	1972	Equal 4th-highest
Puysegur Point	15.4	3rd	1978	Equal 4th-highest
Low records or near-records				
Mokohinau	9.1	14th	1994	Lowest
Whangaparaoa	7.5	14th	1982	Lowest
Hicks Bay	3.3	15th	1969	2nd-lowest
Hanmer Forest	-4.8	15th	1906	2nd-lowest
Le Bons Bay	1.5	14th	1984	2nd-lowest
Nugget Point	1.2	13th	1970	2nd-lowest
Te Kuiti	-0.1	15th	1959	3rd-lowest
Mahia	5.1	15th	1990	3rd-lowest
Puysegur Point	3.7	14th	1978	3rd-lowest
Timaru	-2.5	16th	1885	3rd-lowest
Kaikoura	3.0	14th	1963	Equal 3rd-lowest
Wairoa	1.6	15th	1964	4th-lowest

Wind

On 13 April, motorists travelling on the Desert Road (SH 1) were warned to take extra caution due to strong winds.

On 14 April, motorists travelling on SH 6 from Harihari to Haast were warned to take extra caution due to strong winds.

On 27 April, strong winds occurred throughout the North Island. Auckland was particularly hard-hit, with boats torn from their moorings and pushed up against rocks along Tamaki Drive. Motorists were warned to take extra caution on the Desert Road (SH 1) and the Rimutaka Hill Road (SH 2) due to strong winds.

The highest wind gust was 170 km/hr, observed at South West Cape on 7 April.

Record or near-record April extreme wind gusts were recorded at:

Location	Extreme wind gust (km/hr)	Date of extreme gust	Year records began	Comments
Dannevirke	83	28th	1961	Highest
Tauranga	93	30th	1973	Equal highest

Motu	76	27th	1991	Equal highest
Palmerston North	80	29th	1991	2nd-highest
Manapouri	76	7th	1991	2nd-highest
South West Cape	170	7th	1991	2nd-highest
Mokohinau	109	14th	1994	Equal 2nd-highest
Pukekohe	69	27th	1986	Equal 2nd-highest
Turangi	98	29th	1973	3rd-highest
Hawera	83	27th	1986	3rd-highest
Wanganui	89	13th	1977	3rd-highest
Lauder	102	12th	1981	3rd-highest
Levin	83	28th	1971	Equal 3rd-highest
Secretary Island	119	6th	1994	4th-highest
North Shore, Auckland	67	13th	1994	Equal 4th-highest
Mahia	85	27th	1991	Equal 4th-highest
Mt Kaukau (Wellington)	126	13th	1969	Equal 4th-highest
Wanganui	87	27th	1977	Equal 4th-highest

Snow and ice

On 13 April and 14 April, an unseasonable fall of snow to very low elevations occurred in the lower South Island. The polar outbreak saw snow fall to approximately 100 metres above sea level in some areas. Flights due to arrive at Queenstown Airport were cancelled or diverted because of snow on the runway. In Dunedin, bus services on some of the hill routes were suspended on the morning of 14 April after overnight snow. Snow fell to low levels on Banks Peninsula near Christchurch, and forced the temporary closure of Dyers Pass Road. SH 6 from Kingston to Dipton and SH 94 between Te Anau and Milford Sound were closed due to snow. Motorists were warned to take extra caution on SH1 from Dunedin to Mosgiel, SH 1 from Dunedin to Waitati, SH 8 from Tarras to Omarama, SH 94 from Lumsden to Te Anau, SH 90 from Raes Junction to McNab, SH 8 from Milton to Raes Junction, SH 87 from Outram to Kyeburn, SH 85 from Green Valley to Kyeburn and SH 1 from Milton to McNab due to snow. In the North Island, snow fell to approximately 600 metres above sea level on the Central Plateau.

Cloud and fog

On 2 April, fog caused flight delays at Christchurch Airport.

On 10 April, low cloud caused two flights scheduled to land in Queenstown to be diverted to Invercargill.

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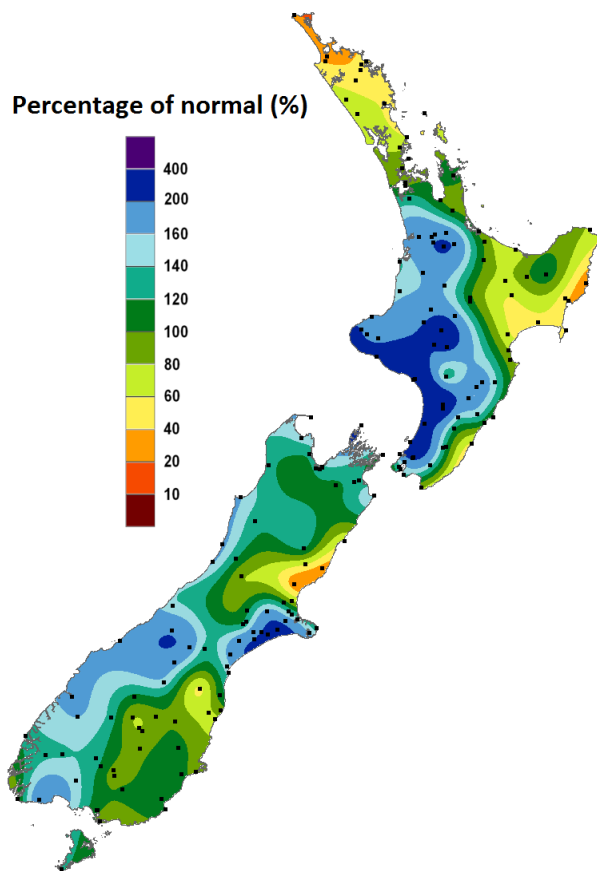
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April 2015 total rainfall, expressed as a percentage of the 1981-2010 normal (%).

Rainfall was above normal (120-149% of the April normal) or well above normal (> 149% of the April normal) in many areas of New Zealand, as indicated by the teal and blue shades. In contrast, it was a dry month for Northland, Gisborne, northern Hawke's Bay and eastern North Canterbury as indicated by the yellow and orange shades.

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