

Dry and sunny for eastern parts of the country.

Rainfall	Rainfall was well below normal (< 50%) or below normal (50-79%) for eastern parts of New Zealand from Gisborne all the way south to North Otago. Rainfall was well above normal (> 149%) or above normal (120-149%) for western parts of the South Island, the Southern Lakes, southwestern and western parts of the North Island, and eastern Bay of Plenty.
Soil Moisture	As of 1 June 2015, soil moisture levels were below normal for this time of year for East Cape, coastal Wairarapa, southern Marlborough and eastern parts of Canterbury. It was especially dry about North Canterbury where soils were considerably drier than normal for this time of year.
Sunshine	May sunshine was abundant for eastern parts of New Zealand including the eastern Bay of Plenty, Gisborne, Hawke's Bay, Wairarapa, Marlborough, Canterbury and Otago where May sunshine was typically above normal (110-125%) or well above normal (> 125%).
Temperature	May temperatures were above average (+0.51°C to +1.20°C) for parts of Southland, Otago, Canterbury, Wairarapa, Whanganui and Southern Taranaki. May temperatures were below average in isolated parts of central Hawke's Bay and western Waikato (-0.51°C to -1.20°C).

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Overview

May 2015 was a mixed bag across New Zealand as a whole, with bouts of heavy rainfall, severe frosts and snow occurring in addition to record or near-record dry and sunny conditions in eastern parts of Canterbury. Overall, the month was characterised by air pressures which were well below normal in the Tasman Sea, with below normal pressures extending over New Zealand. This circulation pattern was accompanied by a westerly flow anomaly over New Zealand. This flow anomaly was clearly reflected in the distribution of rainfall anomalies observed across New Zealand. Specifically, rainfall was below normal (50-79% of the May normal) or well below normal (< 50% of the May normal) for many eastern areas of New Zealand including North Otago, Canterbury, Marlborough, Wairarapa and Gisborne. It was especially dry in eastern parts of Canterbury, which was largely a result of the Southern Alps consistently drawing out most moisture from rain-bearing air masses as they progressed

eastward. In contrast, rainfall was abundant for many western parts of New Zealand. Rainfall was either above normal (120-149% of May normal) or well above normal (> 149% of the May normal) for western parts of the South Island, the Southern Lakes, southwestern and western parts of the North Island, and eastern Bay of Plenty. Kapiti Coast was particularly hard hit by rain during the month, with parts of the region receiving in excess of 300% of normal May rainfall. A considerable proportion of Kapiti Coast's rainfall fell during a single event, which resulted in significant flooding and record 1-day rainfall totals for May (see *Highlights and extreme events* for further information). Rainfall was typically near normal (80-119% of the May normal) for remaining areas of the country. The lack of rainfall for eastern parts of New Zealand has exacerbated concerns regarding soil moisture levels in parts of New Zealand, but particularly in North Canterbury. As of 1 June 2015, soils were notably drier than normal for East Cape, coastal Wairarapa, southern Marlborough and eastern parts of Canterbury. Elsewhere, soil moisture levels were nearer to normal for this time of year, with the exception of northwestern Southland, where soils were wetter than normal.

It was a sunny month for eastern parts of New Zealand, from eastern Bay of Plenty southwards to South Otago where May sunshine was above normal (110-125% of the May normal) or well above normal (> 125% of the May normal). Inland parts of the South Island, including the Southern Lakes, Central Otago and the Mackenzie Country also observed above normal or well above normal May sunshine hours. Remaining parts of the country typically received near normal sunshine (90-109% of the May normal).

Mean temperatures were much higher than average for much of the month across New Zealand. However, a polar outbreak in late-May brought snowfall and severe frosts to many parts of the country, and lowered mean temperatures throughout New Zealand for the month overall. Many parts of Southland, Otago, Canterbury, Wairarapa, Whanganui and Southern Taranaki recorded above average temperatures (0.51-1.20°C above the May average). Temperatures were typically near average (between -0.50°C to +0.50°C of the May average) for the remainder of the country. The exception was isolated parts of central Hawke's Bay and western Waikato where temperatures were below average (-0.51°C to -1.20°C below the May average). The nation-wide average temperature in May 2015 was 11.2°C (0.4°C above the 1981-2010 May average from NIWA's seven station temperature series which begins in 1909)¹.

Further Highlights:

- The highest temperature was 27.0°C, observed at Waiau on 6 May.
- The lowest temperature was -9.0°C, observed at Hanmer Forest on 28 May.
- The highest 1-day rainfall was 190 mm, recorded at North Egmont on 6 May.
- The highest wind gust was 178 km/hr, observed at Cape Turnagain on 13 May.
- Of the six main centres in May 2015, Auckland was the warmest, Christchurch was the coolest and driest, Wellington was the wettest, Tauranga was the sunniest and Dunedin was the cloudiest.
- Of the available, regularly reporting sunshine observation sites, the sunniest four centres so far in 2015 (1 January to 31 May) are: Whakatane (1200 hours), Blenheim (1182 hours), Waipara West (1173 hours) and Appleby (1173 hours).

¹ Interim value

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Rainfall: Extremely dry in parts of Canterbury

May 2015 was a record or near-record dry month in seven New Zealand locations, with some parts of eastern mid-Canterbury receiving as little as 5% of normal May rainfall. In contrast, it was a particularly wet month in Paraparaumu, which observed its wettest May on record. In addition, Milford Sound recorded 896 mm of rainfall during May 2015; a remarkable contrast to the 2 mm of rainfall which was recorded in Timaru over the same period of time.

Record² or near-record May rainfall totals were recorded at:

Location	Rainfall total (mm)	Percentage of normal	Year records began	Comments
High records or near-records				
Paraparaumu	252	303	1945	Highest
Motu	287	150	1990	2nd-highest
Hawera	184	188	1977	3rd-highest
Low records or near-records				
Ashburton	7	11	1909	Lowest
Lincoln	6	11	1881	Lowest
Orari Estate	4	7	1897	Lowest
Timaru	2	5	1881	Lowest
Mahia	15	14	1990	2nd-lowest
Hanmer Forest	27	29	1905	3rd-lowest
Winchmore	9	14	1909	4th-lowest

Temperature: Above average for eastern and southern parts of the South Island

Relatively few locations observed record or near-record high mean temperatures for May, however this doesn't reveal the periods of record or near-record warmth and bitter cold that occurred from time to time (see *Highlights and extreme events for further details*). A small number of locations in eastern Canterbury observed record-or near record mean maximum air temperatures for May, which may be primarily attributed to the foehn effect associated with the westerly flow anomaly observed across New Zealand during the month. The nation-wide average temperature in May 2015 was 11.2°C

² 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.

(0.4°C above the 1981-2010 May average from NIWA's seven station temperature series which begins in 1909).

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

Location	Mean air temp. (°C)	Departure from normal (°C)	Year records began	Comments
High records or near-records				
Cheviot	10.5	1.4	1982	2nd-highest
Low records or near-records				
Secretary Island	10.5	-0.5	1985	4th-lowest

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

Location	Mean maximum air temp. (°C)	Departure from normal (°C)	Year records began	Comments
High records or near-records				
Cheviot	17.6	2.4	1982	Highest
Christchurch (Riccarton)	17.7	3.1	1863	2nd-highest
Waiau School	16.9	2.3	1974	3rd-highest
Orari Estate	15.7	2.1	1972	3rd-highest
Kaikoura	16.2	2.0	1963	4th-highest
Lincoln	16.3	2.0	1881	4th-highest
Timaru	15.6	1.8	1885	4th-highest
Campbell Island	8.9	0.6	1991	4th-highest
Low records or near-records				
Secretary Island	12.7	-0.9	1985	3rd-lowest
Te Kuiti	15.1	-1.5	1959	4th-lowest

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

Location	Mean minimum air temp. (°C)	Departure from normal (°C)	Year records began	Comments
High records or near-records				
Ngawi	11.4	1.0	1972	3rd-highest
Low records or near-records				
Hicks Bay	9.5	-1.3	1969	4th-lowest

Sunshine: Very sunny for eastern parts of the country

May sunshine was plentiful for eastern parts of both the North Island and South Island, as well as inland parts of the South Island. Blenheim and Cheviot observed their sunniest May on record, with five other South Island locations observing near-record sunshine hours for the month. Of the available, regularly reporting sunshine observation sites, the sunniest four centres so far in 2015 (1 January to 31 May) are: Whakatane (1200 hours), Blenheim (1182 hours), Waipara West (1173 hours) and Appleby (1173 hours). It was a relatively cloudy month in New Plymouth compared to other New

Zealand centres. This has resulted in the city dropping from sunniest centre for the year to date at the end of April 2015, to fifth-sunniest centre for the year to date at the end of May 2015.

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

Location	Sunshine hours	Percentage of normal	Year records began	Comments
High records or near-records				
Blenheim	214	125	1947	Highest
Cheviot	187	155	1983	Highest
Ashburton	183	140	1930	2nd-highest
Lake Tekapo	185	128	1928	2nd-highest
Queenstown	124	141	1930	3rd-highest
Waipawa	183	136	1945	4th-highest
Balclutha	124	129	1964	4th-highest
Low records or near-records				
None observed				

May climate in the six main centres

May temperatures were largely near average in the main centres for this time of year. The exception was Christchurch, where the mean temperature was above average. It was also very dry in Christchurch, with the city receiving just 29% of normal May rainfall. In contrast, rainfall was above normal in Hamilton and Wellington, with the latter suffering multiple flooding events during the month (see *Highlights and extreme events* section for further details). Of the six main centres in May 2015, Auckland was the warmest, Christchurch was the coolest and driest, Wellington was the wettest, Tauranga was the sunniest and Dunedin was the cloudiest.

May 2015 main centre climate statistics:

Temperature			
Location	Mean temp. (°C)	Departure from normal (°C)	Comments
Auckland ^a	14.2	+0.2	Near average
Tauranga ^b	13.0	-0.3	Near average
Hamilton ^c	11.5	-0.1	Near average
Wellington ^d	12.2	+0.5	Near average
Christchurch ^e	9.6	+0.6	Above average
Dunedin ^f	9.8	+0.5	Near average
Rainfall			
Location	Rainfall (mm)	% of normal	Comments
Auckland ^a	125	116%	Near normal
Tauranga ^b	95	86%	Near normal

Hamilton ^c	153	143%	Above normal
Wellington ^d	155	139%	Above normal
Christchurch ^e	17	29%	Well below normal
Dunedin ^f	57	87%	Near normal

Sunshine

Location	Sunshine (hours)	% of normal	Comments
Auckland ^a	132	92%	Near normal
Tauranga ^b	177	107%	Near normal
Hamilton ^g	142	108%	Near normal
Wellington ^d	129	97%	Near normal
Christchurch ^e	173	124%	Above normal
Dunedin ^f	117 ³	108%	Near 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

On 6 May, torrential rain and flooding accompanied by strong northwest winds hit the West Coast of the South Island. State Highway (SH) 6 at Haast Pass was closed due to a slip. Caution was advised between Ross and Haast on SH 6 due to surface flooding and slips. SH 94 from Te Anau to Milford Sound was closed for a time due to flooding.

On 12 May, Wellington was affected by heavy rain, resulting in significant surface flooding in many parts of the city as drains couldn't cope with the sudden downpour. The rain also forced the cancellation of Victoria University's graduation parade.

On 14 May, torrential rain caused flooding in Kapiti, Porirua, and Lower Hutt areas. A slip blocked the road and rail link between the Kapiti Coast and Wellington, closing SH 1 between Paekakariki and Pukerua Bay. SH 2 was closed at Petone, and Paekakariki Hill Road was also closed. All commuter train services across the Wellington region were cancelled and Wellington Railway Station was closed. Thousands of Kapiti and Hutt Valley residents were trapped in Wellington city and forced to find alternative accommodation for the night. At least 20 homes were evacuated in Raumati Beach, and a number of schools were closed throughout the region. The Hutt River burst its banks and flooded High Street in Lower Hutt, threatening cars and stores. The Waikanae River also burst its banks, and floodwaters affected Tawa and Porirua. A man swept under a bridge in floodwaters in Paraparaumu was helped to safety by bystanders, and police rescued a cyclist who became trapped in floodwaters in the Waikanae River with a digger. An elderly man's body was found near his car which was underwater in Petone. On 15 May, some roads around the greater Wellington region remained closed

³ Missing one day of data.

due to flooding, including Paekakariki Hill Road and Grays Road in Plimmerton. Surface flooding occurred in and around Levin, where some houses were flooded and SH 57 was closed for a time.

On 24 May, torrential rain caused power outages in Auckland. Power was lost to almost 3000 homes in West Auckland, northwest of Auckland, and Takapuna.

The highest 1-day rainfall was 190 mm, recorded at North Egmont on 6 May.

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

Location	Extreme 1-day rainfall (mm)	Date of extreme rainfall	Year records began	Comments
Paraparaumu	116	13th	1951	Highest
Waione	34	15th	1991	2nd-highest
Hawera	63	14th	1977	2nd-highest
Whakatane	88	23rd	1952	4th-highest
Palmerston North	57	14th	1928	4th-highest

Temperatures

On 6 May northwest winds prevailed over the South Island. The associated foehn effect resulted in high temperatures for this time of year throughout Canterbury. Daily maximum temperatures reached the mid-to-high-twenties in many locations. Pre-dawn temperatures were very high in some parts too: between 4 a.m. and 5 a.m. Christchurch (Riccarton) and Winchmore (near Ashburton) recorded a maximum temperature of 20.9°C and 21.1°C, respectively.

On 28 and 29 May, low morning temperatures were experienced throughout the country, with severe frosts in some parts. Clear skies at night enabled considerable radiative cooling to occur, and a number of New Zealand locations observed record or near-record low temperatures for May.

The highest daily maximum temperature for the country was 27.0°C, observed at Waiau School on 6 May. This was followed by 26.8°C at Rangiora on 6 May, and 26.7°C at Christchurch (Riccarton) on 6 May.

The lowest daily minimum temperature for the country was -9.0°C, observed at Hanmer Forest on 28 May. This was followed by -8.6°C at Pukaki Aerodrome on 29 May, and -8.1°C at Ranfurly on 29 May.

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

Location	Extreme maximum (°C)	Date of extreme temperature	Year records began	Comments
High records or near-records				
Appleby	25.0	7th	1932	Highest
Hanmer Forest	24.7	6th	1906	Highest
Cheviot	26.5	6th	1982	Highest
Waiau School	27.0	6th	1974	Equal highest
Auckland (Airport)	24.4	7th	1959	2nd-highest

Dannevirke	23.8	7th	1951	2nd-highest
Waione	25.1	7th	1991	2nd-highest
Castlepoint	22.3	7th	1972	2nd-highest
Puysegur Point	19.8	5th	1978	2nd-highest
Le Bons Bay	22.0	7th	1984	2nd-highest
Orari Estate	25.5	6th	1972	2nd-highest
Dunedin (Musselburgh)	24.6	6th	1947	2nd-highest
Takapau Plains	23.5	7th	1962	Equal 2nd-highest
Stratford	20.2	8th	1960	Equal 2nd-highest
Nugget Point	20.4	6th	1970	Equal 2nd-highest
Auckland (Whenuapai)	23.5	7th	1945	3rd-highest
Whatawhata	22.5	7th	1952	3rd-highest
Waipawa	23.4	7th	1945	3rd-highest
Kaikoura	25.5	7th	1963	3rd-highest
Christchurch (Riccarton)	26.7	6th	1863	3rd-highest
Mokohinau	20.5	6th	1994	Equal 3rd-highest
Waipara West	25.9	6th	1973	4th-highest
Christchurch (Airport)	26.6	6th	1863	4th-highest
Campbell Island	13.2	6th	1991	4th-highest
Blenheim	23.6	7th	1932	Equal 4th-highest
Low records or near-records				
Motueka	7.8	30th	1972	Lowest
Takaka	10.3	30th	1978	Equal 3rd-lowest
Turangi	8.3	25th	1968	4th-lowest
Waione	9.6	25th	1993	4th-lowest
Mahia	9.7	25th	1990	4th-lowest
Secretary Island	8.4	25th	1989	Equal 4th-lowest

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

Location	Extreme minimum (°C)	Date of extreme temperature	Year records began	Comments
High records or near-records				
Te Puke	17.2	8th	1973	Highest
Whatawhata	17.9	8th	1952	Highest
New Plymouth	17.4	7th	1944	Highest
Masterton	17.2	7th	1992	Highest
Wairoa	18.2	8th	1972	Highest
Stratford	15.2	8th	1972	Highest
Hawera	16.1	7th	1977	Highest
Farewell Spit	16.3	7th	1972	Highest
Reefton	16.0	7th	1972	Highest
Puysegur Point	16.4	6th	1978	Highest
Blenheim	18.3	7th	1972	Highest
Kaikoura	16.0	7th	1972	Highest
Cheviot	17.5	7th	1982	Highest

Waipara West	19.7	7th	1973	Highest
Le Bons Bay	15.4	7th	1984	Highest
Campbell Island	10.4	6th	1991	Highest
Paraparaumu	16.5	7th	1972	Equal highest
Arthurs Pass	11.0	7th	1973	Equal highest
Culverden	16.8	7th	1930	Equal highest
Takapau Plains	15.4	8th	1972	2nd-highest
Dannevirke	16.2	7th	1951	2nd-highest
Waione	16.7	7th	1993	2nd-highest
Martinborough	16.5	7th	1986	2nd-highest
Palmerston North	16.3	7th	1940	2nd-highest
Wallaceville (Upper Hutt)	16.1	7th	1972	2nd-highest
Wanganui	17.8	7th	1972	2nd-highest
Greymouth	15.3	7th	1972	2nd-highest
Secretary Island	14.5	6th	1988	2nd-highest
Nelson	16.6	7th	1943	2nd-highest
Ngawi	17.8	7th	1972	Equal 2nd-highest
Mahia	16.5	8th	1990	Equal 2nd-highest
Wellington (Airport)	16.9	7th	1972	Equal 2nd-highest
Takaka	15.4	7th	1978	3rd-highest
Hanmer Forest	15.0	7th	1972	3rd-highest
Waiau School	15.3	7th	1974	3rd-highest
Ranfurlly	11.0	7th	1975	3rd-highest
Invercargill	12.5	6th	1905	3rd-highest
Hamilton	16.8	8th	1946	Equal 3rd-highest
Castlepoint	17.0	8th	1972	Equal 3rd-highest
Gisborne	17.8	8th	1940	Equal 3rd-highest
Westport	15.0	7th	1966	Equal 3rd-highest
Whitianga	17.4	8th	1971	4th-highest
Whakatane	17.1	8th	1975	4th-highest
Rotorua	15.7	8th	1972	4th-highest
Motu	13.8	8th	1990	4th-highest
Kaikohe	16.6	7th	1973	Equal 4th-highest
Port Taharoa	16.9	7th	1974	Equal 4th-highest
Ohakune	13.0	8th	1972	Equal 4th-highest
Hokitika	14.9	7th	1866	Equal 4th-highest
Low records or near-records				
Turangi	-5.4	29th	1968	Lowest
Waione	-6.1	29th	1991	Lowest
Mahia	3.7	26th	1990	Lowest
Wallaceville (Upper Hutt)	-4.9	26th	1939	Lowest
Appleby	-7.0	29th	1932	Lowest
Blenheim	-5.1	26th	1932	Lowest
Cheviot	-6.3	29th	1982	Lowest
Christchurch (Airport)	-6.4	29th	1863	Lowest
Te Kuiti	-3.1	29th	1959	Equal lowest
Le Bons Bay	0.2	25th	1984	Equal lowest
Hanmer Forest	-9.0	28th	1906	2nd-lowest

Taumarunui	-4.3	28th	1947	3rd-lowest
Winchmore	-6.7	29th	1928	Equal 3rd-lowest
Ranfurlly	-8.1	29th	1975	Equal 3rd-lowest
Kaitaia	4.5	28th	1985	4th-lowest
Motu	-5.3	29th	1990	4th-lowest
Masterton	-3.3	26th	1992	4th-lowest
Takapau Plains	-2.7	30th	1962	4th-lowest
Castlepoint	2.9	25th	1972	4th-lowest
Wairoa	-0.3	30th	1964	4th-lowest
Waiau School	-6.0	28th	1974	4th-lowest
Ashburton	-6.5	29th	1928	4th-lowest
Orari Estate	-4.3	29th	1972	4th-lowest
Dunedin (Airport)	-7.2	29th	1962	4th-lowest
Nugget Point	-0.2	25th	1970	Equal 4th-lowest

Wind

On 6 May, extra caution was required by motorists travelling on the Desert Road (SH 1), SH 2 at Rimutaka Hill, and SH 73 near Arthurs Pass due to strong winds. Overnight on 6 May, over 1000 homes in Wellington's northern suburbs lost power due to the wind. On 7 and 8 May, wind warnings remained in place for motorists travelling on SH 73 near Arthurs Pass, SH 7 at Lewis Pass, and SH 2 at Rimutaka Hill.

In the early morning of 12 May, a mini tornado caused damage in Urenui, north of New Plymouth. The roof of a petrol station was damaged as well as fences, trees, and guttering.

On 14 May, a tornado ripped through Mt Maunganui, damaging homes and buildings, pulling down fences and sending trampolines flying. About 20 homes had roofs lifted and 11 had significant damage. Part of the roof and grandstand of Baypark Stadium was severely damaged. Earlier, a reported tornado ripped the roof off a house and damaged at least three more properties at Coopers Beach in the Far North.

On 15 May, a Cessna plane flipped on the runway at Tauranga airport due to high winds. Strong winds lasting about five minutes battered Tauranga Girls' College, damaging shade sails and table umbrellas, as well as scattering outdoor furniture.

On 20 and 21 May, strong wind warnings were present for SH 2 at Rimutaka Hill, with caution advised for motorists travelling there.

On 24 and 25 May, strong southwest winds affected much of the country, especially in the lower South Island. Numerous ferry services on Cook Strait were cancelled or delayed due to strong winds and associated large swells. *Interislander* sailings remained affected by the rough conditions until 27 May.

The highest wind gust was 178 km/hr, observed at Cape Turnagain on 13 May.

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

Location	Extreme wind gust (km/hr)	Date of extreme gust	Year records began	Comments
Whakatane	100	12th	1974	2nd-highest

Hawera	89	25th	1986	2nd-highest
Pukekohe	69	15th	1986	Equal 2nd-highest
North Shore, Auckland	69	15th	1994	3rd-highest
Lyttelton Harbour	96	25th	1980	3rd-highest
Oamaru	87	24th	1984	3rd-highest
Rotorua	91	15th	1972	Equal 3rd-highest
Hamilton	76	25th	1991	Equal 3rd-highest
Kaikoura	128	22nd	1972	4th-highest
Ashburton	98	6th	1970	4th-highest
Taupo	82	25th	1982	Equal 4th-highest
Motu	82	12th	1991	Equal 4th-highest

Snow and ice

On 12 May, light snow was observed in the area around Naseby, Central Otago.

On 14 May, a road snowfall warning was in place for SH 94 from Te Anau to Milford Sound, with snow falling near the Homer Tunnel. All vehicles were required to carry chains and no towing was allowed.

On 15 May, SH 94 from Te Anau to Milford Sound was closed due to snow.

On 21 and 22 May, a road snowfall warning was in place for SH 94 from Te Anau to Milford Sound, and vehicles were required to carry chains.

On 24 and 25 May, a cold southerly blast hit the country and caused snowfall throughout most of Otago, Southland, as well as the mountain passes and relatively high-elevation settlements in Canterbury. Up to 30 cm of snow was reported in Arrowtown, with 10-25 cm reported in Queenstown, Cromwell and Wanaka. Snow briefly fell to sea level in Dunedin but didn't settle at that elevation, however up to 10 cm was reported in the hill suburbs. Snow fell down to 300 m above sea level in Hawkes Bay, and heavier falls were reported on the Napier-Taupo Road. Roads closed by snow included: SH 75 from Little River to Barrys Bay, SH 58 from Alexandra to Ranfurly, SH 6 from Cromwell to Frankton, SH 1 from Pine Hill to Waitati, SH 93 from Clinton to Matura, SH 85 from Kyeburn to Palmerston, and SH 87 from Kyeburn to Outram. Many roads required chains to be worn and towing was prohibited. Caution was advised at SH 2 on Rimutaka Hill due to snow and ice. All schools in Wanaka were closed, and many schools around Dunedin started later in the day. Flights were delayed in Queenstown as crews cleared the runway of snow.

On 26 and 27 May, many roads in Otago and Southland were still affected by snow and ice, and caution was advised to motorists travelling in these areas.

Lightning and hail

On 12 May, thousands of lightning strikes were recorded over the country (mainly in the west of both Islands). The thunderstorms were generated by atmospheric instability associated with fronts within a disturbed northwesterly flow.

On 25 May, a lightning strike caused power to be knocked out to some homes in Dunedin.

Cloud and fog

On 4 May, hundreds of people were stranded due to fog cancelling and delaying flights into and out of Christchurch airport.

On 11 May, heavy fog blanketed the Waikato with motorists urged to take extra caution on the roads.

For further information, please contact:

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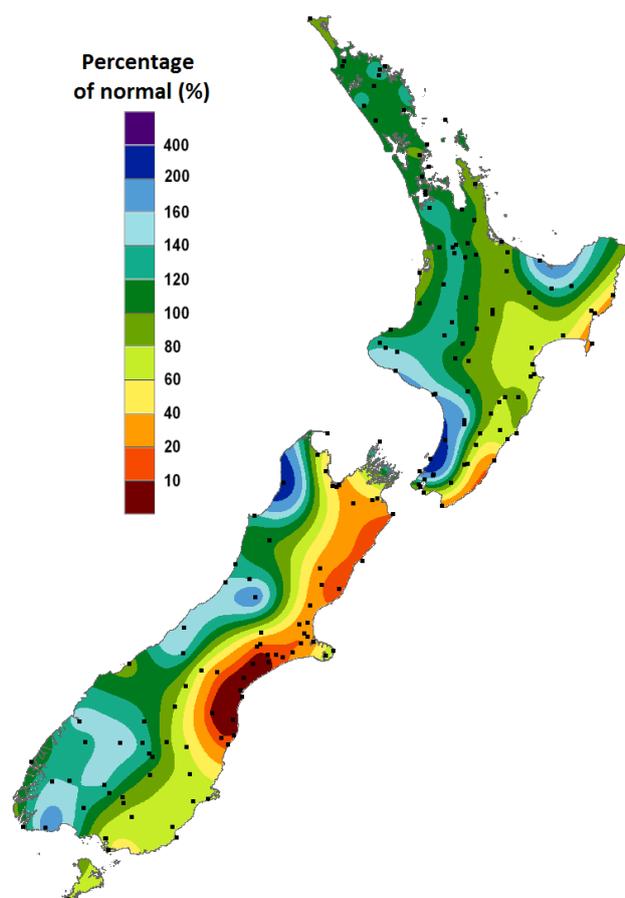
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May 2015 total rainfall, expressed as a percentage of the 1981-2010 normal (%).

Rainfall was above normal (120-149% of the May normal) or well above normal (> 149% of the May normal) in western parts of the North and South Islands and eastern Bay of Plenty, as indicated by the teal and blue shades. In contrast, it was a very dry month for eastern parts of Canterbury, Marlborough, Wairarapa and Gisborne, as indicated by the yellow, orange and red shades. Here, rainfall was typically well below normal (< 50% of the May normal).

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