

**National Climate Summary – February 2006**

**Rainfall: High rainfall in eastern Bay of Plenty; extremely low in parts of Northland and Auckland**  
**Soil moisture: Widespread deficits in the north of the North Island, and east of the South Island**  
**Temperature: Near average in most regions; below average in Westland**  
**Sunshine: Extremely sunny in the far north, normal or above normal elsewhere**

A contrast of rainfall occurred in the North Island in February, with relatively high totals in eastern Bay of Plenty, and extremely low totals in parts of Northland and Auckland. The high rainfall in eastern and inland Bay of Plenty was due to two days of very wet weather over the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> of February. Rainfall was average or below average over much of the South Island. Significant soil moisture deficits redeveloped in Northland, Auckland, and Gisborne, and persisted in Canterbury, Central Otago, and Manawatu. February was one of Kaitiaki's sunniest on record. Sunshine hours were normal or above normal in most other regions. Mean temperatures were average or above average in most regions, but below average in Westland. The national average temperature of 17.2 °C was 0.1 °C below the 1971-2000 normal. During February, mean sea level pressures were above average in the Tasman Sea and to the southeast of the South Island. In contrast, below average pressures occurred northeast of the North Island and well southwest of the South Island. This pattern produced more frequent southeasterlies over the northern half of the North Island. There were no significant wind flow anomalies elsewhere.

**Other Highlights:**

The highest temperatures recorded during February 2006 were 32 °C recorded at Alexandra on the 10<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>, and at Christchurch Airport on the 21<sup>st</sup>. The lowest temperature for the month was -1.9 °C at The Chateau, Mt. Ruapehu on the 24<sup>th</sup>.

High rainfall, totalling 182 mm and 125 mm, was recorded at Whakatane Airport and Rotorua Airport respectively, in the 48 hours to 9am on the 11<sup>th</sup>.

A violent thunderstorm occurred near Ashburton on the 5<sup>th</sup>, ruining millions of dollars worth of ground crops.

The highest wind gust for the month was 137 km/h from the northwest, occurring at Castlepoint on the 28<sup>th</sup> of February.

Of the five main centres Auckland was the driest and Wellington the wettest. Auckland was much drier than normal. Hamilton was also drier than normal. Wellington was warmer, sunnier, and wetter than normal, Christchurch had near normal rainfall, temperature, and sunshine. Dunedin was drier and sunnier than normal.

**Rainfall:** Rainfall was almost 300 percent of normal in parts of eastern Bay of Plenty. Totals were also above normal in inland Bay of Plenty, Taupo, Kapiti, Wellington, central Wairarapa, and isolated parts of Nelson, the Marlborough coast, north Canterbury, and Southland. In contrast, February rainfall totals were 25 percent or less of normal throughout much of Northland, Auckland, and coastal Wairarapa, and 50 percent or less of normal in Central and East Otago. It was also drier than normal in Taranaki, south Westland, and Fiordland.

**Temperature:** Mean temperatures were above average in parts of Auckland, Bay of Plenty, Hawke's Bay, Manawatu, Horowhenua, Canterbury, and Otago. They were below average in Westland, and near average elsewhere.

**Sunshine:** Sunshine hours were at least 120 percent of normal in northern areas of Northland. It was also sunnier than normal in western Bay of Plenty, Taranaki, King Country, Wellington, Westland, Nelson, and Otago.

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**HIGH RAINFALL IN EASTERN BAY OF PLENTY; EXTREMELY LOW IN PARTS OF NORTHLAND**

## AND AUCKLAND

Rainfall was almost 300 percent of normal in parts of eastern Bay of Plenty, and at least 125 percent of normal in inland Bay of Plenty, Taupo, Kapiti, Wellington, central Wairarapa, and isolated parts of Nelson, the Marlborough coast, north Canterbury, and Southland. The high rainfall in eastern and inland Bay of Plenty was due to two days of very wet weather over the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> of February). In contrast, February rainfall totals were 25 percent or less of normal throughout much of Northland, Auckland, and coastal Wairarapa, 50 percent or less of normal in central and eastern Otago, and 75 percent or less of normal in Taranaki, south Westland, and Fiordland. Rainfall was near normal elsewhere.

### High February rainfall was recorded at:

Location	February Rainfall (mm)	Percentage of normal	Year records began	Comments
Whakatane Airport	220	282	1975	3 <sup>rd</sup> highest
Rotorua Airport	177	174	1964	Well above normal

### Near or record low February rainfall was recorded at:

Location	February Rainfall (mm)	Percentage of normal	Year records began	Comments
Cape Reinga	7	9	1920	Lowest since 1946 (8 mm)
Kaitaia Obs.	13	12	1986	Lowest
Kaikohe	15	12	1973	Lowest
Dargaville	6	8	1905	Lowest since 1950 (6 mm)
Whangarei Airport	15	13	1937	Lowest since 1973 (6 mm)
Mokohinau Is.	5	10	1935	2 <sup>nd</sup> lowest
Whangaparaoa	13	23	1990	2 <sup>nd</sup> lowest
Auckland, Henderson	10 <sup>a</sup>	16	1986	Lowest
Auckland, Mangere	5	7	1959	Lowest
Auckland Airport	7	10	1963	Lowest
Pukekohe	6	8	1970	Lowest
Clyde	15	31	1984	3 <sup>rd</sup> lowest

<sup>a</sup> to 9am 28 Feb.

## AVERAGE OR ABOVE AVERAGE TEMPERATURES IN MOST REGIONS; BELOW AVERAGE IN WESTLAND

Mean temperatures were 0.5 to 0.9 °C above average in parts of Auckland, Bay of Plenty, Hawke's Bay, Manawatu, Horowhenua, Canterbury, and Otago. They were 0.5 to 0.9 °C below average in Westland, and near average elsewhere. Offshore, Raoul Island recorded its second warmest February on record.

### Near record high February mean air temperatures were recorded at:

Location	Mean temperature	Departure from average (°C)	Records Began	Comments
Raoul Island	24.2	+1.5	1941	2 <sup>nd</sup> highest

## EXTREMELY SUNNY IN THE FAR NORTH, AVERAGE OR ABOVE AVERAGE SUNSHINE IN OTHER REGIONS

Sunshine hours and solar radiation were at least 120 percent of normal in northern areas of Northland, and at least 110 percent of normal in western Bay of Plenty, Taranaki, King Country, Wellington, Westland, Nelson, and Otago. They were near normal elsewhere.

#### Record high February sunshine hours were recorded at:

Location	February sunshine (hours)	Percentage of normal	Year Records began	Comments
Kaitaia	259	134	1951	Highest

#### FEBRUARY'S CLIMATE IN THE FIVE MAIN CENTRES

Of the five main centres Auckland was the driest, and Wellington the wettest. Rainfall was below average in Auckland, Hamilton, and Dunedin, above average in Wellington, and near average in Christchurch. Temperatures were above average in Wellington, and near average in the other main centres. Sunshine hours were above average in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin, but below average in Hamilton.

Location	Feb. Mean Temp. (°C)	Dep. from normal (°C)		Feb. rainfall (mm)	% of normal		Feb. Sunshine (hours)	% of Normal	
Auckland	19.8	-0.1	Near average	5 <sup>a</sup>	7	Well below average	212	106	Above average
Hamilton	18.5	-0.1	Near average	36	51	Below average	179	90	Below average
Wellington	17.5	+0.4	Above average	89	144	Above average	247	118	Above average
Christchurch	16.6 <sup>b</sup>	-0.2	Average	40 <sup>b</sup>	96	Near average	217 <sup>b</sup>	111	Above average
Dunedin	15.2	+0.2	Average	31	50	Below average	177	115	Above average

<sup>a</sup> Mangere    <sup>b</sup> Christchurch Airport

#### HIGHLIGHTS AND EXTREME EVENTS

##### Temperature

The highest temperatures recorded during February 2006 were 32 °C\* recorded at Alexandra on the 10<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>, and 31.9 °C at Christchurch Airport on the 21<sup>st</sup>. The maximum temperature of 31.2 °C recorded at Whenuapai on the 20<sup>th</sup> was the highest there for any month in records that commenced in 1946. The lowest temperature for the month was -1.9 °C at The Chateau, Mt. Ruapehu on the 24<sup>th</sup>.

\* measured to the nearest whole number

##### High rainfall

High rainfall, totalling 182 mm and 125 mm, was recorded at Whakatane Airport and Rotorua Airport respectively, in the 48 hours to 9am on the 11<sup>th</sup>. SH2 at Matata was closed due to slips and surface flooding. Major flooding occurred on farmland around Awakeri and Taneatua.

##### High winds

The highest wind gust for the month was 137 km/h from the northwest, occurring at Castlepoint on the 28<sup>th</sup> of February. Tornado-like winds blew through Oakura Beach Holiday Park, Taranaki at about 4am on the 8<sup>th</sup>, toppling a caravan

### **Damaging hailstorm**

A violent thunderstorm occurred over Waterton and Pendarves (near Ashburton) between 2am and 3am on the 5<sup>th</sup>, ruining millions of dollars worth of kale, raddish, squash, and onion crops.

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