

## New Zealand's 5th-warmest December on record

<b>Temperature</b>	Temperatures were above average (0.51°C to 1.20°C above average) or well above average (>1.20°C above average) throughout the country.
<b>Rainfall</b>	Rainfall was above normal (120-149% of normal) or well above normal (>149% of normal) in eastern and southern parts of the North Island, inland Marlborough, northern, eastern and central parts of Canterbury, parts of the West Coast, and central and eastern parts of Southland. Below normal (50-79% of normal) or well below normal (<50% of normal) rainfall was observed in northern, central and western parts of the North Island, Nelson, Tasman, southern Canterbury, and North Otago. Near normal rainfall (80-119% of normal) was observed elsewhere.
<b>Soil Moisture</b>	At the end of December, soil moisture levels were higher than normal for eastern parts of the North Island from Gisborne to Wairarapa, Christchurch, Banks Peninsula, and southern parts of Southland. Below normal soil moisture was observed in northern, central and western parts of the North Island. Elsewhere, soil moisture levels were generally near normal.

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### Overview

December 2024 was characterised by lower than normal mean sea level pressure (MSLP) over and surrounding Aotearoa New Zealand. This produced more easterly airflows than normal, particularly over the South Island, with more southwesterly airflows than normal over the upper North Island. It was a warm month overall, with above average (0.51°C to 1.20°C above average) or well above average (>1.20°C above average) temperatures throughout the country. The nationwide average temperature in December 2024 was 17.4°C. This was 1.5°C above the 1991-2020 December average from NIWA's seven station temperature series which begins in 1909, making it the 5<sup>th</sup>-warmest December on record.

Rainfall was above normal (120-149% of normal) or well above normal (>149% of normal) in eastern and southern parts of the North Island from Gisborne to Wellington, inland Marlborough, northern, eastern and central parts of Canterbury, parts of the West Coast from Greymouth to Hokitika, and central and eastern parts of Southland. Below normal (50-79% of normal) or well below normal (<50% of normal) rainfall was observed in northern, central and western parts of the North Island, Nelson, Tasman, southern Canterbury, and North Otago. Near normal rainfall (80-119% of normal) was observed elsewhere.

## Further Highlights:

- The highest December temperature was 34.8°C, observed at Kawerau on 29 December.
- The lowest December temperature was -0.2°C, observed at Waipounamu on 17 December, Waipara on 18 December, and Cass on 19 December.
- The highest 1-day rainfall was 140 mm, recorded at Milford Sound on 10 December.
- The highest wind gust was 196 km/h, observed at Cape Turnagain on 5 December.
- Of the six main centres in December 2024, Auckland was the driest, Dunedin was the coolest and least sunny, and Tauranga was the warmest, wettest and sunniest.
- Of the available, regularly reporting sunshine observation sites, the sunniest four regions in 2024 were Marlborough (2769 hours), wider Nelson (2760 hours), Bay of Plenty (2734 hours), and Tasman (2665 hours).

## For further information, please contact:

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## Temperature: A warm month throughout New Zealand

Forty-seven locations observed record or near-record high mean temperatures, while no location observed record or near-record low mean temperatures. New Zealand's warmest location relative to average was Kawerau, where the mean temperature of 21.6°C was 3.1°C above average.

### Record<sup>1</sup> or near-record mean air temperatures for December were recorded at:

Location	Mean air temp. (°C)	Departure from normal (°C)	Year records began	Comments
High records or near-records				
Kawerau	21.6	3.1	1954	Highest
Hastings	20.1	2.1	1965	Highest
Waipounamu	15.5	1.5	1980	Highest
Kaitiāia	20.3	2.6	1948	2nd-highest
Whitiānga	19.7	1.6	1962	2nd-highest
Tauranga	20.0	1.7	1913	2nd-highest
Te Puke	19.4	2.0	1973	2nd-highest
Whakatāne	20.2	2.1	1974	2nd-highest
Taupō	18.3	2.6	1949	2nd-highest
Hicks Bay	19.1	1.8	1969	2nd-highest
Māhia	18.5	1.7	1990	2nd-highest
Tākaka	18.2	2.1	1978	2nd-highest
Blenheim	19.2	2.4	1932	2nd-highest
Akaroa	18.3	2.1	1978	2nd-highest

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<sup>1</sup> The rankings (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.

Ranfurly	15.7	2.0	1897	2nd-highest
Chatham Island	16.7	2.3	1878	2nd-highest
Leigh	20.5	3.3	1966	3rd-highest
Whangaparāoa	19.8	1.6	1982	3rd-highest
Rotorua	18.1	1.9	1964	3rd-highest
Motu	17.0	2.6	1990	3rd-highest
Masterton	18.9	2.0	1906	3rd-highest
Dannevirke	17.8	2.1	1951	3rd-highest
Ngawi	19.1	1.7	1972	3rd-highest
Gisborne	20.5	2.0	1905	3rd-highest
Ōkārīto	16.1	1.7	1982	3rd-highest
Haast	15.7	2.3	1949	3rd-highest
Puysegur Point	14.7	1.9	1978	3rd-highest
Motueka	18.6	2.0	1956	3rd-highest
Appleby	17.7	2.0	1932	3rd-highest
Cheviot	17.2	1.8	1982	3rd-highest
Five Rivers	15.4	2.1	1982	3rd-highest
Clyde	18.6	2.4	1978	3rd-highest
Kerikeri	19.3	1.3	1945	4th-highest
Kaikohe	18.7	1.3	1973	4th-highest
Whangārei	19.8	1.0	1967	4th-highest
Mokohinau Island	19.2	0.8	1994	4th-highest
Mt Ruapehu Chateau	12.5	1.6	2000	4th-highest
Castlepoint	18.2	2.1	1972	4th-highest
Napier	20.5	2.4	1870	4th-highest
Waipawa	18.2	1.9	1945	4th-highest
Hanmer Forest	17.0	2.6	1906	4th-highest
Kaikōura	17.2	1.8	1963	4th-highest
Windsor	15.6	1.4	2000	4th-highest
Middlemarch	16.0	1.7	2000	4th-highest
Dunedin (Musselburgh)	15.5	1.5	1947	4th-highest
Oban (Stewart Island)	14.3	1.6	1975	4th-highest
Tautuku	14.4	1.3	1976	4th-highest
<b>Low records or near-records</b>				
None observed				

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

Location	Mean maximum air temp. (°C)	Departure from normal (°C)	Year records began	Comments
<b>High records or near-records</b>				
Tauranga	24.8	2.2	1913	Highest
Whakatāne	24.8	2.1	1974	Highest
Kawerau	28.0	4.0	1954	Highest
Hastings	26.0	2.7	1965	Highest
Appleby	24.1	3.0	1932	Highest
Waipounamu	21.3	1.8	1980	Highest
Kaikohe	23.1	1.7	1973	2nd-highest
Whangaparāoa	24.1	2.3	1982	2nd-highest

Te Puke	24.5	2.3	1973	2nd-highest
Hicks Bay	22.2	1.8	1969	2nd-highest
Tākaka	24.9	3.4	1978	2nd-highest
Clyde	26.0	2.6	1978	2nd-highest
Purerua	22.9	1.5	1983	3rd-highest
Whangārei	25.2	1.9	1967	3rd-highest
Mokohinau Island	21.9	1.2	1994	3rd-highest
Leigh	25.3	3.7	1966	3rd-highest
Whitianga	25.0	1.6	1962	3rd-highest
Matamata	24.5	2.2	1999	3rd-highest
Rotorua	23.3	2.5	1964	3rd-highest
Mt Ruapehu Chateau	18.0	2.1	2000	3rd-highest
Gisborne	25.8	2.0	1905	3rd-highest
Waipawa	24.6	2.3	1945	3rd-highest
Puysegur Point	17.4	2.0	1978	3rd-highest
Motueka	24.3	2.2	1956	3rd-highest
Hanmer Forest	24.7	3.0	1906	3rd-highest
Cheviot	23.5	2.0	1982	3rd-highest
Akaroa	23.4	2.3	1978	3rd-highest
Auckland (Whenuapai)	23.6	1.7	1945	4th-highest
Taupō	24.1	3.2	1949	4th-highest
Motu	21.7	2.4	1990	4th-highest
Whatawhata	23.4	2.0	1952	4th-highest
Te Kuiti	24.6	2.2	1959	4th-highest
Blenheim	25.0	2.5	1932	4th-highest
Windsor	21.2	1.7	2000	4th-highest
Ranfurly	22.7	2.2	1897	4th-highest
Middlemarch	22.5	1.6	2000	4th-highest
Chatham Island	19.7	1.9	1878	4th-highest
<b>Low records or near-records</b>				
None observed				

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

Location	Mean minimum air temp. (°C)	Departure from normal (°C)	Year records began	Comments
<b>High records or near-records</b>				
Ngawi	15.7	2.0	1972	Highest
Waipounamu	9.7	1.3	1980	Highest
Whakatāne	15.6	2.1	1974	2nd-highest
Kawerau	15.2	2.3	1954	2nd-highest
Gisborne	15.2	2.1	1905	2nd-highest
Māhia	15.4	1.9	1990	2nd-highest
Five Rivers	10.1	2.3	1982	2nd-highest
Roxburgh	11.3	1.7	1950	2nd-highest
Oban (Stewart Island)	10.7	2.0	1975	2nd-highest
Chatham Island	13.8	2.8	1878	2nd-highest
Kaitaia	16.5	2.7	1948	3rd-highest
Castlepoint	15.0	2.1	1972	3rd-highest

Napier	16.0	2.8	1870	3rd-highest
Hāwera	13.4	1.7	1977	3rd-highest
Ōkārito	12.4	1.9	1982	3rd-highest
Haast	12.1	2.4	1949	3rd-highest
Puysegur Point	11.9	1.7	1978	3rd-highest
Blenheim	13.7	1.9	1932	3rd-highest
Akaroa	13.2	1.9	1978	3rd-highest
Dunedin (Musselburgh)	12.1	1.7	1947	3rd-highest
Tautuku	10.3	2.0	1976	3rd-highest
Hicks Bay	16.0	1.8	1969	Equal 3rd-highest
Motu	12.4	2.9	1990	4th-highest
Paraparaumu	14.3	1.8	1953	4th-highest
Wellington (Kelburn)	13.9	1.5	1928	4th-highest
Wellington (Airport)	14.9	1.4	1962	4th-highest
Motueka	12.9	1.9	1956	4th-highest
Nelson	14.6	1.9	1862	4th-highest
Kaikōura	13.3	1.6	1963	4th-highest
Ranfurlly	8.7	1.8	1897	4th-highest
Middlemarch	9.5	1.8	2000	4th-highest
Lumsden	9.4	1.7	1982	4th-highest
Invercargill	10.7	2.0	1905	Equal 4th-highest
<b>Low records or near-records</b>				
None observed				

## Rainfall: Very wet for some eastern parts of the country

Rainfall totals varied widely across the country in December. Heavy rain late in the second half of the month brought above normal totals to eastern parts of the North Island. Māhia observed its wettest December on record, while Gisborne experienced its 2nd-wettest December since records began there in 1905. In the South Island, Christchurch Airport and Le Bons Bay (Banks Peninsula) each received more than double their normal December rainfall. In contrast, Dargaville received just 23 mm of rain. This was 30% of the town's normal December rainfall, making it New Zealand's driest location relative to normal.

### Record or near-record December rainfall totals were recorded at:

Location	Rainfall total (mm)	Percentage of normal	Year records began	Comments
<b>High records or near-records</b>				
Māhia	270	395	1990	Highest
Gisborne	230	358	1905	2nd-highest
Wairoa	260	337	1964	2nd-highest
Le Bons Bay	114	239	1984	2nd-highest
South West Cape	161	154	1991	4th-highest
<b>Low records or near-records</b>				
Windsor	25	45	2000	4th-lowest

## December climate in the six main centres

December temperatures were above average or well above average in all main centres. It was especially warm in Tauranga, with the city observing its second-warmest December on record. It was a wet month for Christchurch, where rainfall was well above normal. Conversely, rainfall was below normal in Hamilton. Rainfall was near normal in the remaining four main centres. Of the six main centres in December 2024, Auckland was the driest, Dunedin was the coolest and least sunny, and Tauranga was the warmest, wettest and sunniest.

### December 2024 main centre climate statistics:

Temperature			
Location	Mean temp. (°C)	Departure from normal (°C)	Comments
Auckland <sup>a</sup>	19.6	+1.2	Above average
Tauranga <sup>b</sup>	20.0	+1.7	Well above average (2 <sup>nd</sup> -highest on record)
Hamilton <sup>c</sup>	18.4	+1.3	Well above average
Wellington <sup>d</sup>	16.6	+1.0	Above average
Christchurch <sup>e</sup>	17.1	+1.4	Well above average
Dunedin <sup>f</sup>	15.5	+1.5	Well above average
Rainfall			
Location	Rainfall (mm)	% of normal	Comments
Auckland <sup>a</sup>	64	90	Near normal
Tauranga <sup>b</sup>	121	119	Near normal
Hamilton <sup>c</sup>	69	69	Below normal
Wellington <sup>d</sup>	108	119	Near normal
Christchurch <sup>e</sup>	105	219	Well above normal
Dunedin <sup>f</sup>	74	105	Near normal
Sunshine			
Location	Sunshine (hours)		
Auckland <sup>a</sup>	275		
Tauranga <sup>b</sup>	280		
Hamilton <sup>g</sup>	250		
Wellington <sup>d</sup>	196		
Christchurch <sup>e</sup>	220 <sup>2</sup>		
Dunedin <sup>f</sup>	193		

<sup>a</sup> Māngere <sup>b</sup> Tauranga Airport <sup>c</sup> Hamilton Airport <sup>d</sup> Kelburn <sup>e</sup> Christchurch Airport <sup>f</sup> Musselburgh <sup>g</sup> Ruakura

<sup>2</sup> Missing one day of data.

## Highlights and extreme events

### Temperatures

The highest December temperature was 34.8°C, observed at Kawerau on 29 December. The lowest December temperature was -0.2°C, observed at Waipounamu on 17 December, Waipara on 18 December, and Cass on 19 December.

From 3-5 December, high temperatures were recorded throughout the country due to a warm northerly airflow. Eleven locations observed record or near-record high daily maximum temperatures for December, while 14 locations observed record or near-record high daily minimum temperatures.

From 28-29 December, warm northwesterly winds delivered another spell of exceptional warmth across many parts of New Zealand. On 29 December, the warmest temperatures were experienced across inland and eastern parts of the North Island. Kawerau reached 34.8°C, which is the town's highest December temperature since records began in 1954.

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

Location	Extreme maximum (°C)	Date of extreme temperature	Year records began	Comments
<b>High records or near-records</b>				
Kawerau	34.8	29th	1954	Highest
Mt Ruapehu Chateau	25.1	29th	2000	Highest
Whakatu	33.8	5th	1965	Highest
Tākaka	31.0	4th	1978	Highest
Haast	27.3	26th	1949	Highest
Appleby	30.2	4th	1932	Highest
Windsor	31.8	3rd	2000	Highest
Whangaparāoa	27.6	15th	1982	2nd-highest
Taupō	30.5	29th	1949	2nd-highest
Ōkārīto	24.1	26th	1982	2nd-highest
Motueka	31.5	4th	1956	2nd-highest
Ranfurlly	31.6	28th	1897	2nd-highest
Clyde	33.8	28th	1978	2nd-highest
Leigh	29.0	15th	1966	3rd-highest
Te Puke	30.2	29th	1973	3rd-highest
Motu	27.9	4th	1990	3rd-highest
Napier	33.8	5th	1868	3rd-highest
Hastings	32.7	5th	1965	3rd-highest
Māhia	29.4	5th	1990	3rd-highest
Oamaru	31.6	3rd	1967	3rd-highest
Nugget Point	27.6	3rd	1970	3rd-highest
Purerua	26.8	19th	1983	Equal 3rd-highest
Matamata	28.7	19th	1999	Equal 3rd-highest
Whakatāne	29.9	19th	1975	4th-highest
Waipawa	30.6	14th	1945	Equal 4th-highest
<b>Low records or near-records</b>				
None observed				

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

Location	Extreme minimum (°C)	Date of extreme temperature	Year records began	Comments
<b>High records or near-records</b>				
Cape Reinga	18.8	15th	1971	Highest
Blenheim	20.9	5th	1947	Highest
Hanmer Forest	21.5	5th	1972	Highest
Medbury	20.5	5th	1927	Highest
Waiau	22.9	5th	1974	Highest
Culverden	22.5	5th	1930	2nd-highest
Pukaki Aerodrome	16.4	5th	1972	2nd-highest
Kaitaia	20.4	16th	1948	3rd-highest
Nelson	19.5	5th	1862	3rd-highest
Five Rivers	17.9	4th	1982	3rd-highest
Waipounamu	15.1	5th	1980	Equal 3rd-highest
Clyde	18.2	5th	1978	Equal 3rd-highest
Motueka	18.5	5th	1972	4th-highest
Cheviot	19.3	5th	1982	4th-highest
Wānaka	17.8	4th	1972	4th-highest
Lumsden	17.6	4th	1982	4th-highest
<b>Low records or near-records</b>				
Mokohinau Island	6.0	22nd	1994	Lowest
Waipounamu	-0.2	17th	1980	Lowest
Waiau	0.0	20th	1974	2nd-lowest
Balclutha	0.5	17th	1964	3rd-lowest

**Rain and slips**

The highest 1-day rainfall was 140 mm, recorded at Milford Sound on 10 December.

On 16 December, a period of heavy rain caused surface flooding north of Greymouth, with SH6 closed from Barrytown to Punakaiki. In Wellington, heavy rain caused surface flooding on SH59 between Acheron Rd and Mana View Rd, closing the two outermost lanes.

On 26 December, heavy rainfall in Gisborne caused surface flooding among some residential streets. The Gisborne District Council opened emergency sewer valves at pump stations into the Taruheru and Tūrangānui rivers to prevent sewage overflowing into properties.

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

Location	Extreme 1-day rainfall (mm)	Date of extreme rainfall	Year records began	Comments
Māhia	86	26th	1990	Highest
Tiwai Point	48	21st	1970	Highest
Campbell Island	44	4th	1991	Highest
Masterton	57	16th	1926	2nd-highest
Akaroa	72	30th	1977	2nd-highest
Tautuku	54	21st	1976	2nd-highest
Gisborne	74	26th	1937	3rd-highest



Wairoa	87	16th	1967	3rd-highest
Gore	55	21st	1907	3rd-highest
Le Bons Bay	37	30th	1984	4th-highest
Cromwell	40	29th	1949	4th-highest
Invercargill	47	21st	1939	4th-highest

## Wind

The highest wind gust was 196 km/h, observed at Cape Turnagain on 5 December.

On 5 December, strong northwest winds fanned a large fire near the Craigieburn Range in Canterbury. The fire began near SH73 at Bridge Hill, and burned approximately 980 hectares. Three school groups were evacuated from camps in the area. Ten helicopters, three fixed-wing aircraft, and up to 97 personnel were deployed to battle the blaze. SH73 was closed between Castle Hill and Arthurs Pass.

On 8 December, strong northwest winds were recorded over eastern and inland parts of Canterbury. A fire in West Melton covered approximately 134 hectares, with scrub, pine, pasture and a farm shed burned in the blaze. Old West Coast Road was closed temporarily, while 50 homes in West Melton were evacuated. Farther north, Wellington was buffeted by strong winds that brought down several trees, with 27 domestic flight cancellations reported. A boat broke free from its moorings in Wellington Harbour, with debris scattered after crashing into rocks at the southern end of Evans Bay.

On 26 December, high winds brought down trees on SH2 near the Wharerata Rd lookout (near Gisborne), with Police urging motorists to avoid the area.

On 30 December, a burst of strong wind at Omarama's Top 10 Holiday Park lifted a tent with four occupants approximately two metres into the air. The occupants fell out and were later treated for minor injuries. Meanwhile, the tent reached approximately 100-150 metres high, and ended up deposited in a neighbouring paddock.

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

Location	Extreme wind gust (km/h)	Date of extreme gust	Year records began	Comments
Gisborne	104	19th	1972	Highest
Māhia	107	27th	1991	Highest
Rangiora	95	8th	1999	Highest
Middlemarch	111	8th	2000	Highest
Auckland (Western Springs)	80	27th	1994	2nd-highest
Mt Ruapehu Chateau	89	18th	2000	2nd-highest
Upper Hutt (Trentham)	84	9th	1999	2nd-highest
Waiouru	115	8th	1970	2nd-highest
Dargaville	82	27th	1997	3rd-highest
Winchmore	95	8th	1970	3rd-highest
Ranfurly	84	8th	2000	3rd-highest
Puysegur Point	148	8th	1986	Equal 3rd-highest
Te Puke	58	18th	1987	4th-highest
Brothers Island	126	16th	1997	4th-highest

### Lightning, hail, and tornadoes

On 21 December, approximately 1,700 lightning strikes were recorded across the North Island. A lightning strike caused a power outage in Hawke's Bay and Gisborne. Farther south, the Wellington Phoenix women's football match in Porirua was suspended due to lightning strikes in the area.

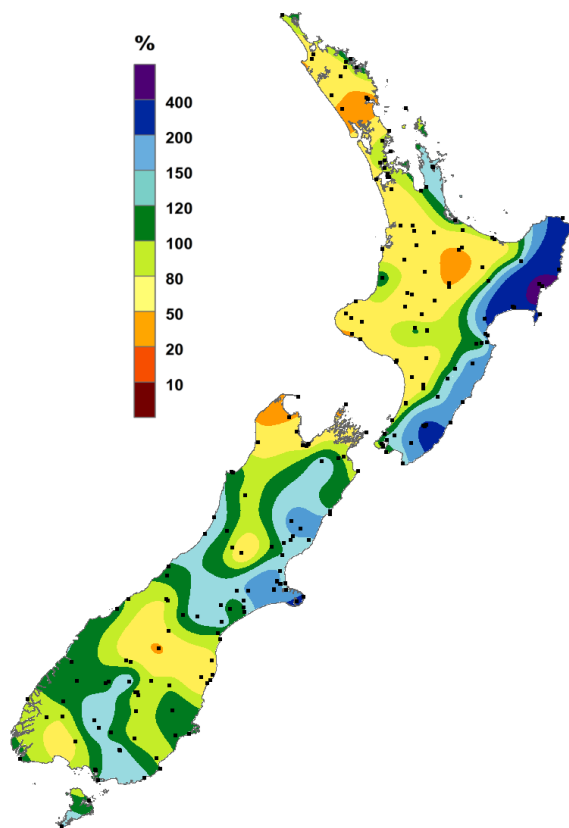
On 22 December, a funnel cloud was spotted near Whitford, Auckland.

On 30 December, severe thunderstorms occurred over northern parts of the South Island. Lightning and hail reports were widespread, with particularly heavy hail observed near Rainbow Ski Area, and in Mārahau. A lightning strike set trees on fire on Kaiuma Bay Rd (Marlborough, near Havelock).

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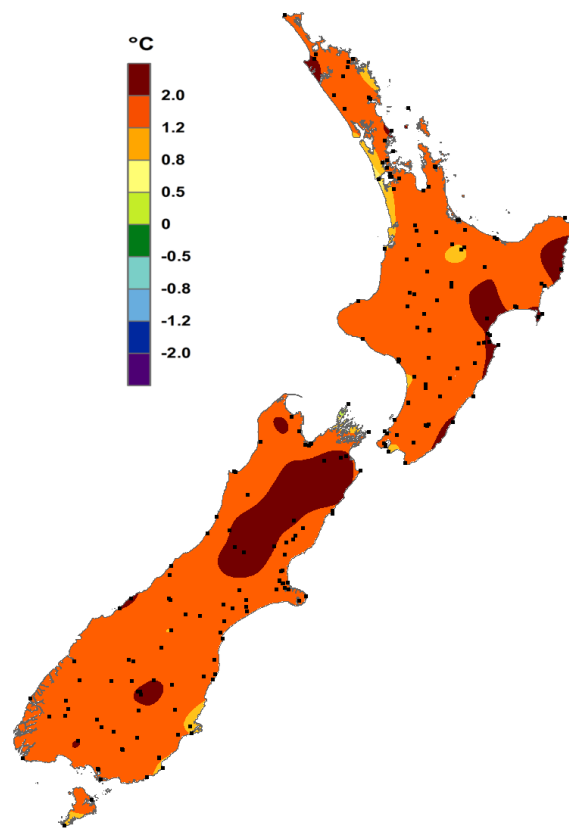
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#### December rainfall

Expressed as a percentage of the 1991-2020 normal.



#### December temperature

Expressed as a departure from the 1991-2020 average in degrees Celsius.

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