

December 2025

Issued: 8 January 2026

An unsettled close to 2025

Temperature	Temperatures were well above average ($>1.20^{\circ}\text{C}$ above average) for Northland, Auckland, much of the Coromandel, the east coast of the North Island, and western Tasman. Above average temperatures ($0.51\text{--}1.20^{\circ}\text{C}$ above average) were recorded elsewhere in the North Island, as well as in parts of Canterbury and Marlborough. Below average temperatures ($0.51\text{--}1.20^{\circ}\text{C}$ below average) occurred in much of Fiordland and interior Otago, with near normal temperatures ($\pm 0.50^{\circ}\text{C}$) elsewhere.
Rainfall	Rainfall was well above normal ($>149\%$ of normal) or above normal ($120\text{--}149\%$ of normal) for coastal Otago, Fiordland, most of the Canterbury low country, Marlborough south of Blenheim, South Taranaki, the Wellington region, most of Hawke's Bay, and Gisborne. Rainfall was below normal ($50\text{--}79\%$ of normal) or well below normal ($<50\%$ of normal) for Nelson-Tasman, parts of southern Southland, much of the West Coast, the Bay of Plenty, eastern Waikato, and Northland. Elsewhere, near normal rainfall ($80\text{--}119\%$ of normal) fell in December.
Soil Moisture	At the end of December, soil moisture levels were lower than normal in upper Northland, lower Manawātū, along the Kāpiti Coast, about Nelson, in Southland about Invercargill, about North Otago and South Canterbury, and parts of the high country of Canterbury. Soil moisture levels were higher than normal along the west coast of the North Island from Auckland to Taranaki, about Taupō, along the east coast of the North Island, western Tasman, the upper West Coast, most of Fiordland, Balclutha, and portions of coastal Canterbury and Marlborough. Near normal soil moisture levels were typical for the remainder of the country.

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Overview

December was an unsettled month, with alternating hot and cool spells, and a wet end to the month for many areas. Overall, lower than average air pressure dominated over Aotearoa New Zealand in December. Additionally, after a record setting November, December was much closer to average temperature-wise, although with an overall warm lean. La Niña conditions continued through the month of December and the impacts of a sudden stratospheric warming event from early spring continued to wane. Sea surface temperatures (SSTs) surrounding New Zealand were mostly above average, however the SST anomalies eased in the latter half of the month in response to additional clouds and increased windiness across New Zealand's waters. At the end of December, Marine Heatwave (MHW) conditions¹ were present about the west coast of

¹ Defined as five or more consecutive days with SSTs above the 90th percentile for the time of year.

Northland, the Auckland, Waikato, and Bay of Plenty areas in the North Island and near the coasts of Southland, Stewart Island, and most of the east coast of the South Island.

The nationwide average temperature in December 2025 was 16.4°C. This is 0.6°C above the 1991-2020 December average, making it New Zealand's 27th-warmest December on record. The month featured brief unsettled periods with cooler weather, with a long stretch of warm and dry weather for the early to middle of the month across the North Island. Meanwhile, the South Island remained somewhat cooler and unsettled overall. The last half of the month featured alternating cooler and warmer air masses, followed by a slow moving northerly low pressure system that brought warm moisture laden air to the North Island and the upper South Island in the final days of December.

While December featured lower than average air pressures overall, the month was filled with alternating periods of high pressure and low pressure, which led to an uneven distribution of rainfall across the country. Rainfall was well above normal (>149% of normal) for coastal Otago, Fiordland, most of the Canterbury low country south of Christchurch, the east of the Wellington region, and the east of Hawke's Bay and Gisborne, with above normal (120-149% of normal) rainfall in Marlborough south of Blenheim, Canterbury about Kaikōura, South Taranaki, and the rest of the Wellington region. The rainfall for the east of the North Island was notable since these areas were very dry until the final days of December. Rainfall was below normal (50-79% of normal) for Nelson-Tasman, parts of southern Southland, much of the West Coast, the Bay of Plenty, eastern Waikato, and most of Northland, with the Far North recording well below normal (<50% of normal) rainfall. Elsewhere, near normal rainfall (80-119% of normal) fell in December.

Further Highlights:

- The highest temperature was 35.6°C, observed at Kawerau on 7 December. Notably, this was Kawerau's highest temperature since records began there in 1954.
- The lowest temperature was -0.1°C, observed at Pūkaki Airport 22 December.
- The highest 1-day rainfall was 184 mm, recorded at Milford Sound on 7 December.
- The highest wind gust was 170 km/h, observed at Cape Turnagain on 1 December.
- Of the six main centres in December 2025, Tauranga was the warmest and sunniest, Wellington was the wettest, Dunedin was the coolest and least sunny, and Auckland was the driest.
- The sunniest four regions in 2025 were Taranaki (2743 hours), wider Nelson (2672 hours), Marlborough (2644 hours), and Bay of Plenty (2633 hours).

For further information, please contact:

Chester Lampkin

Meteorologist

Tel. 09 375 2087

Temperature: A warm December overall

No location observed record breaking high or low mean air temperatures. However, ten locations observed near-record high mean temperatures. The country's coolest location relative to normal was Clyde, where the mean temperature of 15.0°C was 1.2°C below normal.

Record² 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				
Pukekohe	19.3	2.0	1969	2nd-highest
Dargaville	19.6	1.7	1943	3rd-highest
Purerua	19.3	1.5	1983	3rd-highest
Whangaparāoa	19.9	1.7	1982	3rd-highest
Cape Reinga	18.8	1.4	1951	4th-highest
Kaitaia	19.8	1.8	1948	4th-highest
Leigh	20.5	3.3	1966	4th-highest
Kawerau	20.4	1.9	1954	4th-highest
Auckland Airport	19.9	1.4	1959	4th-highest
Gisborne	19.9	1.4	1905	4th-highest
Low records or near-records				
Waipounamu	13.4	-0.6	1980	3rd-lowest

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
High records or near-records				
Motu	22.4	3.1	1990	Highest
Takapau Plains	22.8	2.6	1962	Highest
Whakatu	25.6	3.6	1982	Highest
Whakatāne	24.7	2.0	1974	2nd-highest
Kawerau	27.8	3.8	1954	2nd-highest
Napier	25.3	2.6	1870	2nd-highest
Hastings	26.2	2.9	1930	2nd-highest
Hicks Bay	21.9	1.5	1969	3rd-highest
Gisborne	25.9	2.1	1905	3rd-highest
Māhia	21.9	1.8	1990	3rd-highest
Tākaka	24.1	2.6	1978	3rd-highest
Cape Reinga	21.8	1.7	1951	4th-highest
Kaikohe	22.8	1.4	1973	4th-highest
Purerua	23.0	1.6	1983	4th-highest
Mokohinau Island	21.6	0.9	1994	4th-highest
Whangaparāoa	23.6	1.8	1982	4th-highest
Te Puke	23.6	1.4	1973	4th-highest
Rotorua	22.9	2.1	1964	4th-highest
Te Kuiti	24.6	2.2	1959	4th-highest
Tūrangi	22.9	1.9	1968	4th-highest
Wairoa	25.6	2.2	1964	4th-highest

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.

Chatham Island	20.0	2.2	1878	4th-highest
Low records or near-records				
Middlemarch	19.5	-1.4	2000	4th-lowest

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
High records or near-records				
Leigh	16.6	3.7	1966	3rd-highest
Pukekohe	14.6	1.5	1969	3rd-highest
Mokohinau Island	17.2	1.2	1994	4th-highest
Low records or near-records				
Waipounamu	7.5	-0.9	1980	2nd-lowest
Pukaki Airport	6.2	-0.9	1972	4th-lowest

Rainfall: Record rain in Gisborne

December 2025 recorded one significant rain event, which led to record or near-record breaking rain in the east of the North Island. An area of low pressure, tropical in origin, moved across the North Island from 29- 31 December, which led to a very wet end to the month for Gisborne and northern Hawke's Bay. These areas were trending dry before low pressure produced a record December daily rainfall total of 106 mm in Gisborne, and a near-record 134 mm at Hicks Bay on 29 December. Both Castlepoint and Māhia recorded their 4th-wettest December on record, with rainfall mostly attributed to the one event.

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

Location	Rainfall total (mm)	Percentage of normal	Year records began	Comments
High records or near-records				
Castlepoint	179	309	1902	4th-highest
Māhia	134	196	1990	4th-highest
Low records or near-records				
None observed				

December climate in the six main centres

Temperatures for the six main centres were above average or on the warm side of average, a change from the record-breaking November 2025. Rainfall was below normal for Auckland, Tauranga, and Hamilton, near normal for Dunedin, with Wellington and Christchurch registering above normal rain in December. Of the six main centres, Tauranga was the warmest and sunniest, Wellington was the wettest, Dunedin was the coolest and least sunny, and Auckland was the driest.

December 2025 main centre climate statistics:

Temperature			
Location	Mean temp. (°C)	Departure from normal (°C)	Comments
Auckland ^a	19.3	+0.9	Above average
Tauranga ^b	19.4	+1.1	Above average
Hamilton ^c	18.1	+1.0	Above average
Wellington ^d	16.0	+0.4	Near average
Christchurch ^e	16.3	+0.6	Above average
Dunedin ^f	14.5	+0.5	Near average
Rainfall			
Location	Rainfall (mm)	% of normal	Comments
Auckland ^a	54	75	Below normal
Tauranga ^b	72	69	Below normal
Hamilton ^c	77	77	Below normal
Wellington ^d	112	123	Above normal
Christchurch ^e	70	147	Above normal
Dunedin ^f	80	113	Near normal
Sunshine			
Location	Sunshine (hours)		
Auckland ^a	263		
Tauranga ^b	269		
Hamilton ^g	193 ³		
Wellington ^d	236		
Christchurch ^e	241		
Dunedin ^f	181		

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

³ Missing 12 days of data.

Highlights and extreme events

Temperatures

The highest temperature was 35.6°C, observed at Kawerau on 7 December. Notably, this was Kawerau's highest temperature since records began there in 1954. The lowest temperature was -0.1°C Pūkaki Airport on 22 December.

Nine locations recorded their hottest December days on record, eight of those records were broken between 6-10 December during the hottest stretch of the month in the North Island. Six other locations recorded near-record highs in that same stretch.

On 7 December, Tauranga observed a new record high December temperature of 31.2°C, as did Whitianga with 32.2°C. The latter is notable for being a 2°C higher than its previous December record, and for being higher than its current January record temperature.

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
High records or near-records				
Whangaparāoa	29.0	7th	1982	Highest
Whitianga	32.2	7th	1962	Highest
Matamata	30.1	8th	1999	Highest
Tauranga	31.2	7th	1913	Highest
Whakatāne	32.5	6th	1975	Highest
Kawerau	35.6	7th	1954	Highest
Motu	29.5	9th	1990	Highest
Mt Ruapehu Chateau	25.7	9th	2000	Highest
Secretary Island	28.0	30th	1985	Highest
Kaikohe	28.3	7th	1973	2nd-highest
Te Puke	31.9	7th	1973	2nd-highest
Pukekohe	29.1	9th	1969	2nd-highest
Te Kuiti	30.1	10th	1959	2nd-highest
Hastings	33.4	23rd	1930	2nd-highest
Whakatu	32.8	23rd	1982	2nd-highest
Waiouru	26.6	9th	1962	2nd-highest
Westport	26.6	29th	1937	2nd-highest
Rotorua	29.6	7th	1964	Equal 2nd-highest
Ōkārīto	24.1	30th	1982	Equal 2nd-highest
Whangārei	30.2	7th	1967	3rd-highest
Mokohinau Island	25.3	7th	1994	3rd-highest
Tākaka	30.3	5th	1978	3rd-highest
Westport	26.5	29th	1937	3rd-highest
Haast	26.3	29th	1949	3rd-highest
Milford Sound	26.7	30th	1934	3rd-highest
Windsor	30.8	5th	2000	3rd-highest
Tautuku	29.1	7th	1976	3rd-highest
Cape Reinga	25.0	29th	1951	Equal 3rd-highest
Napier	33.8	8th	1868	Equal 3rd-highest
Hamilton (Airport)	29.1	8th	1946	4th-highest

Lower Retaruke	30.0	9th	1966	4th-highest
Takapau Plains	28.1	8th	1962	4th-highest
Wairoa	33.3	8th	1964	4th-highest
Oamaru	31.0	5th	1967	4th-highest
Waipounamu	28.7	7th	1980	4th-highest
Chatham Island	24.9	1st	1878	4th-highest
Kaitaia	27.9	7th	1948	Equal 4th-highest
Taupō	29.6	9th	1949	Equal 4th-highest
Whatawhata	28.7	9th	1952	Equal 4th-highest
Taumarunui	31.1	9th	1947	Equal 4th-highest
Nugget Point	27.5	7th	1970	Equal 4th-highest
Low records or near-records				
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
Low records or near-records				
Mokohinau Island	8.0	4th	1994	Lowest
Lower Retaruke	0.1	10th	1966	Lowest
Waipounamu	1.4	14th	1980	4th-lowest
High records or near-records				
Leigh	20.0	3rd	1966	Highest
Whangaparāoa	19.9	24th	1982	Highest
Whitianga	20.7	24th	1971	Highest
Ngawi	20.6	10th	1972	Highest
Raoul Island	25.0	22nd	1992	Highest
Cape Reinga	18.8	24th	1971	Equal highest
Brothers Island	16.7	16th	1997	Equal highest
Kaikōura	20.2	8th	1972	2nd-highest
Dargaville	20.3	24th	1951	Equal 2nd-highest
Whangārei	20.7	3rd	1967	3rd-highest
Hicks Bay	19.1	1st	1972	3rd-highest
Haast	17.3	30th	1949	3rd-highest
South West Cape	14.8	15th	1991	3rd-highest
Mokohinau Island	19.7	24th	1994	Equal 3rd-highest
Diamond Harbour	18.5	8th	2004	4th-highest
Kaitaia	20.3	3rd	1948	Equal 4th-highest
Kerikeri	20.0	24th	1952	Equal 4th-highest
Rangiora	20.0	8th	1972	Equal 4th-highest

Rain, flooding, and slips

On 3 December, heavy downpours caused surface flooding at the northbound on-ramp to the Northern Motorway at Northcote in Auckland. Farther south, 43mm fell in one hour at Matamata Aerodrome during a severe thunderstorm.

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
Gisborne Airport	106	29th	1937	Highest
Castlepoint	73	30th	1907	3rd-highest
Hicks Bay	134	29th	1916	3rd-highest
Whakatu	38	29th	1982	4th-highest
South West Cape	42	7th	1991	4th-highest

Drought, dryness, and fire

From 8-9 December, a fire in the Tongariro National Park area burned through approximately 322 hectares, with 60 firefighters, 16 fire trucks, and helicopters used to bring it under control. Earlier on 8 December, visitors were warned to leave the Whakapapa area and residents were told to prepare for potential evacuation. SH47 was closed through the area.

On 14 December, a fire was reported in Lismore Forest near Whanganui. By 15 December, the fire had burned through at least 100 hectares. Five helicopters and at least 14 ground crew were deployed to fight the blaze.

On 22 December, low river flows led to water usage restrictions for the Taruheru River and Mangaheia River. All water takes from these rivers for irrigation were directed to stop, and non-essential uses such as garden watering were banned.

Wind

The highest wind gust was 170 km/h, observed at Cape Turnagain on 1 December.

On 3 December, approximately 5000 customers in the Coromandel were without power after strong winds brought down tree debris onto power lines. Farther north, structures were damaged and a tree brought down by strong winds in Mangapai (Northland).

On 5 December, strong northwesterly winds brought down trees onto powerlines in the Wakatipu Basin, resulting in power outages for nearly 2000 customers primarily in the Lake Hayes Estate and Shotover Country areas. Power outages were also reported near Cromwell.

On 15 December, strong crosswinds and severe turbulence forced the diversion of several flights due to land at Queenstown airport.

On 29 December, multiple orange wind and rain warnings were issued ahead of a weather system, which brought trees down across Auckland, the Waikato and the Coromandel Peninsula. The weather also closed all lanes on the Auckland Harbour Bridge at 3:00 p.m.

Also on 29 December, thousands of homes and businesses lost power, and two Horowhenua townships were urged to conserve water after severe weather felled trees and downed powerlines across the lower North Island and upper South Island. Widespread power cuts impacted the Nelson-Tasman regions and the Horowhenua District. The weather, moving south after wreaking havoc across the upper North Island the day before, prompted heavy rain and strong wind warnings for central areas. Civil Defence Manawatu-Whanganui issued a notice urging Foxton and Shannon residents to conserve water.

There was a district-wide power outage in the West Coast on the evening of 29 December. Buller Electricity Limited said there had been a fault at the Robertson Substation. The outage affected the Buller area including Westport and Karamea.

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
Mokohinau Island	135	29th	1994	Highest
Taupō	107	29th	1982	Highest
Pukekohe	78	29th	1986	Highest
Mt Ruapehu Chateau	113	29th	2000	Highest
Māhia	107	4th	1991	Highest
Secretary Island	144	15th	1994	Highest
Mt Cook Airport	154	8th	2000	Highest
Alexandra	96	5th	2001	Highest
Cape Reinga	128	3rd	1974	2nd-highest
Westport	108	30th	1973	2nd-highest
Wānaka	83	5th	1992	2nd-highest
Manapouri	83	7th	1991	2nd-highest
Auckland (Western Springs)	78	29th	1994	3rd-highest
Rotorua	87	29th	1972	3rd-highest
Hāwera	91	30th	1986	3rd-highest
Nelson	96	29th	1972	3rd-highest
Whakatāne	86	3rd	1974	4th-highest
Waiouru	98	29th	1970	4th-highest
Westport	100	30th	1973	4th-highest
Franz Josef	75	8th	2003	4th-highest
Lake Tekapo	102	5th	2003	4th-highest

Lightning, hail, and tornadoes

On 3 December, a suspected tornado struck at Dudding Lake Motor Camp and Caravan Park near Marton. Trees were blown over in the area, and a man was injured when the caravan he was inside was lifted and flipped onto its roof. Several other structures at the camp were damaged or destroyed. Farther north, severe thunderstorms passed over the Auckland region, with large hail and lightning reported in several suburbs including Stanmore Bay, Orewa, and Whangaparāoa. Nearly 14,000 lightning strikes were recorded over the North Island on this day.

On 11 December, thunderstorms delivered hail and lightning to eastern parts of Otago. A thick coating of hail fell at Dunedin airport with areas of surface flooding on nearby roads.

On 16 December, severe thunderstorms were observed in Canterbury and Otago, producing heavy rain and large hail up to 3 cm in diameter near Dunedin.

On 27 December, severe thunderstorms produced large and prolonged hail for parts of South Canterbury. Deep accumulations of hail were reported about Cave (South Canterbury), temporarily making SH8 impassable for vehicles in the area

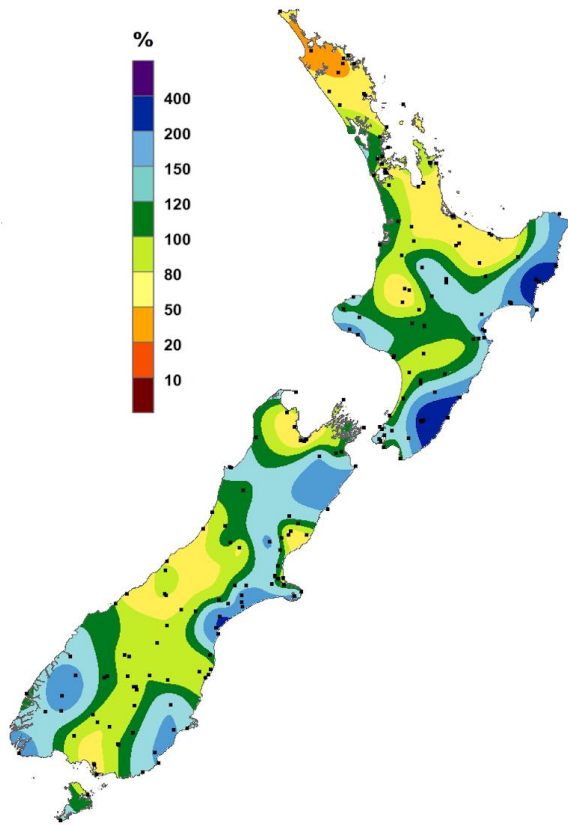
On 29 December, a waterspout formed in stormy conditions off the shore between Waimārama Beach and Te Motu-o-Kura/Bare Island.

For further information, please contact:

Chester Lampkin

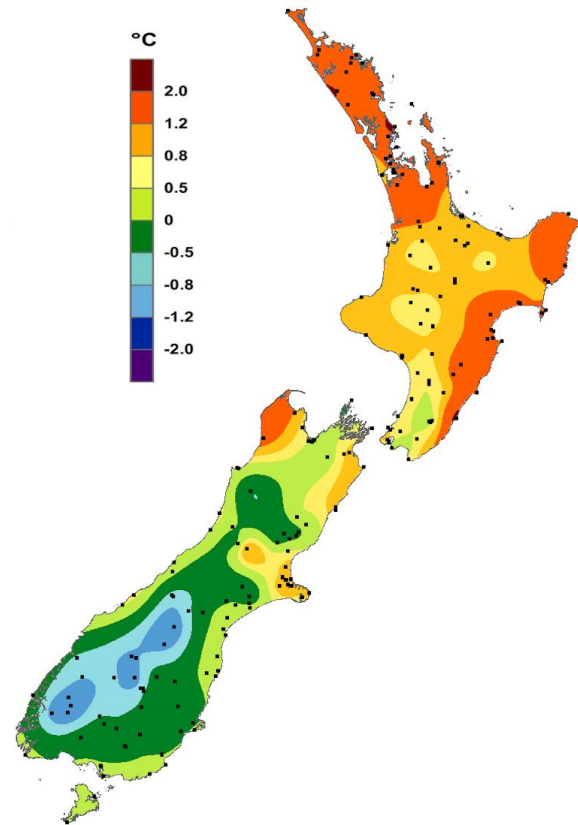
Meteorologist

Tel. 09 375 2087



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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