

April 2026

Issued: 6 May 2026

A cyclone and a low dominate the picture

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Temperature | Temperatures were well above average ($>1.20^{\circ}\text{C}$ well above average) for isolated spots in Canterbury, Southland, Otago, Buller and Tasman. Above average temperatures ($0.51\text{-}1.20^{\circ}\text{C}$ above average) were recorded for much of the North Island, as well as most of the eastern, upper and lower South Island. Near normal temperatures ($\pm 0.50^{\circ}\text{C}$) occurred elsewhere. |
| Rainfall | Rainfall was well above normal ($>149\%$ of normal) for almost the entire North Island, and coastal Marlborough. Rainfall was above normal ($120\text{-}149\%$ of normal) for some central parts of the North Island, the Far North, South Canterbury and southern Westland. Rainfall was below normal ($50\text{-}79\%$ of normal) or well below normal ($<50\%$ of normal) for Tasman, parts of Southland, the remainder of Canterbury, Buller and much of Otago. Near normal rainfall ($80\text{-}119\%$ of normal) was reported in the rest of the South Island, parts of Gisborne and Bay of Plenty. |
| Soil Moisture | At the end of April, soil moisture levels were lower than normal in parts of Canterbury and Otago. Soil moisture levels were higher than normal across the majority of the North Island, eastern Marlborough, South Canterbury and Clutha. Near normal soil moisture levels were typical for the remainder of the country. |

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Overview

April 2026 continued the theme of the year, as slow-moving high pressure systems alternated with significant depressions. The first of these was Cyclone Vaianu, a highly compact and unusually intact system of tropical origins in the middle of the month, closely followed by a much broader and more complex low pressure system only one week later. This second system had more widespread impacts which lasted over several days. The final week of the month saw a return to settled conditions under another broad and slow moving anticyclone. The overall monthly anomaly comprised higher than normal air pressure to the east of the country, and lower than normal air pressure just west of the country, leading to a northeasterly circulation anomaly over New Zealand.

Sea Surface Temperature (SSTs) remained warmer than normal around most coastal waters, with the exception of the eastern North Island where colder than normal waters persisted. ENSO (El Niño Southern Oscillation) neutral conditions continued through the month, though La Niña-like weather patterns persisted despite the demise of the recent La Niña event.

The nationwide average temperature in April 2026 was 14.0°C . This is 0.6°C above the 1991-2020 April average.

The nationwide rainfall pattern was highly dependent on Cyclone Vaianu and the broad low pressure system that followed a week later. This created a distinctive rainfall anomaly for the month, where some locations received significant rainfall amounts from the systems in succession, while others – sometimes quite nearby – received little to nothing. The North Island in general saw widespread and heavy rainfall from these two systems, with corresponding wet anomalies for the month, whereas the South Island was not affected so widely, leading to converse anomalies sitting in close proximity. For example, Cape Campbell received more than five times its typical April rainfall, whereas Christchurch reported a fraction of its norm: its third driest April on record.

Further Highlights:

- The highest temperature was 28.3°C, observed at Alexandra on 2 April.
- The lowest temperature was -5.0°C, observed at Middlemarch 23 April.
- The highest 1-day rainfall was 151 mm, recorded at Arthur’s Pass Village on 17 April.
- The highest wind gust was 194 km/h, observed at Cape Turnagain on 13 April.
- Of the six main centres in April 2026, Auckland was the warmest, Wellington was the wettest, Christchurch was the coolest, driest, and sunniest, and Dunedin was the least sunny.
- The sunniest four regions in 2026 so far are wider Nelson (1044 hours), Taranaki (1019 hours), Bay of Plenty (973 hours) and Tasman (969 hours).

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Temperature: A month of two halves

The nationwide temperature was slightly above average for April 2026, as a warmer first half was generally offset by a cooler second half. Hence there were relatively few notable temperatures at the monthly scale; records were more likely to be challenged at a daily level.

Record¹ 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 | | | | |
| Nugget Point | 12.2 | +1.3 | 1970 | 3 rd -highest |
| Low records or near-records | | | | |
| None observed | | | | |

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

¹ 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.

| Location | Mean maximum air temp. (°C) | Departure from normal (°C) | Year records began | Comments |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| High records or near-records | | | | |
| Tākaka | 20.5 | 1.7 | 1978 | 2nd-highest |
| Arapito | 19.8 | 1.7 | 1978 | 3rd-highest |
| Secretary Island | 16.9 | 1.3 | 1985 | 4th-highest |
| South West Cape | 14.4 | 1.3 | 1991 | 4th-highest |
| Low records or near-records | | | | |
| None observed | | | | |

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 | | | | |
| Akaroa | 10.5 | 1.2 | 1978 | 4th-highest |
| Nugget Point | 9.2 | 1.4 | 1970 | 4th-highest |
| Low records or near-records | | | | |
| Waipounamu | 4.4 | -0.2 | 1980 | 4th-lowest |

Rainfall: A cyclone and complex low pressure system

A multitude of rainfall events occurred through the middle of April. A northeasterly trough early in the second week of the month was quickly followed by Cyclone Vaianu. Vaianu exhibited steady southward movement without stalling, which was able to limit overall accumulations. It still produced some notable short duration rainfall observations in the North Island.

A far more complex system followed, with impacts lasting from 18 to 21 April. This was a multi-pronged depression, with an unusual combination of duration, intensity, and geographic spread.

Record 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 | | | | |
| Mokohinau Island | 270 | 358 | 1994 | Highest |
| Leigh | 259 | 311 | 1966 | 2nd-highest |
| Awakino | 320 | 182 | 2005 | 2nd-highest |
| Lower Retaruke | 234 | 190 | 1966 | 2nd-highest |
| Ohakune | 219 | 197 | 1961 | 2nd-highest |
| Cape Campbell | 191 | 518 | 1873 | 2nd-highest |
| Brothers Island | 129 | 232 | 1983 | 3rd-highest |
| Mt Ruapehu (Chateau) | 302 | 148 | 2000 | 4th-highest |
| Waipawa | 167 | 210 | 1945 | 4th-highest |
| Purerua | 265 | 218 | 1983 | 4th-highest |
| Low records or near-records | | | | |
| Christchurch (Riccarton) | 11 | 19 | 2002 | 3rd-lowest |

April climate in the six main centres

Temperatures for the six main centres mostly near average or slightly above average, though Dunedin notably had a warm month. Rainfall covered a wide range, with the lower South Island centres being very dry, while most of the North Island centres were very wet. Of the six main centres in April 2026, Auckland was the warmest, Wellington was the wettest, Christchurch was the coolest, driest, and sunniest, and Dunedin was the least sunny.

April 2026 main centre climate statistics:

| Temperature | | | |
|---------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Location | Mean temp. (°C) | Departure from normal (°C) | Comments |
| Auckland ^a | 16.7 | +0.1 | Near average |
| Tauranga ^b | 16.4 | +0.5 | Near average |
| Hamilton ^c | 15.1 | +0.6 | Above average |
| Wellington ^d | 14.1 | +0.3 | Near average |
| Christchurch ^e | 12.7 | +0.8 | Above average |
| Dunedin ^f | 13.1 | +1.3 | Well above average |
| Rainfall | | | |
| Location | Rainfall (mm) | % of normal | Comments |
| Auckland ^a | 159 | 173 | Well above normal |
| Tauranga ^b | 115 | 101 | Near normal |
| Hamilton ^c | 185 | 208 | Well above normal |
| Wellington ^d | 215 | 170 | Well above normal |
| Christchurch ^e | 20 | 35 | Well below normal |
| Dunedin ^f | 30 | 50 | Well below normal |
| Sunshine | | | |
| Location | Sunshine (hours) | | |
| Auckland ^a | 176 | | |
| Tauranga ^b | 178 ² | | |
| Hamilton ^g | 151 | | |
| Wellington ^d | 164 | | |
| Christchurch ^e | 193 | | |
| Dunedin ^f | 142 | | |

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

² Missing 4 days of data

Highlights and extreme events

Temperatures

The highest temperature was 28.3°C, observed at Alexandra on 2 April.

The first half of the month saw some warm and humid airmasses sourced from the tropics or subtropics, leading to elevated temperatures, both day and night. Widespread warm nights occurred around 7-9 April, followed by another spell with the approach of Cyclone Vaianu 11-12 April.

An unusual foehn southwesterly on 9 April produced the 26.8C maximum temperature at Tākaka township. The top 5 April temperature maxima at this location have all been recorded in the last 15 years.

Cyclone Vaianu passed just to the south of the Chatham Islands. The warm air advected by this system allowed the islands to record their warmest April temperature on record.

By contrast, all of the unusually low maximum temperatures occurred later in the month, mostly associated with the tail-end of the slow-moving low-pressure system. This combined cold air with persistent rainfall, subduing temperatures significantly, primarily through central New Zealand. 21 April was notable for Pahiatua – it reported its wettest April day on record, and its second coldest April daytime high on record.

A separate trough on 24 April brought a persistent and slow moving rainband to Auckland and Northland, keeping temperatures low throughout the day, allowing both Whangapāroa and Dargaville to record particularly cool daily highs.

Notably cold minima temperatures later in the month occurred due to clear nights associated with high pressure that followed the passage of the slow-moving low-pressure system.

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 | | | | |
| Tākaka | 26.8 | 9th | 1978 | Highest |
| Chatham Island | 22.2 | 13th | 1878 | Highest |
| Lauder | 26.4 | 2nd | 1924 | Equal 2nd-highest |
| Secretary Island | 23.1 | 6th | 1985 | Equal 3rd-highest |
| Port Taharoa | 25.9 | 11th | 1973 | 3rd-highest |
| Arapito | 24.2 | 11th | 1978 | 3rd-highest |
| Alexandra | 28.3 | 2nd | 1928 | 3rd-highest |
| Mt Ruapehu, Chateau | 19.8 | 11th | 2000 | Equal 4th-highest |
| Ōkārīto | 22.8 | 6th | 1982 | 4th-highest |
| Lake Tekapo | 24.7 | 2nd | 1925 | 4th-highest |
| Clyde | 27.5 | 2nd | 1978 | 4th-highest |
| Nugget Point | 23.4 | 2nd | 1970 | 4th-highest |
| Low records or near-records | | | | |
| Ohakune | 6.4 | 21st | 1972 | Lowest |
| Hastings | 12.1 | 21st | 1972 | 2nd-lowest |

| | | | | |
|-----------------|------|------|------|------------------|
| Waiiau School | 7.8 | 21st | 1974 | 2nd-lowest |
| Pahiatua | 10.0 | 21st | 1946 | Equal 2nd-lowest |
| Dargaville | 14.3 | 24th | 1951 | 3rd-lowest |
| Whangaparāoa | 15.3 | 24th | 1982 | 4th-lowest |
| Te Kuiti | 12.2 | 21st | 1959 | 4th-lowest |
| Brothers Island | 11.4 | 21st | 1997 | 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 |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Low records or near-records | | | | |
| Kaikohe | 4.7 | 24th | 1973 | 2nd-lowest |
| Manapouri | -4.8 | 22nd | 1991 | 2nd-lowest |
| Waipounamu | -3.2 | 23rd | 1980 | 2nd-lowest |
| Middlemarch | -5.0 | 23rd | 2000 | Equal 2nd-lowest |
| Mt Cook | -4.1 | 23rd | 1929 | 4th-lowest |
| Manapouri, West Arm | -1.1 | 23rd | 1971 | Equal 4th-lowest |
| High records or near-records | | | | |
| Arapito | 18.7 | 7th | 1978 | Highest |
| Mt Ruapehu (Chateau) | 13.4 | 12th | 2000 | Highest |
| Waiouru | 14.6 | 12th | 1972 | Equal highest |
| Motu | 16.7 | 9th | 1990 | 2nd-highest |
| Hicks Bay | 19.2 | 9th | 1972 | 2nd-highest |
| Windsor | 13.3 | 8th | 2000 | 2nd-highest |
| Oamaru | 14.3 | 8th | 1972 | 2nd-highest |
| Campbell Island | 11.1 | 12th | 1991 | 2nd-highest |
| Rotorua | 17.8 | 12th | 1972 | 3rd-highest |
| South West Cape | 14.5 | 3rd | 1991 | 3rd-highest |
| Taupo | 16.8 | 12th | 1950 | Equal 3rd-highest |
| Mahia | 17.6 | 12th | 1990 | 4th-highest |
| Waiouru | 14.4 | 12th | 1972 | 4th-highest |

Rain, flooding, and slips

Rain associated with a moist northeasterly trough led to a slip on the Desert Road on 8 April, partially closing SH1 here.

Cyclone Vaianu's rainfall impacts were focused mainly between Hawke's Bay and Northland, and especially through Coromandel and Bay of Plenty. SH2 and SH35 were closed concurrently due to slips, fallen trees and downed powerlines, while Thames was left cut-off by road closures on the Peninsula. Numerous other closures occurred, including SH16, SH30, SH33, SH34, SH50 and SH25. Eastern coastal parts of Northland were cut off, and average wave heights of 9 metres were recorded in Tauranga harbour.

Intense, organised north-westerly rain and severe thunderstorms on 18 April led to slips closing SH67, and numerous flooding incidents in the Hutt Valley, Porirua and Kāpiti Coast, leading to SH59 being closed in multiple locations, and SH58 being closed overnight into 19 April. The same

event generated major rainfall in the Central North Island, leading to widespread road closures, large slips, and States of Emergency being declared in two districts. The daily rainfall record for April was broken for several central North Island locations during this event.

A low pressure system associated with this multi-day event then lingered across and to the east of the North Island into the new working week. An isolated, slow moving area of converging winds over Wellington city produced torrential rainfall in localised urban areas in the early hours of 20 April. The resulting slips and dramatic flooding resulted in a rare State of Emergency for parts of the Wellington region, which persisted for several days in Wellington city. Major city streets were transformed temporarily into rivers, the Mount Victoria tunnel was closed due to flooding, the Basin Reserve became effectively impassable. A car was washed into the sea at Ōwhiro Bay, and numerous houses and businesses were flooded throughout Wellington’s southern suburbs. One fatality occurred in south Karori.

Heavy rain spread into Hawke’s Bay and Wairarapa across 20-21 April, producing some notable rainfall amounts. Pahiatua reported its wettest April day on record, and Masterton, Castlepoint and Whakatu their second-wettest. SH2 was closed near Featherston due to a washout, and some coastal communities in coastal Wairarapa were cut off from the rest of the region.

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 |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Pahiatua | 102 | 20th | 1927 | Highest |
| Mokohinau Island | 117 | 23rd | 1994 | Highest |
| Awakino | 143 | 18th | 2005 | Highest |
| Lower Retaruke | 113 | 18th | 1967 | Highest |
| Mt Ruapehu (Chateau) | 105 | 18th | 2000 | Highest |
| Ohakune | 87 | 18th | 1961 | Highest |
| Masterton | 87 | 20th | 1926 | 2nd-highest |
| Castlepoint | 110 | 20th | 1907 | 2nd-highest |
| Whakatu | 67 | 21st | 1982 | Equal 2nd-highest |
| Whangārei | 113 | 11th | 1943 | 3rd-highest |
| Raoul Island | 95 | 9th | 1991 | 4th-highest |
| Purerua | 83 | 11th | 1983 | 4th-highest |

Wind

The highest wind gust was 194 km/h, observed at Cape Turnagain on 13 April. Winds associated with Cyclone Vaianu (11-13 April) led to thousands of customers without power across the North Island. The majority of Fire and Emergency call-outs were for wind related damage through this event.

Both extremely strong easterly quarter and westerly quarter winds were recorded, due to the compact nature and track of this system. Several locations reported their strongest or near-strongest April wind gusts on record. Whakatāne reported winds comparable to Cyclone Cook in 2017, but lost power during the peak of the storm. Recordings from this peak period are not recoverable, but unofficial wind observations at exposed locations in eastern Bay of Plenty reached 170 km/h.

Another burst of strong winds across the country occurred with the low pressure system after Vaianu, and squally thunderstorms produced notable gusts across several North Island locations 18-20 April.

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

| Location | Extreme wind gust (km/h) | Date of extreme gust | Year records began | Comments |
|----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Kaikohe | 89 | 20th | 1986 | Highest |
| Mokohinau Island | 131 | 11th | 1994 | Highest |
| Whatawhata | 84 | 12th | 2003 | Highest |
| Māhia | 126 | 12th | 1991 | Highest |
| Hawera | 102 | 20th | 1986 | Highest |
| Takapau Plains | 96 | 13th | 2005 | 2nd-highest |
| Dannevirke | 82 | 13th | 1961 | 2nd-highest |
| Kaitia | 120 | 19th | 1972 | 3rd-highest |
| Whitianga | 78 | 12th | 1991 | 3rd-highest |
| Te Puke | 60 | 12th | 1987 | 3rd-highest |
| Motu | 82 | 12th | 1991 | 3rd-highest |
| Gisborne | 102 | 12th | 1972 | 3rd-highest |
| Franz Josef | 89 | 15th | 2003 | 3rd-highest |
| Mt Ruapehu (Chateau) | 95 | 22nd | 2000 | 4th-highest |
| Mana Island | 102 | 20th | 2005 | 4th-highest |
| Upper Hutt | 81 | 18th | 1999 | 4th-highest |
| Brothers Island | 139 | 20th | 1997 | 4th-highest |
| Cape Campbell | 111 | 20th | 1963 | 4th-highest |
| Ranfurly | 76 | 17th | 2000 | 4th-highest |

Lightning, hail, and tornadoes

An unsettled spell of weather followed the passage of Cyclone Vaianu, and severe thunderstorms were observed over Waikato and Bay of Plenty on Monday 13 April, while a funnel cloud was observed in Invercargill on the same day.

Embedded convection in a very unstable airmass on 18 April allowed repeated development of severe thunderstorms across Kāpiti and the Hutt Valley, bringing heavy rain and significant flooding. Fast moving squally thunderstorms continued to affect the North Island on the 19 April as well. This highly unstable period led to a tornado affecting Bay of Plenty, reportedly damaging a house in Tauranga.

The complex low on 20 April allowed well organised thunderstorms to move quickly across the North Island, affecting both Auckland that afternoon, and more significantly Wairarapa later that day where severe thunderstorm warnings were issued for an area that was already under a red warning for heavy rainfall.

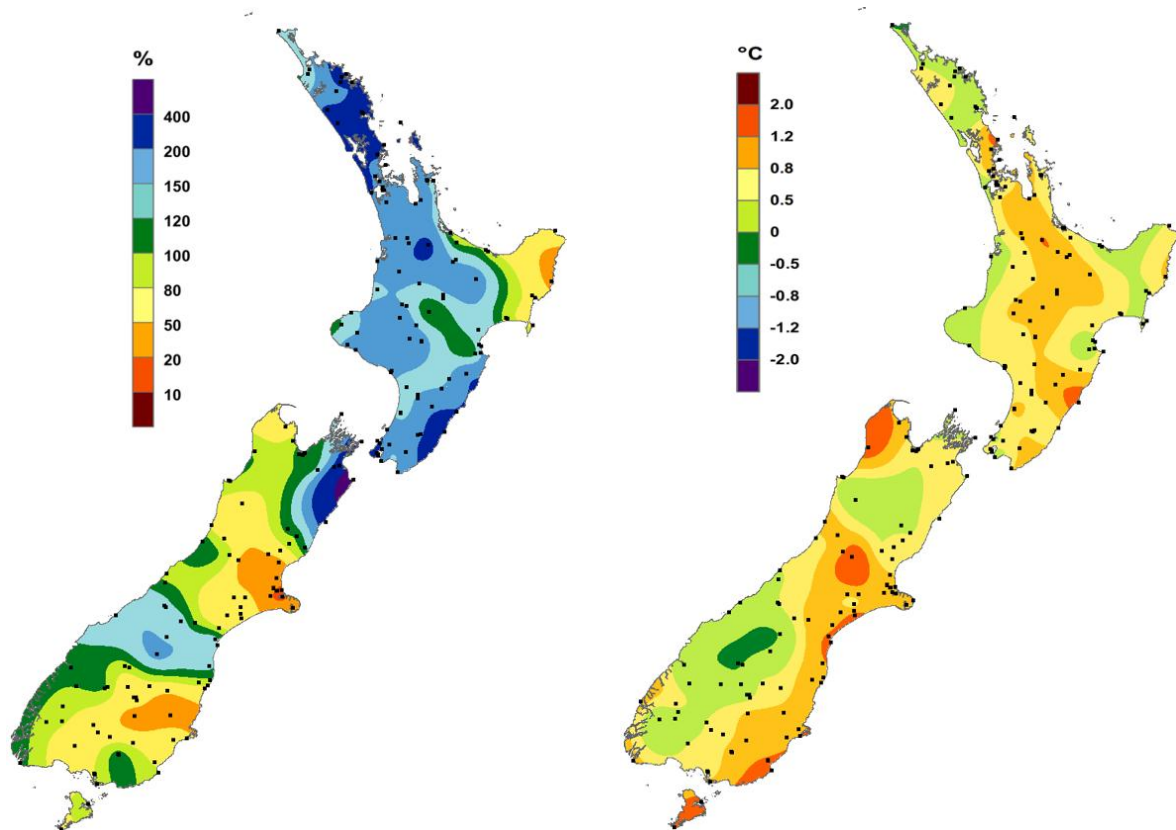
Fog

Domestic flights were disrupted early on 21 April as light winds and abundant moisture led to radiation fog forming at Auckland airport.

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April rainfall

Expressed as a percentage of the 1991-2020 normal.

April temperature

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

<https://earthsciences.nz/research/climate-and-weather>

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