Earth Sciences New Zealand Te Whatu Ao

Monthly Climate Summary

September 2026

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A mild month, dry in the North and wet in the South

Temperature	Temperatures were above average (0.51–1.20°C above average) for inland parts of Southland, Otago, southern and central parts of Canterbury, southern Taranaki, southern Waikato, the western Bay of Plenty, and southern and western parts of Northland. Temperatures were generally near average (±0.50°C of average) for the remainder of the country.
Rainfall	Rainfall was below normal (50–79% of normal) or well below normal (<50% of normal) for most of the North Island, Nelson, and Tasman. Rainfall was above normal (120–149% of normal) or well above normal (>149% of normal) for southern, inland, and eastern parts of the South Island, northern parts of the West Coast, and southern parts of the Wellington region.
Soil moisture	At the end September, soil moisture levels were higher than normal for southern, eastern, and inland parts of the South Island. Soil moisture was lower than normal for eastern parts of Northland. Near normal soil moisture levels were typical for the remainder of the country.

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Overview

Mean sea level air pressure was higher than normal over the Tasman Sea, and lower than normal to the south and east of Aotearoa New Zealand. This pattern led to more frequent southwesterly airflows across the country. By the end of September, very strong El Niño conditions were present in the tropical Pacific. Sea surface temperatures (SSTs) around New Zealand were mostly near average or above average, except east of the North Island where cooler–than–average SSTs were present. Marine Heatwave (MHW) conditions[1] persisted to the west and south of the South Island, although their extent and intensity decreased compared to preceding months.

The nationwide average temperature in September 2026 was 11.0°C. This is 0.4°C above the 1991–2020 September average, making it New Zealand's equal–22nd warmest September since Earth Sciences New Zealand's seven station temperature series began in 1909. The month was relatively warm for eastern and inland parts of the South Island south of Christchurch, where temperatures were above average (0.51–1.20°C above average). Temperatures were also above average for western parts of Tasman, southern

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

Taranaki, Taupō, western Bay of Plenty, Coromandel, southern parts of Northland, and Kaipara. Temperatures were mostly near average (±0.50°C of average) for remaining parts of the country.

September was a dry month for much of the North Island, and northern parts of the South Island. Rainfall was below normal (50–79% of normal) or well below normal (<50% of normal) in Northland, Auckland, Waikato, Bay of Plenty, Gisborne, Hawke's Bay, Taranaki, inland parts of Manawatū–Whanganui, Nelson, and northern Tasman. In contrast, it was a wet month for much of the South Island, and southernmost parts of the North Island. Rainfall was above normal (120–149% of normal) or well above normal (>149% of normal) in Southland, Otago, much of Canterbury, eastern Marlborough, and southern parts of the Wellington region. September rainfall was mostly near normal (80–119% of normal) for remaining parts of the country, including about Christchurch, Banks Peninsula, central parts of the West Coast, northern Wairarapa, and coastal Manawatū–Whanganui.

Further highlights

- The highest temperature was 24.8°C, observed at Whakatu on 27 September.
- The lowest temperature was −6.1°C, observed at Pukaki Aerodrome on 24 September.
- The highest 1-day rainfall was 154 mm, recorded at Mt Cook Village on 3 September.
- The highest wind gust was 222 km/h, observed at Cape Turnagain on 10 September.
- Of the six main centres, Tauranga was the warmest and driest, Christchurch was coolest and sunniest, Wellington was the wettest, and Hamilton was the least sunny.
- The sunniest four locations in 2026 so far are Nelson (2056 hours), Whakatāne (2019 hours), New Plymouth (1958 hours) and Richmond (1954 hours).

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Temperature: A mild month overall

No mean air temperature records were set in September, however four locations set near-record high mean temperatures. The country's warmest locations relative to average were Alexandra and Oamaru, where the mean temperature was 1.4°C above average, respectively. The coolest locations relative to average were Reefton, Hastings, and Te Kuiti, where the mean temperature was 0.4°C below average, respectively.

Record[2] or near-record mean air temperatures for September were recorded at:

Location	Mean air temp. (°C)	Departure from normal (°C)	Year records began	Comments
High records or near-records				
Waipounamu	9.0	0.9	1980	3rd-highest
Te Puke	13.0	1.0	1973	4th-highest
Windsor	9.7	1.0	2000	4th-highest
Cromwell	10.6	1.3	1949	4th-highest
Low records or near-records				
None observed				

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

Location	Mean maximum air temp. (°C)	Departure from normal (°C)	Year records began	Comments
High records or near-records				
Tākaka	17.8	2.1	1978	Highest
Whakatāne	18.3	1.2	1974	2nd-highest
Purerua	17.9	1.1	1983	3rd-highest
Whitianga	18.1	0.6	1962	3rd-highest
Tauranga	18.0	1.3	1913	3rd-highest
Rotorua	15.9	1.4	1964	3rd-highest
Waipounamu	14.1	0.6	1980	3rd-highest
Windsor	16.4	1.9	2000	4th-highest
Low records or near-records				
None observed				

[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.

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

Location	Mean minimum air temp. (°C)	Departure from normal (°C)	Year records began	Comments
High records or near-records				
Dargaville	10.8	1.0	1943	3rd-highest
Greymouth	7.9	1.2	1947	3rd-highest
Waipounamu	3.8	1.0	1980	4th-highest
Cromwell	4.5	1.5	1949	4th-highest
Tautuku	5.2	1.0	1976	4th-highest
Low records or near-records				
Diamond Harbour	6.1	0.1	2004	3rd-lowest

Rainfall: Dry in the North Island, wetter in the South Island

It was a dry month for much of the North Island, where six locations observed record or near-record low September rainfall totals. Whangārei was the country's driest location compared to normal; notably, the city observed its driest September since its records began in 1937. In contrast, it was a wet month for much of the South Island, where two locations observed near-record high September rainfall totals. Gore observed its second-wettest September since records began in 1907. The country's wettest location compared to normal was Ashburton, where the monthly rainfall of 111 mm was 299% of normal.

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

Location	Rainfall total (mm)	Percentage of normal	Year records began	Comments
High records or near-records				
Gore	149	227	1907	2nd-highest
Waipounamu	131	208	1917	4th-highest
Low records or near-records				
Whangārei	20	17	1937	Lowest
Mokohinau Island	18	29	1994	2nd-lowest
Tauranga	18	21	1898	2nd-lowest
Kerikeri	42	29	1935	3rd-lowest
Whakatāne	32	30	1952	4th-lowest
Port Taharoa	70	65	1973	4th-lowest

September climate in the six main centres

Temperatures for the six main centres were near average or above average, with the warmest anomaly in Dunedin. Rainfall was below normal or well below normal for the three northernmost main centres, with Tauranga observing its second-driest September on record. In contrast, it was a relatively wet month in Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin, with each city recording above normal rainfall. Of the six main centres, Tauranga was the warmest and driest, Christchurch was coolest and sunniest, Wellington was the wettest, and Hamilton was the least sunny.

September 2026 main centre climate statistics:

Temperature			
Location	**Mean temp. (°C)**	**Departure from normal (°C)**	**Comments**
Auckland[a]	13.4	+0.4	Near average
Tauranga[b]	13.6	+1.1	Above average
Hamilton[c]	11.5	+0.1	Near average
Wellington[d]	10.8	−0.1	Near average
Christchurch[e]	9.4	+0.1	Near average
Dunedin[f]	10.7	+1.2	Above average
Rainfall			
Location	**Rainfall (mm)**	**% of normal**	**Comments**
Auckland[a]	51	47	Well below normal
Tauranga[b]	18	21	2nd-lowest on record
Hamilton[c]	58	56	Below normal
Wellington[d]	144[3]	133	Above normal
Christchurch[e]	52	122	Above normal
Dunedin[f]	61	130	Above normal
Sunshine			
Location	**Sunshine (hours)**		
Auckland[a]	167[3]		
Tauranga[b]	211		
Hamilton[g]	158		
Wellington[d]	194		
Christchurch[e]	231		
Dunedin[f]	185		

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

[3] Missing 1 day of data.

Highlights and extreme events

Temperatures

The highest temperature was 24.8°C, observed at Whakatu on 27 September. The lowest temperature was −6.1°C, observed at Pukaki Aerodrome on 24 September.

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

Location	Extreme maximum (°C)	Date of extreme temperature	Year records began	Comments
High records or near-records				
Waipounamu	20.9	21st	1980	4th-highest
Low records or near-records				
Martinborough	8.3	7th	1986	2nd-lowest
Whanganui	8.5	7th	1972	2nd-lowest
Farewell Spit	10.4	7th	1972	Equal 4th-lowest

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

Location	Extreme minimum (°C)	Date of extreme temperature	Year records began	Comments
Low records or near-records				
Waiouru	−6.6	24th	1962	2nd-lowest
Mt Ruapehu Chateau	−6.7	24th	2000	4th-lowest
High records or near-records				
Paraparaumu	14.2	4th	1972	Equal 3rd-highest
Arapito	13.0	4th	1978	Equal 3rd-highest
Greymouth	12.4	4th	1972	Equal 4th-highest

Rain, flooding, and slips

The highest 1-day rainfall was 154 mm, recorded at Mt Cook Village on 3 September.

On 7 September, heavy rainfall occurred for parts of the West Coast. At Inangahua, SH6 was closed between Brown Creek Road and SH69 due to flooding, while SH67 was closed from Hector to Mōkihinui due to a slip.

On 16 September, SH96 was closed between Riverside Road and Ryan Road (near Winton) due to flooding.

By the end of September, persistent wet conditions for southern parts of the South Island created challenging conditions for farmers, growers, rural communities and livestock. On 1 October, the Minister for Agriculture and Minister for Rural Communities jointly classified the wet conditions across Southland and the Clutha District as a medium-scale adverse event.

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

Location	Extreme 1-day rainfall (mm)	Date of extreme rainfall	Year records began	Comments
Palmerston North	45	6th	1928	4th-highest

Wind

The highest wind gust was 222 km/h, observed at Cape Turnagain on 10 September.

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

Location	Extreme wind gust (km/h)	Date of extreme gust	Year records began	Comments
Takapau Plains	117	27th	2005	Highest
Blenheim	105	4th	1972	Highest
Māhia	107	20th	1991	2nd-highest
Upper Hutt (Trentham)	98	4th	1999	2nd-highest
Bromley	89	4th	1972	2nd-highest
Secretary Island	156	19th	1994	3rd-highest
Clyde	93	2nd	1983	3rd-highest
Te Puke	65	27th	1987	4th-highest
Whatawhata	82	20th	2003	4th-highest
Hamilton (Ruakura)	74	20th	1996	4th-highest

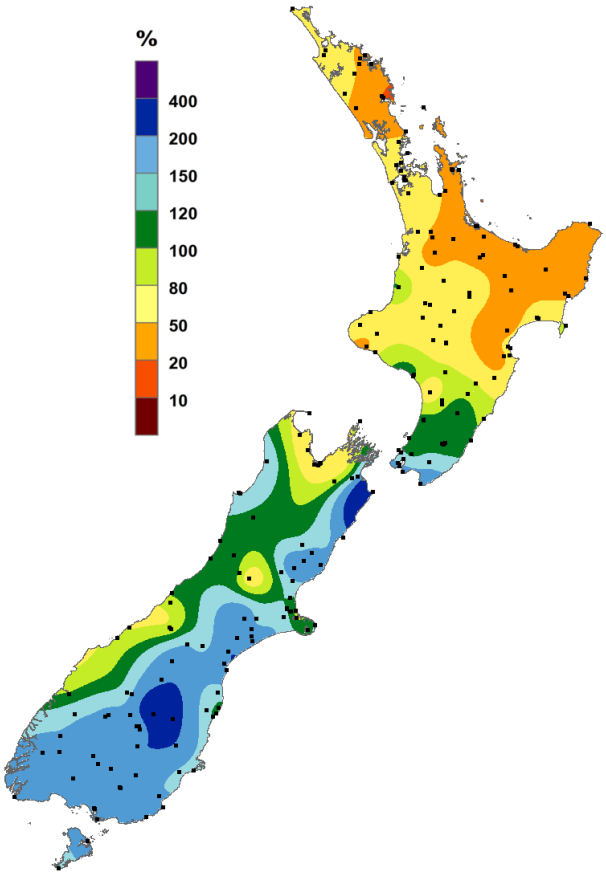
Snow and ice

On 16 September, snow fell to low elevations about inland parts of Southland and Otago, with snow settling down to around 200 m above sea level in some parts of these regions. SH87 was closed between Outram and Middlemarch due to snow.

On 27 September, snow settled to the valley floor in eastern parts of Central Otago, and many inland parts of Canterbury. Several roads were closed due to snow including SH7 between the SH7/SH65 intersection at Springs Junction and the SH7/SH7A intersection south of Hanmer Springs. Meanwhile, chains were essential for vehicles travelling on SH73 between Springfield and Castle Hill, and between Otira and Arthur's Pass.

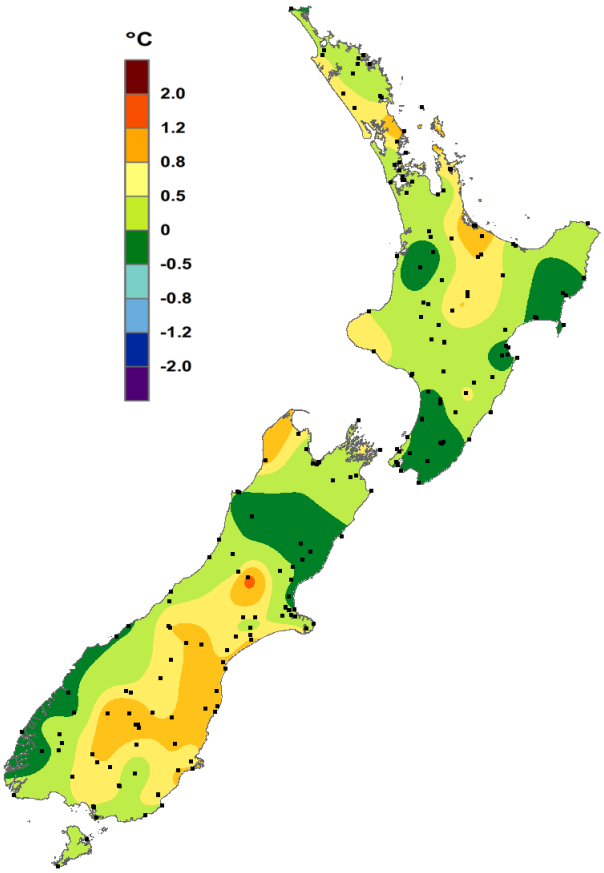
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September rainfall

Expressed as a percentage of the 1991–2020 normal.



September temperature

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

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