Earth Sciences New Zealand
Te Whatu Ao

Monthly Climate Summary

October 2026

Issued 5 November 2026

Warm and dry for most of the country

Temperature	Temperatures were well above average (>1.20°C above average) for most of the South Island. Temperatures were above average (0.51–1.20°C above average) for Nelson, Marlborough, and much of the North Island. Temperatures were generally near average (±0.50°C of average) for eastern parts of Northland, western Waikato, Gisborne, coastal Hawke's Bay, Taranaki, and northern Wairarapa.
Rainfall	Rainfall was below normal (50–79% of normal) or well below normal (<50% of normal) for most of the North Island, Nelson, Tasman, Marlborough, the West Coast, much of Canterbury, and southern Otago. Rainfall was above normal (120–149% of normal) or well above normal (>149% of normal) for northern and central Otago, and Milford Sound. Rainfall was near normal (80–119% of normal) for coastal parts of southern Canterbury, Dunedin, and much of Southland.
Soil moisture	At the end October, soil moisture levels were lower than normal for Northland, Bay of Plenty, East Cape, and parts of the Waikato. Soil moisture was higher than normal about Kaikōura, eastern parts of the South Island from mid Canterbury to Dunedin, and central and western parts of Otago. 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 and surrounding Aotearoa New Zealand. This pattern delivered prolonged periods of fine and settled weather, with relatively warm temperatures and low rainfall prevailing for most of the country. Very strong El Niño conditions were firmly established in the tropical Pacific by the end of October, having intensified during the month. Sea surface temperatures (SSTs) around New Zealand were mostly near average or above average. Marine Heatwave (MHW) conditions[1] persisted to the west and south of the South Island. MHW conditions also developed along parts of the east coast of the South Island and near Nelson–Tasman.

The nationwide average temperature in October 2026 was 13.3°C. This is 1.2°C above the 1991–2020 October average, making it New Zealand's 4th-warmest October since Earth Sciences New Zealand's seven station temperature series began in 1909. The month was particularly warm for the South Island, where

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

temperatures were well above average (>1.20°C above average) in most regions The exception was Nelson and Marlborough, where temperatures were above average (0.51–1.20°C above average). Temperatures were also above average for much of the North Island including Wellington, the Kāpiti Coast, southern Wairarapa, Manawatū, Whanganui, the Central Plateau, western Bay of Plenty, parts of Auckland, and western and northern parts of Northland. Temperatures were mostly near average (±0.50°C of average) for remaining parts of the country.

October was a dry month for the North Island and extensive parts of the South Island, where rainfall was below normal (50–79% of normal) or well below normal (<50% of normal). In contrast, rainfall was above normal (120–149% of normal) or well above normal (>149% of normal) for northern and central Otago, and Milford Sound. Rainfall was near normal (80–119% of normal) for eastern parts of Canterbury south of Banks Peninsula, Dunedin, and most of Southland. According to the New Zealand Drought Index[2], very dry to extremely dry conditions had developed across the southern half of Northland by the end of October.

Further highlights

- The highest temperature was 29.4°C, observed at Hastings on 14 October.
- The lowest temperature was −4.4°C, observed at Mt Cook Airport on 31 October.
- The highest 1-day rainfall was 251 mm, recorded at Milford Sound on 26 October.
- The highest wind gust was 181 km/h, observed at South West Cape on 2 October.
- Of the six main centres, Tauranga was the warmest and sunniest, Auckland was the driest, Christchurch was the coolest, Wellington was the wettest, and Hamilton was the least sunny.
- The sunniest four locations in 2026 so far are Nelson (2346 hours), Whakatāne (2319 hours), Richmond (2253 hours) and New Plymouth (2211 hours).

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[2] https://niwa.co.nz/hazards/weather-hazards/new-zealand-drought-monitor

Temperature: Very warm for parts of the South Island

Record or near-record high October mean temperatures were observed in 36 locations. It was especially warm across the South Island where many locations recorded mean temperatures at least 2°C above normal. The country's warmest location relative to average was Mt Cook Village, where the mean temperature was 3.0°C above average.

New Zealand's coolest location relative to average was Te Kuiti, where the mean temperature was 0.1°C below average. Here, mean minimum temperatures were 6.3°C (1.7°C below average), which was the town's 4th-lowest mean minimum temperature for October since records began in 1959. This highlights the prevalence of clear skies and light winds during the month, contributing to enhanced radiative cooling overnight.

Record[3] or near-record mean air temperatures for October were recorded at:

Location	Mean air temp. (°C)	Departure from normal (°C)	Year records began	Comments
High records or near-records				
Arapito	14.1	2.4	1978	Highest
Milford Sound	11.9	1.5	1934	Highest
Secretary Island	12.5	1.7	1985	Highest
Windsor	12.4	2.1	2000	Highest
Oamaru	12.1	1.4	1967	Highest
Middlemarch	12.4	2.3	2000	Highest
Dunedin (Airport)	12.7	2.3	1962	Highest
Dunedin (Musselburgh)	13.4	2.4	1947	Highest
Manapouri	11.0	1.7	1991	Highest
Lumsden	11.9	2.1	1982	Highest
Waipounamu	12.1	2.2	1980	Highest
Tiwai Point	12.0	1.7	1970	Highest
Balclutha	12.3	2.0	1964	Highest
Nugget Point	11.9	2.0	1970	Highest
Tautuku	12.3	2.2	1976	Highest
Campbell Island	7.4	1.1	1991	Highest
Queenstown	12.8	2.3	1871	Equal highest
Mt Ruapehu Chateau	7.9	1.4	2000	2nd-highest
Reefton	13.2	1.8	1960	2nd-highest
Franz Josef	12.3	1.8	1953	2nd-highest
Mt Cook Village	11.6	3.0	1929	2nd-highest

[3] 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 air temp. (°C)	Departure from normal (°C)	Year records began	Comments
Manapouri (West Arm Jetty)	10.5	1.6	1971	2nd-highest
Clyde	13.0	1.9	1978	2nd-highest
Alexandra	13.2	1.8	1929	2nd-highest
Roxburgh	13.3	2.2	1950	2nd-highest
Cape Reinga	15.3	1.0	1951	3rd-highest
Tākaka	13.3	1.2	1978	3rd-highest
Waipara West	13.7	1.8	1973	3rd-highest
Le Bons Bay	11.8	1.3	1984	3rd-highest
Orari	12.5	1.7	1972	3rd-highest
Cromwell	13.5	1.8	1949	3rd-highest
Lauder	12.0	1.9	1924	3rd-highest
Brothers Island	13.5	0.9	1997	4th-highest
Medbury	12.9	1.7	1927	4th-highest
Akaroa	14.1	1.7	1978	4th-highest
Wānaka	12.6	1.9	1955	4th-highest
Low records or near-records				
None observed				

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

Location	Mean maximum air temp. (°C)	Departure from normal (°C)	Year records began	Comments
High records or near-records				
Kaitaia	20.4	2.1	1948	Highest
Matamata	20.1	2.2	1999	Highest
Whakatāne	20.6	1.8	1974	Highest
Rotorua	19.0	2.6	1964	Highest
Taupō	19.5	3.5	1949	Highest
Tūrangi	18.8	2.4	1968	Highest
Lower Retaruke	18.8	1.6	1966	Highest
Mt Ruapehu Chateau	13.7	2.7	2000	Highest
Waiouru	15.6	2.7	1962	Highest
Tākaka	19.8	2.0	1978	Highest
Arapito	18.3	2.3	1978	Highest
Waiau	20.3	2.0	1974	Highest
Mt Cook Airport	17.7	3.4	1929	Highest
Ranfurly	18.3	2.6	1897	Highest
Middlemarch	19.6	3.0	2000	Highest

Location	Mean maximum air temp. (°C)	Departure from normal (°C)	Year records began	Comments
Dunedin (Airport)	19.1	2.8	1962	Highest
Dunedin (Musselburgh)	17.7	2.8	1947	Highest
Manapouri	16.7	1.9	1991	Highest
Lumsden	17.5	2.3	1982	Highest
Waipounamu	17.9	2.8	1980	Highest
Balclutha	17.7	2.4	1964	Highest
Nugget Point	15.6	2.2	1970	Highest
Purerua	19.2	1.1	1983	2nd-highest
Whitianga	20.7	1.4	1962	2nd-highest
Stratford	16.8	1.5	1960	2nd-highest
Reefton	18.6	1.9	1960	2nd-highest
Franz Josef	16.6	1.8	1953	2nd-highest
Diamond Harbour	17.6	2.2	2004	2nd-highest
Lake Tekapo	17.9	2.7	1927	2nd-highest
Windsor	18.7	2.6	2000	2nd-highest
Queenstown	18.6	2.5	1871	2nd-highest
Cromwell	20.9	2.8	1949	2nd-highest
Clyde	20.5	2.3	1978	2nd-highest
Tautuku	16.8	2.1	1976	2nd-highest
Cape Reinga	18.3	1.4	1951	3rd-highest
Kaikohe	18.6	1.4	1973	3rd-highest
Whangaparāoa	19.4	1.4	1982	3rd-highest
Pahīatua	17.8	1.7	1928	3rd-highest
Secretary Island	15.4	1.6	1985	3rd-highest
Blenheim	20.2	1.8	1932	3rd-highest
Hanmer Forest	20.2	2.7	1906	3rd-highest
Medbury	19.6	2.5	1927	3rd-highest
Akaroa	19.5	2.4	1978	3rd-highest
Pukaki Aerodrome	19.3	1.7	1972	3rd-highest
Wānaka	18.4	2.0	1955	3rd-highest
Alexandra	20.7	2.6	1929	3rd-highest
Tiwai Point	15.3	1.5	1970	3rd-highest
Hamilton (Airport)	19.3	1.4	1946	Equal 3rd-highest
Kerikeri	20.8	1.5	1945	4th-highest
Whangārei	20.5	1.2	1967	4th-highest
Tauranga	19.9	1.4	1913	4th-highest
Waikeria	19.7	1.4	1957	4th-highest

Location	Mean maximum air temp. (°C)	Departure from normal (°C)	Year records began	Comments
Te Kuiti	19.6	1.6	1959	4th-highest
Ohakune	16.1	1.3	1962	4th-highest
Brothers Island	15.5	0.8	1997	4th-highest
Arthurs Pass	14.8	3.3	1973	4th-highest
Cheviot	19.3	1.7	1982	4th-highest
Waipara West	19.8	2.5	1973	4th-highest
Orari	19.2	2.7	1972	4th-highest
Oamaru	16.8	1.4	1967	4th-highest
Campbell Island	9.5	0.7	1991	4th-highest
Low records or near-records				
None observed				

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

Location	Mean minimum air temp. (°C)	Departure from normal (°C)	Year records began	Comments
High records or near-records				
Roxburgh	7.5	1.7	1950	Highest
Gore	7.4	2.0	1907	Highest
Invercargill	7.8	2.2	1905	Highest
Tiwai Point	8.7	1.8	1970	Highest
Nugget Point	8.2	1.9	1970	Highest
Tautuku	7.7	2.3	1976	Highest
Campbell Island	5.2	1.3	1991	Highest
Lumsden	6.4	1.9	1982	Equal highest
Franz Josef	8.0	1.8	1953	2nd-highest
Secretary Island	9.6	1.7	1985	2nd-highest
Dunedin (Musselburgh)	9.1	2.1	1947	2nd-highest
Waipounamu	6.3	1.5	1980	2nd-highest
Balclutha	7.0	1.7	1964	2nd-highest
Arapito	9.8	2.4	1978	3rd-highest
Brothers Island	11.5	1.1	1997	3rd-highest
Mt Cook Village	5.8	2.7	1929	3rd-highest
Windsor	6.0	1.5	2000	3rd-highest
Oamaru	7.4	1.4	1967	3rd-highest
Middlemarch	5.3	1.7	2000	3rd-highest
Manapouri (West Arm Jetty)	6.5	1.8	1971	3rd-highest
Queenstown	7.0	2.1	1871	3rd-highest

Location	Mean minimum air temp. (°C)	Departure from normal (°C)	Year records began	Comments
Greymouth	10.0	2.1	1947	4th-highest
Milford Sound	7.8	2.0	1934	4th-highest
Akaroa	8.7	1.0	1978	4th-highest
Low records or near-records				
Te Kuiti	6.3	-1.7	1959	4th-lowest

Rainfall: A dry month for much of the country

It was a dry month across the North Island, where 14 locations observed record or near-record low October rainfall totals. Whakatāne recorded just 8 mm of rainfall (7% of normal), making it the country's driest location compared to normal. Notably, the city observed its driest October since its records began in 1952. Whangārei observed driest October on record after also observing its driest September on record just last month. The city received 37 mm of rainfall over this two-month period (only 19% of normal). The country's wettest location compared to normal was Oamaru, where the monthly rainfall of 82 mm was 209% of normal.

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

Location	Rainfall total (mm)	Percentage of normal	Year records began	Comments
High records or near-records				
Windsor	65	161	2000	4th-highest
Low records or near-records				
Dargaville	19	25	1943	Lowest
Whangārei	17	22	1937	Lowest
Whakatāne	8	7	1952	Lowest
Auckland (Western Springs)	27	28	1948	2nd-lowest
Kerikeri	25	22	1935	3rd-lowest
Kaikohe	31	33	1956	3rd-lowest
Taupō	17	22	1949	3rd-lowest
Hamilton (Ruakura)	27	32	1905	3rd-lowest
Tūrangi	45	34	1968	3rd-lowest
Dannevirke	32	32	1951	3rd-lowest
Hicks Bay	20	20	1916	3rd-lowest
Paraparaumu	33	33	1945	3rd-lowest
Te Puke	32	27	1973	4th-lowest
Rotorua	31	24	1963	Equal 4th-lowest

October climate in the six main centres

It was an exceptionally warm month in Dunedin, with the city observing its warmest October on record. Temperatures were above average across the remaining main centres, except for Hamilton where temperatures were near average. Rainfall was well below normal for the three northernmost main centres, and below normal in Wellington. Rainfall was near normal for Christchurch and Dunedin. Of the six main centres, Tauranga was the warmest and sunniest, Auckland was the driest, Christchurch was the coolest, Wellington was the wettest, and Hamilton was the least sunny.

October 2026 main centre climate statistics:

Temperature			
Location	**Mean temp. (°C)**	**Departure from normal (°C)**	**Comments**
Auckland[a]	15.1	+0.6	Above average
Tauranga[b]	15.2	+0.9	Above average
Hamilton[c]	13.4	+0.4	Near average
Wellington[d]	13.0	+0.9	Above average
Christchurch[e]	12.5	+1.2	Above average
Dunedin[f]	13.4	+2.4	Highest on record
Rainfall			
Location	**Rainfall (mm)**	**% of normal**	**Comments**
Auckland[a]	31	38	Well below normal
Tauranga[b]	36	45	Well below normal
Hamilton[c]	32	33	Well below normal
Wellington[d]	81	68	Below normal
Christchurch[e]	41	83	Near normal
Dunedin[f]	57	95	Near normal
Sunshine			
Location	**Sunshine (hours)**		
Auckland[a]	233		
Tauranga[b]	290		
Hamilton[g]	210		
Wellington[d]	211		
Christchurch[e]	260		
Dunedin[f]	218		

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

Highlights and extreme events

Temperatures

The highest temperature was 29.4°C, observed at Hastings on 14 October. The lowest temperature was −4.4°C, observed at Mt Cook Airport on 31 October.

On 26 October, a warm northerly airflow contributed to widespread overnight warmth across the South Island. Twenty-two locations observed record or near-record high daily minimum air temperatures on this date.

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

Location	Extreme maximum (°C)	Date of extreme temperature	Year records began	Comments
High records or near-records				
Chatham Island	22.7	25th	1878	Highest
Waipounamu	24.2	23rd	1980	Equal highest
Matamata	24.5	12th	1999	2nd-highest
Pahīatua	24.4	23rd	1928	2nd-highest
Mt Cook Airport	25.4	23rd	1929	2nd-highest
Whangaparāoa	23.1	26th	1982	Equal 2nd-highest
Kerikeri	25.4	12th	1945	3rd-highest
Purerua	23.2	12th	1983	3rd-highest
Rotorua	23.3	12th	1964	3rd-highest
Arapito	22.3	10th	1978	3rd-highest
Rangiora	28.4	24th	1965	3rd-highest
Lumsden	24.2	23rd	1982	3rd-highest
Campbell Island	14.3	10th	1991	3rd-highest
Clyde	28.0	23rd	1978	Equal 3rd-highest
Taupō	25.5	23rd	1949	4th-highest
Mt Ruapehu Chateau	20.5	23rd	2000	4th-highest
Tākaka	25.0	13th	1978	4th-highest
Franz Josef	22.1	9th	1953	4th-highest
Cromwell	27.6	23rd	1949	4th-highest
Kaitaia	23.5	26th	1948	Equal 4th-highest
Waikeria	23.6	12th	1957	Equal 4th-highest
Ranfurly	25.5	12th	1897	Equal 4th-highest
Queenstown	25.1	20th	1871	Equal 4th-highest
Low records or near-records				
Whitianga	13.2	4th	1971	3rd-lowest

Location	Extreme maximum (°C)	Date of extreme temperature	Year records began	Comments
Hastings	11.0	16th	1972	Equal 4th-lowest

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

Location	Extreme minimum (°C)	Date of extreme temperature	Year records began	Comments
Low records or near-records				
Takapau Plains	-2.5	5th	1962	3rd-lowest
Tūrangi	-3.9	5th	1968	4th-lowest
High records or near-records				
Waipawa	16.5	15th	1945	Highest
Greymouth	14.6	14th	1972	Highest
Dunedin (Airport)	17.2	26th	1972	Highest
Manapouri (West Arm Jetty)	12.5	24th	1972	Highest
Manapouri	14.3	26th	1991	Highest
Lumsden	17.8	26th	1982	Highest
Invercargill	16.5	26th	1905	Highest
Tiwai Point	16.3	26th	1972	Highest
Richmond	15.8	27th	1862	Equal highest
Matamata	15.7	13th	1999	2nd-highest
Hastings	18.1	15th	1972	2nd-highest
Nelson	15.7	27th	1862	2nd-highest
Pukaki Aerodrome	13.7	26th	1972	2nd-highest
Windsor	15.5	26th	2000	2nd-highest
Ranfurly	15.2	26th	1897	2nd-highest
Oamaru	15.7	26th	1972	2nd-highest
Dunedin (Musselburgh)	18.2	26th	1947	2nd-highest
Tapanui	15.5	26th	1900	2nd-highest
Gore	16.0	25th	1907	2nd-highest
Nugget Point	13.8	26th	1972	2nd-highest
Tautuku	15.9	25th	1976	2nd-highest
Lauder	15.7	26th	1924	Equal 2nd-highest
Wānaka	14.5	26th	1972	3rd-highest
Middlemarch	17.2	26th	2000	3rd-highest
Cromwell	16.7	26th	1949	3rd-highest
Roxburgh	17.0	26th	1950	3rd-highest
Milford Sound	13.0	26th	1935	Equal 3rd-highest
Mt Cook Village	15.5	24th	1929	Equal 3rd-highest

Location	Extreme minimum (°C)	Date of extreme temperature	Year records began	Comments
Queenstown	14.3	26th	1871	Equal 3rd-highest
Napier	19.2	15th	1940	4th-highest
Diamond Harbour	15.7	26th	2004	4th-highest
Akaroa	16.4	26th	1978	4th-highest
Waipounamu	13.4	26th	1980	4th-highest
Te Puke	15.7	13th	1973	Equal 4th-highest
Hamilton (Airport)	16.0	13th	1946	Equal 4th-highest
Waiouru	12.2	15th	1972	Equal 4th-highest

Rain, flooding, and slips

The highest 1-day rainfall was 251 mm, recorded at Milford Sound on 26 October.

On 15 October, heavy rain caused flooding in the Awakino Gorge. A stretch of SH3 through Mt Messenger was down to one lane following a slip.

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

Location	Extreme 1-day rainfall (mm)	Date of extreme rainfall	Year records began	Comments
Awakino	39	14th	2005	4th-highest
Manapouri (West Arm Jetty)	124	26th	1971	4th-highest

Drought, dryness, and fire

On 6 October, a large fire broke out Walter Peak, southwest of Queenstown. The fire burned mainly tussock, scrub and some trees. Over the course of 2 days, it spread from Walter Peak Station along the McKinlays Creek area, and also affected parts of adjoining conservation estate and Cecil Peak Station. The fire burned an estimated 1,350 hectares of land.

On 26 October, a scrub fire near Roxburgh resulted in the evacuation of six homes, with power cut as a safety precaution to 220 properties. Farther north, strong winds reignited a fire in the Central Plateau military zone near the Desert Road, while an uncontained vegetation fire of around 3.7 hectares was reported near Waitakaruru.

Wind

The highest wind gust was 181 km/h, observed at South West Cape on 2 October.

On 26 October, strong north to northwesterly winds impacted many parts of the country. Lauder observed a maximum gust of 142 km/h, its strongest October wind gust since records began in 1981. In Wellington, a section of Evans Bay Parade between Carlton Gore Road and Rata Road was closed due to multiple people being blown off bikes, and wing mirrors being blown off cars.

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

Location	Extreme wind gust (km/h)	Date of extreme gust	Year records began	Comments
New Plymouth	113	16th	1972	Highest
Middlemarch	118	26th	2000	Highest
Lauder	142	26th	1981	Highest
Upper Hutt (Trentham)	97	27th	1999	2nd-highest
Wānaka	87	26th	1992	2nd-highest
Mt Cook Airport	143	26th	2000	3rd-highest
Oamaru	102	30th	1984	3rd-highest
South West Cape	181	2nd	1991	3rd-highest
Gore	119	26th	1987	4th-highest

Cloud and fog

On 24 October, fog at Auckland Airport resulted in 15 flight cancellations, with a further 15 flights delayed.

Lightning, hail, and tornadoes

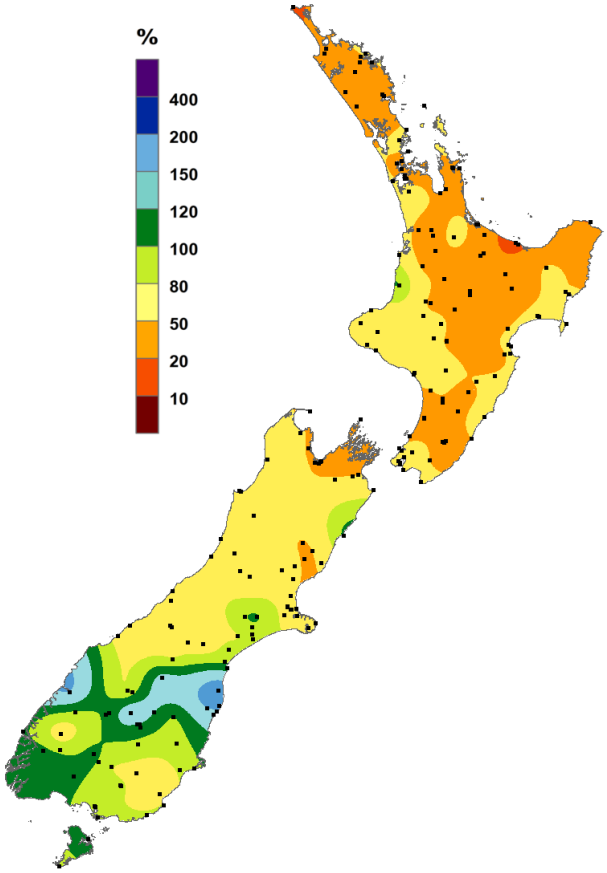
On 29 October, thunderstorms occurred over eastern parts of eastern Canterbury. Heavy hail showers were reported in Southbridge and Leeston, stripping trees of leaves and damaging a building roof. A small tornado occurred near Rakaia.

Snow and ice

On 30 October, snow caused the closure of SH7 between Hanmer Springs turnoff and Springs Junction (Lewis Pass), and SH73 from Arthur's Pass Village to Otira (Arthur's Pass). Light snow settled on the Crown Range Road about the summit, but the road remained open.

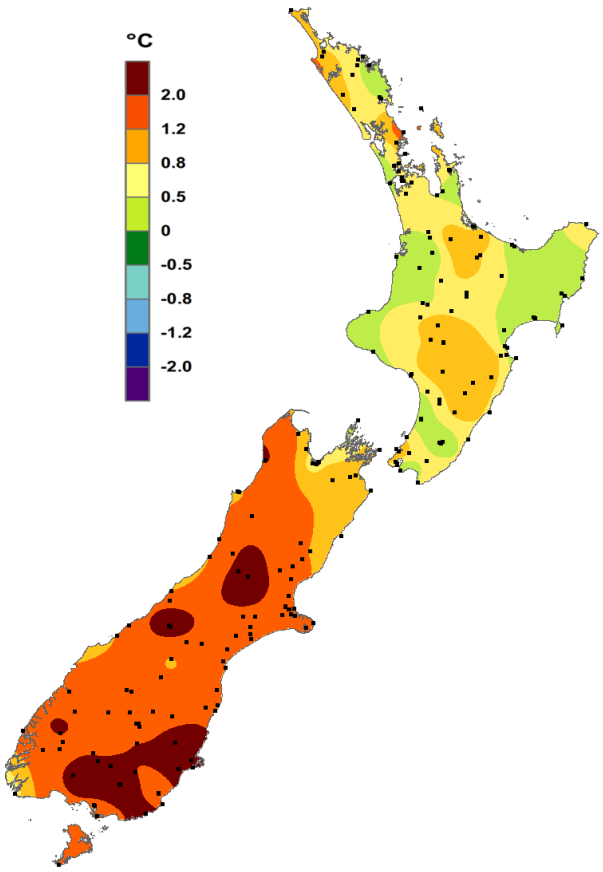
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October rainfall

Expressed as a percentage of the 1991–2020 normal.



October temperature

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

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