

National Climate Summary – May 2004

- **Temperature:** Warm, especially in Bay of Plenty and Gisborne
- **Rainfall:** Wet in Northland, Auckland, Coromandel, Waikato, Bay of Plenty, Hawke's Bay, Golden Bay, Canterbury and parts of Otago, but dry in the south and west of the North Island, as well as Wairarapa
- **Sunshine:** Sunny in the west of the North Island, coastal Otago, and Southland, but extremely cloudy in Riwaka, Blenheim and Mt Cook

May's climate was much warmer than usual, with temperatures almost the same as April 2004. Rainfall was well above average in parts of Auckland, Coromandel, and Bay of Plenty, and well below average in Wanganui, Manawatu, Kapiti, and Wairarapa. As a result soils are only drier than normal in Central Otago. Mean temperatures were above normal in most districts, especially Bay of Plenty and Gisborne. It was sunny in the west of the North Island, as well as coastal Otago and Southland, but totals were very low in Nelson and Marlborough. The May climate pattern was due to warm northeasterlies prevailing over the country with more frequent depressions ("lows") in the Tasman Sea and anticyclones ("highs") well east of New Zealand.

Highlights:

- The highest May 2004 temperature was 27.3°C, recorded at Nelson Park, Napier, on the 2nd. This was their highest May temperature in measurements that commenced in 1869, and a new May all-time record for the North Island. A number of other locations also recorded their highest May temperature on record that day.
- The lowest temperature for the month was -5.7°C, recorded at Ranfurly on the 19th.
- High rainfall totalling 50 to 100 mm occurred in Northland, Auckland, and Coromandel on the 1st, with further high rainfall in Coromandel and western Bay of Plenty, on the 14th. Rainfall totalled 88 mm in Takaka on the 12th, with 50 mm in Gisborne on the 23rd. The month ended with 50–65 mm rainfalls in parts of Northland, Rotorua, and Golden Bay on the 28th.
- Snow settled in Methven on the 24th.
- Auckland was the sunniest and Christchurch the driest main centre. Rainfall was above average in Auckland and Dunedin, near average in Christchurch, and below average in Wellington. Temperatures were above average in Auckland, Wellington, and Christchurch, and average in Dunedin. Sunshine hours were above normal in Auckland and Dunedin, and near normal in the other two main centres.

Rainfall: Rainfall was at about 200 percent (twice) average May totals in parts of Auckland, Coromandel, and Bay of Plenty. Rainfall was also above average throughout much of Northland, Waikato, Gisborne, Hawke's Bay, Golden Bay, Canterbury, and parts of Otago. In contrast, rainfall was below average in Wanganui, Manawatu, Kapiti, and Wairarapa. May rainfall was near average in Westland, and Southland.

Temperature: The May national average temperature of 11.5°C was 0.8°C above normal. Mean temperatures were above normal throughout the North Island, as well as Buller, Westland, Fiordland, Marlborough, Nelson, and north Canterbury. Temperatures were 1.6 to 1.8°C above normal in Bay of Plenty, Tongariro/Ruapehu, and Gisborne.

Sunshine: Sunshine totals were above normal in the west of the North Island, from Auckland to Horowhenua, and in coastal Otago and Southland, very low in Riwaka, Blenheim and Mt Cook, and near normal in most other districts.

For further information, please contact:

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Warmer than normal overall

May was much warmer than normal, with a national average temperature of 11.5°C, 0.8°C more than normal. Mean temperatures were 1.0 to 1.5°C above normal throughout much of the North Island, as well as Buller, Marlborough, Nelson, and north Canterbury. Temperatures were 1.6 to 1.8°C above normal in Bay of Plenty, Tongariro/Ruapehu, and Gisborne.

High May mean air temperatures were recorded at:

Location	Mean temperature	Departure from average (°C)	Records began	Comments
Paeroa	13.6	+1.7	1947	Well above average
Tauranga Airport	14.2	+1.7	1913	Well above average
Whakatane Airport	12.9	+1.7	1975	3rd highest
Rotorua Airport	11.7	+1.2	1964	2nd equal highest
Taupo Airport	10.3	+1.5	1976	Well above average
Motu	10.6 ^a	+1.9	1991	Highest
Hamilton Airport	12.4	+1.4	1971	Well above average
Gisborne Airport	13.5	+1.5	1905	Well above average
Napier, Nelson Park	13.5	+1.4	1923	Well above average
Ohakune	9.2 ^a	+1.7	1994	Well above average
Farewell Spit	13.7	+1.9	1971	Equal highest
Lincoln	10.5	+1.5	1881	Well above average

^a to 30 May

Above average rainfall in Northland, Auckland, Coromandel, Waikato, Bay of Plenty, Gisborne, Hawke's Bay, Golden Bay, Canterbury and parts of Otago

Below average rainfall in the south and west of the North Island from Wanganui to Kapiti as well as the Wairarapa

Rainfall was 200 percent (twice) or more of average May totals in parts of Auckland, Coromandel, and Bay of Plenty, and 125–175 percent (one and a quarter to one and three quarter times) of average throughout much of Northland, Waikato, Gisborne, Hawke's Bay, Golden Bay, Canterbury, and parts of Otago. In contrast, rainfall was less than 75 percent (three quarters) of average in Wanganui, Manawatu, Kapiti, and Wairarapa. May rainfall was near average in Westland and Southland.

High May rainfall was recorded at:

Location	May rainfall (mm)	Percentage of normal	Year records began	Comments
Dargaville	216	207	1943	4th highest
Mokohinau Island	160	233	1935	Well above average
Henderson, Auckland	217 ^a	194	1986	Highest
Auckland Airport	217	236	1962	Highest
Mangere, Auckland	191	190	1959	3rd highest
Whitianga Airport	304	223	1991	2nd highest
Tauranga Airport	192	211	1898	Well above average
Te Puke	255	211	1973	Highest
Whakatane Airport	173	205	1975	Highest

^a to 30 May

Sunny in the west of the North Island, and in coastal Otago and Southland, low totals in parts of the north of the South Island

Sunshine totals were at least 110 percent of normal in the west of the North Island, from Auckland to Horowhenua, and in coastal Otago and Southland. Sunshine totals were very low in Riwaka, Blenheim and Mt Cook. Sunshine was near normal in most other districts.

Near or record low May sunshine was recorded at:

Location	May sunshine (hrs)	Percentage of normal	Year records began	Comments
Motueka, Riwaka	131	79	1965	2nd lowest
Blenheim Research	130	77	1986	Lowest
Mt. Cook Village	47	53	1930	Lowest

May's climate in the four main centres

Of the four main centres, Auckland was the sunniest and Christchurch the driest. Rainfall was above average in Auckland and Dunedin, near average in Christchurch, and below average in Wellington. Temperatures were above average in Auckland, Wellington, and Christchurch, and average in Dunedin. Sunshine hours were above normal in Auckland and Dunedin, and near normal in the other two main centres.

Location	May mean temp. (°C)	Dep. from normal (°C)		May rainfall (mm)	% of normal		May sunshine (hours)	% of normal	
Auckland	14.6 ^a	+0.9	Above average	203 ^b	198	3rd highest	151 ^a	109	Above average
Wellington	12.0	+0.5	Above average	94	81	Near average	122	96	Near average
Christchurch	10.0 ^c	+1.1	Above average	51 ^c	97	Near average	133 ^c	94	Near average
Dunedin	9.2	+0.0	Average	101	141	Above average	120	120	Well above Average

a Mangere b Mt. Albert c Christchurch Airport

Highlights and extreme events

- The highest May 2004 temperature was 27.3°C, recorded at Nelson Park, Napier, on the 2nd, a new May all-time record for the North Island.

Record high May air temperatures were recorded at:

Location	Maximum temperature (°C)	Date of occurrence	Records began
Whangarei Airport	24.8	2 May	1968
Whitianga Airport	22.7	2 May	1991
Hamilton Airport	22.4	2 May	1971
Napier Airport	26.0	2 May	1974
Napier, Nelson Park	27.3	2 May	1923
Takaka, Kotinga	23.9	2 May	1986
Franz Josef	21.5 equal highest	12 May	1983

- The lowest temperature for the month was -5.7°C , recorded at Ranfurly on the 19th.
- High rainfall totalling 50–100 mm occurred in Northland, Auckland, and Coromandel on the 1st, with further high rainfall in Coromandel, and western Bay of Plenty, on the 14th. Rainfall totalling 88 mm was recorded in Takaka on the 12th, with 50 mm in Gisborne on the 23rd. The month ended with 50–65 mm rainfalls in parts of Northland, Rotorua, and Golden Bay on the 28th.
- Snow settled in Methven on the 24th.

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