

THE WEATHER IN NEW ZEALAND FOR APRIL 1985

General—April was dry in many regions, with mean temperatures below normal over the North Island, and above average over the South Island.

North-easterly winds prevailed over the country. Their frequency was exceptional being about three times the average for April. Strong winds were a little less frequent than usual. These conditions resulted from mean sea level pressures being well above average to the east and south of New Zealand. Both Macquarie Island and Chatham Islands were 11 hectopascals higher than normal.

With the very dry conditions continuing again this month in parts of Canterbury and Otago, farmers have reported no grass growth and generally poor stock condition. In other parts of New Zealand, stock condition has been good, but with seasonally cooler temperatures and dry weather, grass growth has been slow.

Cold southerlies over New Zealand on the 22nd brought snow to the South Island, and to the ranges of Southern North Island.

Rainfall—Rainfall was below average over much of New Zealand. Over the South Island very dry conditions prevailed again this month in the east from North Otago to North Canterbury with rainfalls of between about 5 and 30 percent of normal. Hapuku, Marlborough had 25 percent of normal rainfall, Kaikoura West 31 percent, Christchurch 16 percent, Magnet Bay, Banks Peninsula and Rangitata 12 percent. The following stations all had less than 10 percent; Coldstream, Gordons Valley, Lake Waitaki, Duntroon, Oamaru, Timaru, Kauru Hill, Glendale (North Otago) and Hindon. No rainfall was also recorded at Islay Downs and Garthmyl.

Northland, Bay of Plenty, Gisborne, and Nelson and Westland were the only areas to have above normal rainfall. In some areas more than 150 percent of normal rainfall was recorded. Whangarei recorded 152 percent and Nelson Airport 161 percent.

Temperatures—Over the North Island mean temperatures were below average except in the South and around Cook Strait where they were about normal. Night-time temperatures were in many districts between 0.5°C and 1.0°C lower than usual.

Over the South Island mean temperatures were above average. Eastern districts had temperatures between 1.0°C and 1.5°C higher than average. While daytime temperatures were up to 2 degrees higher in some regions, night-time minima were close to average.

Sunshine—Over the South Island and in the South of the North Island sunshine was above average. The remaining districts of New Zealand had less sunshine than usual.

Among those stations to have greatest departures this month include:

Christchurch (+59 hours, the largest departure since 1949),
Timaru (+45 hours, the greatest since 1942),
Kelburn, Wellington (+47 hours),
Tauranga (−33 hours, the least since 1968),
Kaitaia (−39 hours, the largest since 1956) and
Gisborne (−40 hours).

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