

## THE WEATHER IN NEW ZEALAND IN JANUARY 1986

*General*—January was much warmer than average throughout New Zealand.

North-easterlies prevailed over the North Island with a much greater frequency than usual, and north-westerlies were predominant over the South Island, with their second highest frequency since 1956.

Flooding occurred in some North Island regions during the period from the 4th to the 6th. The worst affected places were:

Pawarenga (Northland) where people were evacuated from all of the 18 houses there;

Ngongotaha (near Rotorua) where water had surrounded 30 properties and 25 people were evacuated;

Tarawera where 5 families had to leave their homes, and 3 major roads were blocked in the area due to slips;

The Henderson Valley (Northwest Auckland) where residents fled from their houses due to flood waters up to 2 or 3 metres high (due to the Opanuku Stream which had burst its banks). Twelve people were rescued by the fire brigade.

On the 25th floods also occurred in Nelson City. Almost 150 mm of rain fell in the 48 hours to 9 a.m. on the 27th, which has a return period of nearly 50 years. Major damage to some homes, bridges, and the sewage system resulted, together with severe slips, causing roads out of the city to be blocked. A state of emergency was declared at 2 p.m. on the 25th. Approximately 150 people in the Brightwater and Matai regions evacuated their houses.

During this time high seas affected Northland and the Bay of Plenty. A yacht capsized just off the coast near Leigh, and a woman was swept away and assumed drowned. Winds in the area were estimated to be gusting up to 110 kmph from the north-east, with waves up to 11 metres.

Mean sea level pressures were 1 to 2 hPa above average over the North Island, and near average over the South Island.

Farmers reported excellent pasture growth this month. Most stock were in good condition, although a large number of cases of flystrike affected cattle in southern and eastern regions of the North Island.

*Rainfall*—Rainfall was well above normal throughout the North Island, apart from Gisborne, Hawkes Bay and the Wairarapa. Rainfall totals for the Gisborne region ranged between 45 and 60 percent of normal.

Record January rainfalls resulted at:

Rotorua Airport	359 mm	(399 percent of normal)
Kinleith	275 mm	(257 percent of normal)
Auckland City	225 mm	(381 percent of normal)
Hamilton Airport	219 mm	(300 percent of normal)

Over the South Island rainfall was generally near average apart from Buller, Marlborough and Nelson where it ranged from 150 to over 300 percent of normal. Nelson's high rainfall of 227 mm (329 percent of normal) was also a record.

Some high 24 and 48 hour rainfalls this month were:

Station	Period	Date	Rainfall (mm)
Milford Sound	48 hours to 9 a.m.	1st	545
Pawarenga (Northland)	24 hours to 9 a.m.	4th	255
Rotorua Airport	24 hours to 9 a.m.	5th	131

*Temperatures*—Nationwide January was one of the warmest months ever. Mean temperatures were 2°C above the long term averages, making it the second warmest month since records began in the 1860's. The mean daily temperature was 2.5°C above normal in the King Country, Wellington, South Canterbury and central Otago regions.

Some of the greatest departures from normal this month were:

Station	Start of record	Mean Daily Temperature°C and Rank
Onepoto	1936	19.1° highest on record
Gisborne Airport	1938	21.1° highest on record
New Plymouth	1944	19.4° highest on record
Ohakea	1940	19.7° 2nd highest, equal to 1975
Palmerston North	1962	19.6° highest on record
Paraparaumu Airport	1953	19.5° highest on record
Kelburn (Wellington)	1928	19.1° 2nd highest
Waingawa	1906	19.6° 3rd highest
Blenheim	1941	19.7° 2nd highest
Kaikoura	1964	18.2° highest on record
Timaru Airport	1962	17.7° highest on record
Christchurch Airport	1954	18.8° 2nd highest
Oamaru Airport	1968	18.2° highest on record
Alexandra	1929	19.8° 2nd highest

At Gisborne Airport the mean daily maximum temperature averaged 27.4°C which is the second highest since records began in 1938.

*Sunshine*—Throughout the whole of the country hours of sunshine ranged between 85 and 105 percent of normal. The region with the least amount of sunshine was in Southern Hawke's Bay.

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