

THE WEATHER IN NEW ZEALAND IN FEBRUARY 1986

General—February was slightly warmer and wetter than usual in most places.

South-westerlies prevailed over the North Island with more strong winds than usual, while north-westerlies prevailed over the southern part of the South Island. The frequency of south-easterlies over the South Island was the highest on record and accounted for some of the record high February rainfalls in Marlborough, Canterbury, and Otago. There was a lack of strong winds over the South Island.

Mean sea level pressures were three to four hectopascals below average over the whole of New Zealand.

Farmers reported plenty of grass growth, and stock in good condition. Flystrike was a problem again this month in some parts of Hawkes Bay, and haymaking was often interrupted by rainfall in Southland.

Rainfall—The only regions where rainfall was below normal this month were Gisborne, Hawkes Bay, Fiordland and South Westland.

The total rainfall for the month at East Cape was only 37 percent of normal.

Rainfall was well above average in Wellington and the Manawatu, Marlborough, South Canterbury and Central Otago, where it ranged from 200 to 300 percent of normal. Dunedin Airport and Oamaru Airport recorded 354 and 391 percent of normal rainfall respectively.

Some record or near record rainfalls for February resulted at:

Station	Amount (mm)	Year records began	Rank
Blenheim Airport	126	1941	Highest on record.
Kaikoura	132	1950	Second highest on record.
Mount John	102	1963	Second highest on record.
Timaru Airport	131	1957	Highest on record.
Oamaru Airport	126	1941	Third highest on record.
Roxburgh	93	1948	Highest on record.
Dunedin Airport	143	1963	Highest on record.

Temperatures—Mean daily temperatures were near or slightly above average in most regions. In the North Island mean daily temperatures were about 1°C above average in the Manawatu, Wellington and the Wairarapa. The mean daily minimum temperature of 14.6°C at Waingawa was almost 4°C above the normal, being the second highest there on record for February since records began in 1906.

Over the South Island mean daily temperatures were almost 1°C below average in inland South Canterbury and Central Otago. In some parts of inland South Canterbury the mean daily maximum temperature was up to 2°C below average.

Sunshine—Over the whole of the country hours of bright sunshine were generally near normal. In parts of Canterbury and Westland sunshine was 10 percent above average, while Manawatu had one of the lowest sunshine totals for February since records began. There was also less sunshine than usual in Otago.

Some of the greatest departures from normal this month were:

Station	Start of record	Amount of sunshine (hours)	Departure from Normal (hours)	Rank
Levin	1956	147	-41	Least on record
Dunedin Airport	1963	140	-25	