



Met Society Newsletter

For a printable pdf of this newsletter <http://metsoc.rsnz.org/Newsletter/clipsjune2009.pdf>

Those members who have chosen the postal option will receive a hard copy of this in their September newsletter

Record cold in May and more chill to come

ONE News | Jun 3, 2009

<http://aftermathnews.wordpress.com/2009/06/04/new-zealand-shivered-last-month-in-the-lowest-may-temperatures-ever-recorded/>



The national average temperature of nine degrees was 1.6 degrees below the long-term average for May.

NIWA says extremely low temperatures, between two and 2.5 degrees lower than normal, were recorded over most of the South Island, lower parts of the North Island, King Country, Waikato, Auckland and parts of Northland.

Most other locations experienced well below average temperatures between 1.2 and two degrees lower than normal.

The lowest temperature during May was minus seven degrees recorded at Hanmer Forest on the 12th. The highest temperature was 23 degrees recorded at Christchurch on the 16th.

NIWA is warning we can expect below average temperatures in many regions in June. (Abridged)

Wet May heralds long, boggy winter

By Neal Wallace on Mon, 8 Jun 2009 Otago Daily Times



Wet weather in May has thrust farms in to mid-winter conditions such as these Taieri dairy cows grazing a crop. Photo by Peter McIntosh.

Otago farmers are hunkering down for what some expect to be a long, wet winter. May rainfall over much of the province was double the long-term average, soaking soils, slowing grass growth and making access around farms more typical of the end of winter than the start.

Warepa farmer Mike Elliot said ground conditions resembled mid-winter rather than the start. "May really was not a nice month. It has put us back a bit," the South Otago farmer said.

Snow arrived on the Central Otago mountain tops heavier and earlier than usual. (Abridged)

'Frosty, settled' weather ahead

ROGER MORONEY Hawkes Bay Today 02.06.2009

<http://www.hbtoday.co.nz/localnews/storydisplay.cfm?storyid=3798378&thesection=localnews&thesubsection=&thesecondsubsection=>



Seven-year-old Hannah, left, and 9-year-old Sam Perry-Purchas of Havelock North having icy fun on the peak on Sunday.

Sunday's low snow flurries, which smeared Te Mata Peak and even speckled Napier Hill, were rarities and not portents that the region was in for an Antarctic-like winter.

“It was just a particularly cold southerly,” MetService weather ambassador Bob McDavitt said today. “The seasonal forecast was for a cool start to winter, but what you’ll see for the rest of the week is more frosty, settled weather,” he said. (abridged)

New label for clouds

Wednesday June 03, 2009 NZPA <http://tvnz.co.nz/content/2766528>

British efforts to find a new label for distinctive layered clouds that form "gravity waves" may not be necessary in New Zealand, says MetService spokesman Bob McDavitt.

Meteorologists in Britain are making a bid to have a new classification created for the cloud formation, which the Royal Meteorological Society wants to have named "asperatus" after the Latin word for rough.

The scientists want the label officially added to the international scheme used by forecasters to identify clouds.

New Zealand meteorologists normally describe the cloud pattern as altocumulus lenticularism and one formation of mountain wave clouds is commonly known the "northwest arch" in regions such as Canterbury, McDavitt said.

"So maybe no new name is required for such clouds," he said. "There is a whole zoo of cloud forms and changing shapes that occur". McDavitt said there were already 10 or so varieties of cloud, and another 15 "species".



The cloud formations at the centre of the debate have underbellies like a rough sea. They are typical of clouds that form when there are two layers of different density in the air, one sitting on the other.

"The moister, cooler higher layer has cloud in it and the less moist layer is cloud-free," he said. "The boundary between these layers occasionally kicks up, then dips again because of gravity".

The northwest arch seen in Canterbury was usually a mix of lenticularis cloud at various levels - altocumulus altostratus and cirrostratus.

McDavitt said the asperatus label could be used to describe the undulations on the underbelly of the cloud but the current cloud classification system was sufficient to describe New Zealand clouds.

If the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) decided to add asperatus as a new species of cloud, "then we will probably use it to describe the times when the underbellies of altocumulus lenticularis clouds can be seen to change shape and "undulate" over a period of a time."

Residents endure flood frustrations

Peter de Graaf and Andre Hueber | 10th June 2009 Northern Advocate

<http://www.northernadvocate.co.nz/local/news/residents-endure-flood-frustrations/3900333/>

When Ricky Timms saw council contractors waterblasting Kaeo's main street to clean up after a flood two weeks earlier, the volunteer firefighter had a chuckle to himself.

"I told them as soon as they do that it'll flood again."

The clean-up was on Monday night; sure enough, by Tuesday morning parts of Kaeo were under water again.



Flooding at Jubilee Road. Whananaki. Picture/Michael Cunningham

MetService forecaster Nic Bonnette said by today most of the rain would have fallen, but some showers would linger until the front moved off in the afternoon. The rain that hit Northland, caused by a slow-moving trough, was significant but not exceptional, she said.

According to Northland Regional Council figures, the wettest place in the 36 hours to noon yesterday was Puhipuhi, about 30km north of Whangarei, with a whopping 117mm of rain. It was followed by Kerikeri's Western Hills (87mm), Kaeo East (85mm) and Glenbervie Forest (80.5mm). (Abridged)

No business like snow business

By PAUL GORMAN - The Press 15/06/2009

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/2499999/No-business-like-snow-business>



NATASHA MARTIN/Timaru Herald

UPLIFTING: Richard Willis and daughter Claudia, 8, of Christchurch, enjoy Mt Dobson Ski Area's 90cm base on Saturday's opening day with more snow forecast this week

MetService forecaster Mark Pascoe said the cold air was going to "stick around for quite some time".

"Most of the week it will be cold and it'll probably snow on Banks Peninsula. It'll get pretty low, close to sea-level, probably down to 100 metres.

"Tuesday morning will be a pretty rough morning for Dunedin."

Blue Skies Weather forecaster Tony Trewinnard said "it will get very cold" tomorrow and the peninsula would "get a few more snow showers".

"Temperatures will be significantly cold, in single figures all week with some good frosts inland."

The Mt Dobson Ski Area opened on Saturday in fine, clear weather, with about 1300 snow lovers enjoying a 90cm base. (Abridged)

Snow disrupts thousands around New Zealand

ONE News Tuesday June 16, 2009

<http://tvnz.co.nz/national-news/snow-disrupts-thousands-around-new-zealand-2786332>



Thousands have been disrupted by winter snow around New Zealand on one of the worst days of winter weather so far.

The authorities are warning motorists to take extra care on Tuesday night. In Otago, schools have closed, flights were cancelled and dozens of roads throughout the region have been affected by the conditions.

And the polar blast is making its way up the country, closing the Rimutaka Hill Road, north of Wellington.

Snow showers on the Desert Road are predicted with as much as 5cm of snow likely to accumulate on the road by 8pm Tuesday.

One viewer in Blenheim had this to say just after 1pm: "It's snowing snow and ice falling, and only five degrees in Blenheim right now. On the close hills going through from Blenheim to Picton the hills are white with snow. Blenheim doesn't usually get this snow and icy conditions. It's freezing, it's bitter."

Dunedin was virtually shut down. Many wish they had stayed home when they faced what was close to chaos on Dunedin streets. (Abridged)

Snow closes Rimutaka Hill road

16/06/2009 Stuff/ NZPA

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/2505467/Snow-closes-Rimutaka-Hill-road-overnight>

The Rimutaka Hill Road north of Wellington was open early tonight after being closed because of snow but may close again later tonight.

Snow, black ice and sleet caused traffic chaos in and around the hills of Dunedin this morning. Heavy snow falls in Dunedin caused a number of accidents and closed roads in and out of the city. Snow also closed Dunedin Airport this morning, cancelling a total of 10 flights and the travel plans of 480 people.

Dunedin Airport was only rarely closed because of snow, said Air New Zealand airport manager Alistair Bevin.

The MetService predicted Dunedin would experience slightly warmer temperatures tomorrow. Snow showers would clear by evening for a frosty night but it would be fine tomorrow for north and Central Otago.

For the rest of Otago, Southland and Fiordland there would be snow to near sea level, with snow levels rising. (Abridged)



Otago University covered in Snow . Vicki Bradford

Weather kinder but not to be taken lightly

ODT Wed, 17 Jun 2009

After a milder night than expected Dunedin police reported no accidents this morning but asked motorists to drive carefully on snow and ice-covered roads around the region.

MetService weather ambassador Bob McDavitt said conditions were expected to be drier today, making for a frosty morning across the region but it was only a slight coating of white that greeted Dunedin residents today.

"You'll have similar cold mornings for the rest of the week."

Severe frosts were expected in inland Otago and South Otago this morning. Black ice is highly likely in Southland today and snow on the roads meant extreme care was needed when travelling over the Kilmog to Dunedin and on SH 1 from Balclutha to Clinton.



Dunedin viewed from the air above the Stuart St overbridge in Roslyn yesterday morning. Photo by Stephen Jaquiery.

The southwest front which brought the snow and dropped temperatures to a low of 1degC in the city moved north yesterday afternoon, but not before creating treacherous road conditions, closing schools, and delaying or preventing hundreds of people from getting to work or opening businesses.

Coastal Otago hill farms were covered by up to 100mm of snow yesterday morning, but farmers said ample warning and full hay barns and silage pits meant the storm caused few problems. Abridged

Polar blast sweeps country

The Dominion Post 17/06/2009

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/manawatu-standard/news/national-news/2506486/Polar-blast>



ROBERT KITCHIN/ The Dominion Post

HEAVENLY CREATURE: Glen Lanceley, from Featherston, makes a "snow angel" near the Rimutaka summit.

Rugby fans could be forced to sheepishly reach for the winter woollies, with temperatures expected to plunge to 4 degrees celsius for Saturday's grudge match between France and the All Blacks in Wellington.

Snow and ice closed roads, schools and airports as an Arctic blast swept up the country yesterday and MetService says there is more to come this weekend.

Weather forecaster Ramon Oosterkamp is warning Wellingtonians to batten down the hatches for a southerly storm expected to last till Monday.

Foul weather is expected in Wellington for the test match at Westpac Stadium.

"Given wind chill factor, spectators at the game should prepare for four-degree temperatures," Mr Oosterkamp said.

Minimum temperature in Wellington

Yesterday: 1C, Today: 3C

Coldest temperature recorded in June for Wellington: -1.2C in 1919.

The lowest temperature recorded in New Zealand was on July 3, 1995, -21.6C at Ophir, Central Otago.

Abridged

Shore freezes over and more to come

By TANYA KATTERNS - The Dominion Post 20/06/2009

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/sunday-star-times/news/latest-news/2518791/Shore-freezes-over-and-more-to-come>



NICOLA CUSTANCE

PRETTY SLICK: Pauatahanui Inlet displays an unusual frozen shoreline.

It was fine weather for polar bears, but not so hot for humans.

In the lower North Island, Paraparaumu woke up to a frozen -6.7C and the sea froze over on the shoreline of Pauatahanui Inlet.

With the shortest day of the year tomorrow, MetService is warning that frigid days are not over yet. The lowest air temperature was recorded in Tongariro a chilling -8.6C, though an estimated -11C "on the ground". Nelson was also bearing the brunt of the cold snap with a thick white frost and -10.6C ground temperature early yesterday.

Masterton recorded -6.2C, Levin -5.6C and Kelburn -1.6C. However, most roads remained open. Some streets in the Central Plateau resembled ice-rinks, but after a layer of grit was laid there were no closures.

The Rimutaka Hill Road was closed on and off throughout the morning as contractors cleared sleet and ice. Abridged

Insurance bills to soar

By LOIS WATSON - Sunday Star Times 21/06/2009

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/business/2520757/Insurance-bills-to-soar>

The insurance industry says premiums have not kept up with repair costs.



Many homeowners face steep premium increases as insurance companies try to claw back the huge payouts they have made in recent years.

In the year ending September 2008, New Zealand insurance companies paid out a record \$566 million in domestic building and contents insurance claims. Industry insiders say this level of claims means companies now have little choice but to increase their premiums if they want to stay in the black.

Gary Young, chief executive of the Insurance Brokers' Association, said domestic insurance premiums were definitely rising: "Premium rates have fallen behind the increased cost of replacing housing.

Over the past five years building costs had increased at a faster pace than insurance premiums. Increased frequency of personal insurance claims and weather events such as storms and flooding, combined with economic challenges, have also significantly influenced the cost of claims. Abridged

Wellington shivers as southerlies bite

By MICHAEL FOX - Stuff.co.nz 23/06/2009

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/2526339/Wellington-shivers-as-southerlies-bite/>

Wellingtonians bemoaning the consistent cold weather have been vindicated by new figures released by the MetService.



KENT BLECHYNDEN/Dominion Post

WINTRY BLASTS: Between May 1 and June 21 Wellington copped 27 southerly days, with 16 of those wet.

"MetService data confirms the talk of the town that Wellingtonians have been experiencing a sustained southerly assault since May", he said.

Results show that in the 52 days between May 1 and June 21, Wellington copped 27 southerly days. On top of that, 16 of those days were wet.

This compares with 20 southerly days in the same period last year, of which 13 were wet.

Dunedin came second with 17 southerly days, and 13 wet ones compared with eight and four last year.

Christchurch and Auckland were equal with 13 southerly days. Twelve of these were wet in Christchurch and only nine in Auckland. In the same period last year, Auckland had 13 southerly days, but Christchurch only had five.

Mr McDavitt added that playing fields around the country this winter got muddy earlier than normal because of a very wet May.

"The hardest place to play weekend sport recently has been in Wellington. Their last dry weekend was the first weekend of May.

While temperatures across the country had taken a sharp dive into in May, they were now levelling out.

The coolest time of the year is likely to be between mid July and early August, as per normal, he said.

Flood fears as district faces continuing rain

Monday, 29 June 2009 Gisborne Herald By Marianne Gillingham

<http://www.gisborneherald.co.nz/Default.aspx?s=3&s1=2&id=12499>

Rivers were rising and drains around Gisborne city were overloaded as between 80-100 millimetres of rain fell in the 24 hours until 9am today. There was widespread surface flooding around the city and across the Poverty Bay Flats. With MetService this morning renewing and upgrading its heavy rain warning for the district, Civil Defence officer Richard Steele was keeping a close eye on the situation. The worst of the rain appeared to be concentrated in the area south of Tolaga Bay. Abridged



Mangapapa resident Arnold Hutchings keeps a concerned eye as the level of Mangapapa Stream under a footbridge at the back of his home reaches new heights. He was one of several residents who called The Herald, alarmed at the rapidly rising water in the area this morning. Picture by Paul Rickard

Rising rivers spark Gisborne flood concerns

Tuesday Jun 30, 2009 NZ Herald By David Kraitzick with NZPA



Civil Defence is warning Gisborne area residents to be ready to leave their homes, as river levels across the region rise rapidly.

Residents from Mangatuna, 65km northeast of Gisborne, are currently being evacuated while those in Te Karaka are being warned of their probable isolation by tonight, said Civil Defence.

Gisborne's Civil Defence emergency operation was activated about 9.30am today as rivers around the Poverty Bay and Uawa catchments rose past warning levels, in the face of continuing south-easterly rain.

WeatherWatch analyst Philip Duncan said there is a "very high risk of slips and flooding over the next 24 to 36 hours".

Rainfall totals have reached the 180mm mark in both the Waipaoa and Uawa catchments, with a further heavy rain warning for another 150mm-200mm in the hills around Gisborne and Tolaga Bay from 8am today until 2pm tomorrow.

Yesterday's storm brought more than 1000 bolts of forked lightning to Auckland and Northland, while heavy rain caused slips and flooding, resulting in road closures in the central North Island and Manawatu.

Rain also caused slips in the Manawatu Gorge and contractors were called in to keep the road open.

The MetService said today the vigorous low that had caused the storm was now sitting north of Bay of Plenty and was predicted to move slowly east or southeast.

About 180mm of rain was also expected in the ranges north of Mohaka, in the Hawke's Bay, with snow falling down to about 900m. Snow warnings were also issued for the Desert Road in the central North Island and Porters Pass in central Canterbury. Abridged

MetService Launches New Warning Service

Monday, 29 June 2009, 4:35 pm

MetService has today announced a new warning service, commencing 1 July, that will warn people of localised severe weather caused by thunderstorms up to two hours in advance.

“Individual thunderstorms don't affect big areas like lows or fronts – and they only last an hour or two. But the sheer intensity of the rain, wind or hail associated with them can have a big impact. According to the Insurance Council of New Zealand website, insurance claims resulting from the tornadoes in Taranaki in early July 2007 totalled about \$8 million, while the cost of a hail storm in Canterbury in November 2008 was about \$11 million”, commented Peter Kreft of MetService.

“The Severe Thunderstorm Warning service may provide up to two hours notice of such a weather event”, says Kreft. “Warnings will be available by email and on the MetService website.”

The new service will be invaluable for those managing risk, particularly in the outdoors. Severe Thunderstorm Warnings will provide detailed information on the expected track of the thunderstorm and associated severe weather. Warnings will only be issued once severe thunderstorms have been identified and will be valid for up to two hours.

Weather radar is essential for identifying and tracking thunderstorms. Because of this, Severe Thunderstorm Warnings will only be made available to places within 150 km of a weather radar. To make the service available to more New Zealanders, MetService is installing radars in the Far North, Western Bay of Plenty, Mahia and on the South Island West Coast over the next three years. All of New Zealand, including areas that are beyond the range of a weather radar, will continue to be covered by the Severe Thunderstorm Outlook and Severe Thunderstorm Watch. Both of these services are available from MetService's website, and the Severe Thunderstorm Watch is also available by email.

Thunderstorms occur in varying circumstances over different parts of New Zealand. In inland and eastern parts of both islands, they tend to occur most often in the afternoons and evenings of summer and autumn. In the west of both islands, however, they are often associated with vigorous and fast moving cold fronts and can occur at any time of the day and in any season. For more information on how to stay safe in a thunderstorm visit: www.metservice.co.nz