

Weather Data summary for March 2024 for the Blenheim Meteorological station located at Grovetown Park.

Table 1: Weekly temperatures, rainfall and sunshine during March 2024

| | Mean (°C) | Mean Max (°C) | Mean Min (°C) | Rainfall (mm) | Sunshine (hours) | Windrun (km) |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| 1 st - 7 th | 16.0 (-0.1) | 22.4 (+0.8) | 9.6 (-1.0) | 17.6 | 66.8 | 294.6 |
| 8 th - 14 th | 16.6 (+0.5) | 22.1 (+0.5) | 11.2 (+0.6) | 0.0 | 52.3 | 214.9 |
| 15 th - 21 st | 12.5 (-3.6) | 19.1 (-2.5) | 6.0 (-4.6) | 7.4 | 73.2 | 187.6 |
| 22 nd - 28 th | 16.4 (+0.3) | 22.4 (+0.8) | 10.3 (-0.3) | 0.0 | 45.9 | 245.3 |
| 29 th – 31 st (3 days) | 10.2 (-5.9) | 17.1 (-4.5) | 3.4 (-7.2) | 0.0 | 24.7 | 157.0 |
| 1 – 31 March | 14.9 (-1.2) | 21.1 (-0.5) | 8.7 (-1.9) | 25.0 (60%) | 262.9 (114%) | 228.0 (96%) |
| LTA 1986-2023 | 16.1 | 21.6 | 10.6 | 41.4 | 230.6 | 237.6 |

Sunshine

262.9 hours sunshine for March is 114% of the long-term average (LTA) for March of 230.6 hours (1986-2023).
 March 2023 recorded 247.0 hours sunshine.
 March 2022 recorded 238.0 hours sunshine.
 March 2021 recorded 208.8 hours sunshine.
 March 2020 recorded 234.0 hours sunshine.

Total sunshine for the first three months of 2024 was 867.0 hours; 120% of the LTA (1986-2023) of 723.3 hours.

Blenheim recorded well above average sunshine hours in March and is at the top of the table for the month’s total compared with various other towns. For the first three months of the year Richmond has been leading the way with Blenheim close behind (in second place) followed by Appleby. Richmond recorded 617.6 hours in January and February which were 13.5 hours more than Blenheim, however the roles were reversed in March as Blenheim recorded 11.2 hours more than Richmond, thus closing the gap between the two locations by 2.3 hours.

Sunniest towns in March 2024

| | |
|--------------|-------------|
| Blenheim | 262.9 hours |
| Whakatane | 260.3 hours |
| Tekapo | 260.1 hours |
| Cromwell | 253.2 hours |
| Takaka | 252.6 hours |
| Richmond | 251.7 hours |
| New Plymouth | 248.3 hours |
| Appleby | 243.0 hours |
| Napier | 239.1 hours |
| Paraparaumu | 230.8 hours |
| Masterton | 224.1 hours |
| Auckland | 208.9 hours |
| Levin | 208.7 hours |

Ranking of sunniest towns in NZ for the 3-months January to March 2024

| | |
|--------------|-------------|
| Richmond | 869.3 hours |
| Blenheim | 867.0 hours |
| Appleby | 854.7 hours |
| Takaka | 851.0 hours |
| New Plymouth | 842.8 hours |
| Tekapo | 829.4 hours |
| Whakatane | 806.4 hours |

| | |
|----------|-------------|
| Cromwell | 784.6 hours |
| Auckland | 763.4 hours |
| Napier | 752.9 hours |

Rainfall

25.0 mm rain is 62% of the LTA for March of 41.4 mm (1986-2023).

March 2023 rainfall was 55.6 mm.

March 2022 rainfall was 17.0 mm.

March 2021 rainfall was 79.2 mm.

March 2020 rainfall was 11.2 mm.

March 2024 rainfall was below average as there were no significantly large rain events during the month. There were just 2 rain days during the month; i.e. days that recorded 1.0 mm or more of rain. The largest of the two rain days was 17.6 mm on 4 March. January and February each recorded 2 rain days. The first 3 months of 2024 was well below the LTA which is making it hard for farmers heading into winter.

Total rainfall for the first 3-months of 2024 was 44.2 mm; 33.5% of the LTA of 131.9 mm

Total rainfall for the first 3-months of 2023 was 156.2 mm; 118% of the LTA

Total rainfall for the first 3-months of 2022 was 183.0 mm; 139% of the LTA

Total rainfall for the first 3-months of 2021 was 109.8 mm; 83% of the LTA.

Soil moisture

Average shallow soil moisture (5-35 cm depth) at the Grovetown Park weather station during March was 16.8%.

Shallow soil moisture was 14.2% on 1 March which only increased to 15.6% by 31 March.

Air Temperature

Mean temperature of 14.9°C was 1.2°C below the LTA temperature for March of 16.1°C (1986-2023).

March 2023 mean temperature was 16.6°C

March 2022 mean temperature was 16.3°C.

March 2021 mean temperature was 16.2°C.

March 2020 mean temperature was 15.5°C.

The overall daily temperatures for March were below average predominantly due to the colder than average daily minimum temperatures. The third week was especially cool, with the mean temperature of 12.5°C. The final three days of the month had a daily average temperature of 10.2°C. The hottest maximum temperature of 26.9°C was recorded on 2 March; 30 March recorded the coldest air temperature of 2.3°C, which is 5th coldest since 1986.

Wind Run

March 2024 recorded average daily wind-run of 228 km compared to the LTA of 237.6 km (1996-2023); 96% of the LTA.

While March recorded lower than average wind-run it was considerably windier than March 2013 to 2022 which recorded average daily wind-run of only 199 km.

11 days in March recorded above average daily wind-run; i.e. greater than 237.6 km.

The maximum instantaneous wind-gust recorded during the month was 61.2 km/hr on 4 March. The highest daily windrun was 388 km on 2 and 8 March.

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