

March 2019

Hawke's Bay Trends

RAINFALL
TEMPERATURES
RIVER FLOW
GROUNDWATER & SOIL
RECREATIONAL WATER QUALITY
LONGER FORECAST

THE STATE OF OUR ENVIRONMENT

March 2019

Lame but true, I'm beside myself with excitement. My banana plant is, for the first time in the 5 or so years I've had it, growing bananas! For someone who eats three bananas a day, I'm fair busting with anticipation and will struggle to contain myself until harvesting in spring. I put it down to a good summer and a hot start to autumn. March was a good 1.5°C warmer than usual, matching our above average sea temperatures.

Actually March was more like summer than summer, with not only hot weather but also a lack of rain. It meant the month's river flows weren't hell-bent on flowing and soil moisture, on the Heretaunga Plains at least, started taking a bit of a hit. Groundwater levels for now are about normal. A sure sign we've struck autumn is the pending end of daylight saving (heavy sigh) and the recreational water quality report saying a final hurrah. Apart from the coastal lagoons, our bathing spots ended on a good note.

Kathleen Kozyniak
Principal Scientist - Climate and Air



SUMMARY

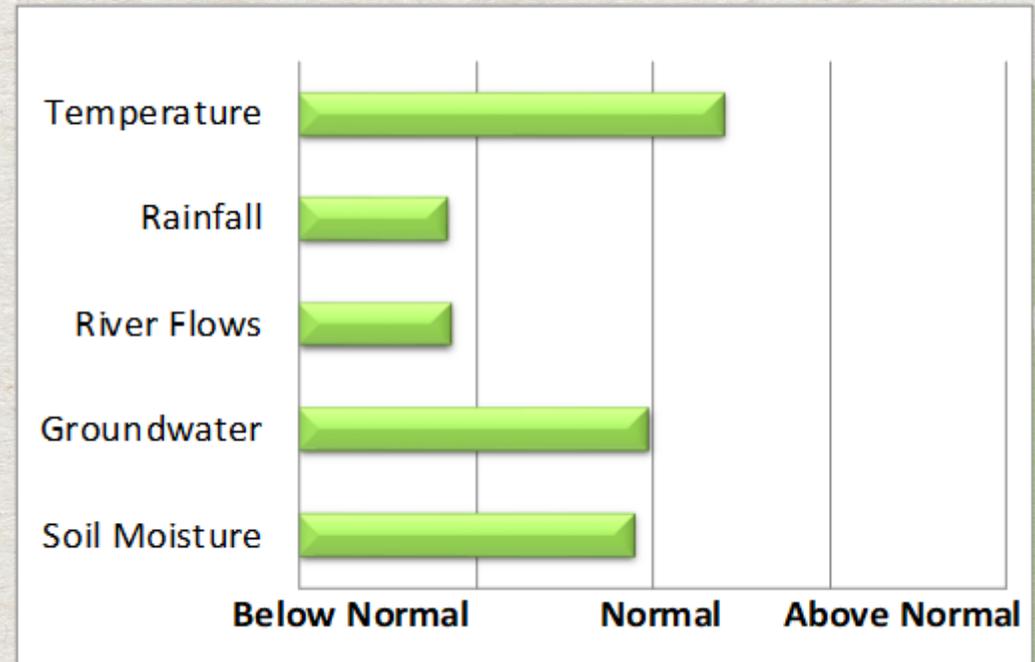
March 2019

Touch of summer, hot and dry.

This is a summary of the regions rainfall, river flows, ground water, air quality and soil moisture levels. Data and images provided by HBRC.

April to June Forecast

Temperature	Above average
Rain	Below or near normal
River flows	Below or near normal
Soil moisture	Below or near normal



source : NIWA

For more information
www.hbrc.govt.nz
P: 06 835 9200

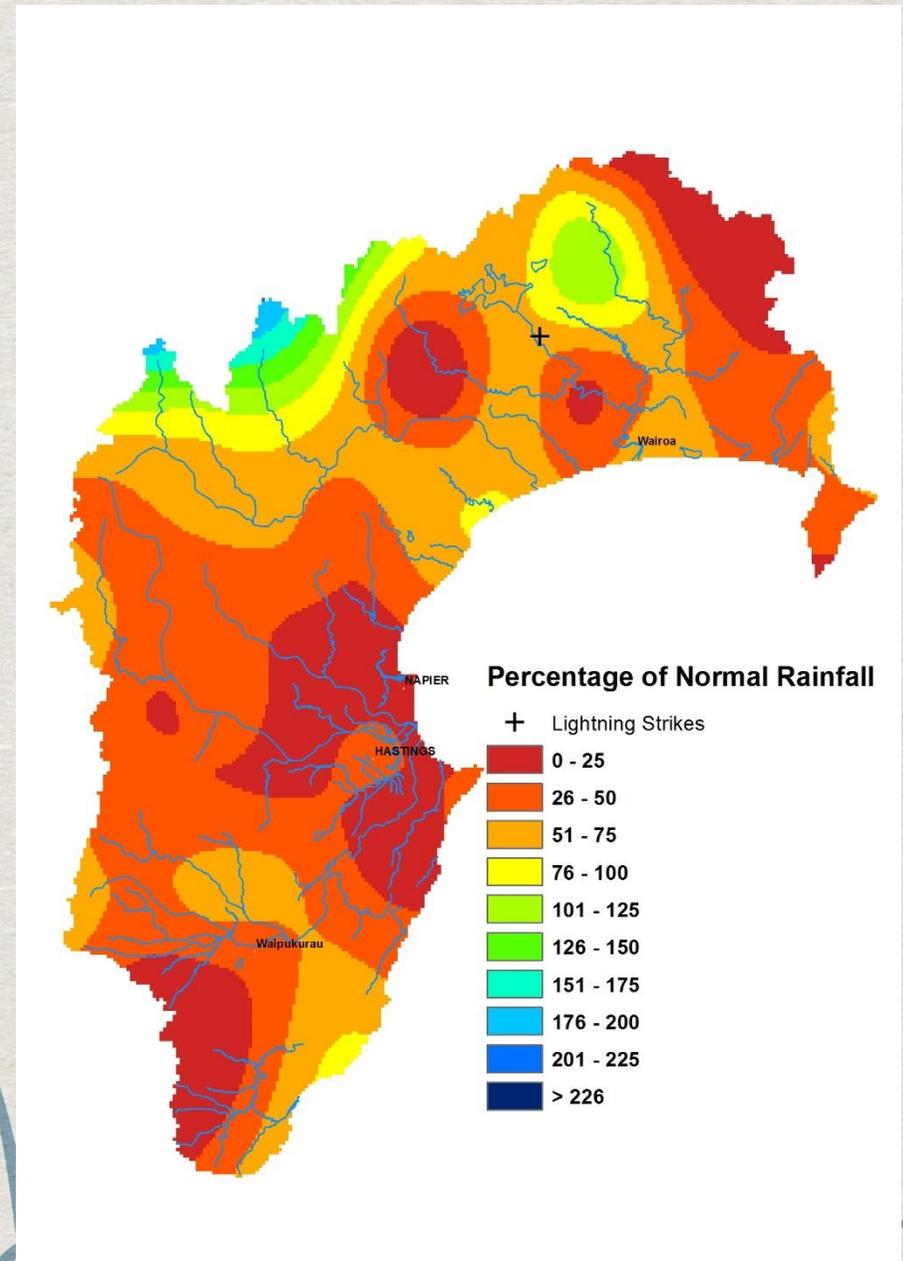
RAINFALL

Below normal, especially on the Heretaunga Plains.

Percentage of normal February rainfall
(30 year average)

For areas in the region:

Waikaremoana	65%
Northern HB	49%
Tangoio	37%
Kaweka	42%
Ruahine	46%
Heretaunga Plains	23%
Ruataniwha Plains	42%
<u>Southern HB</u>	<u>31%</u>
Hawke's Bay Region	42%



TEMPERATURES

Gorgeous.

Mean Difference from Normal

Maximum Temperature: 1.5°C

Minimum Temperature: 1.8 °C

Mean Daily Maximum: 22°C

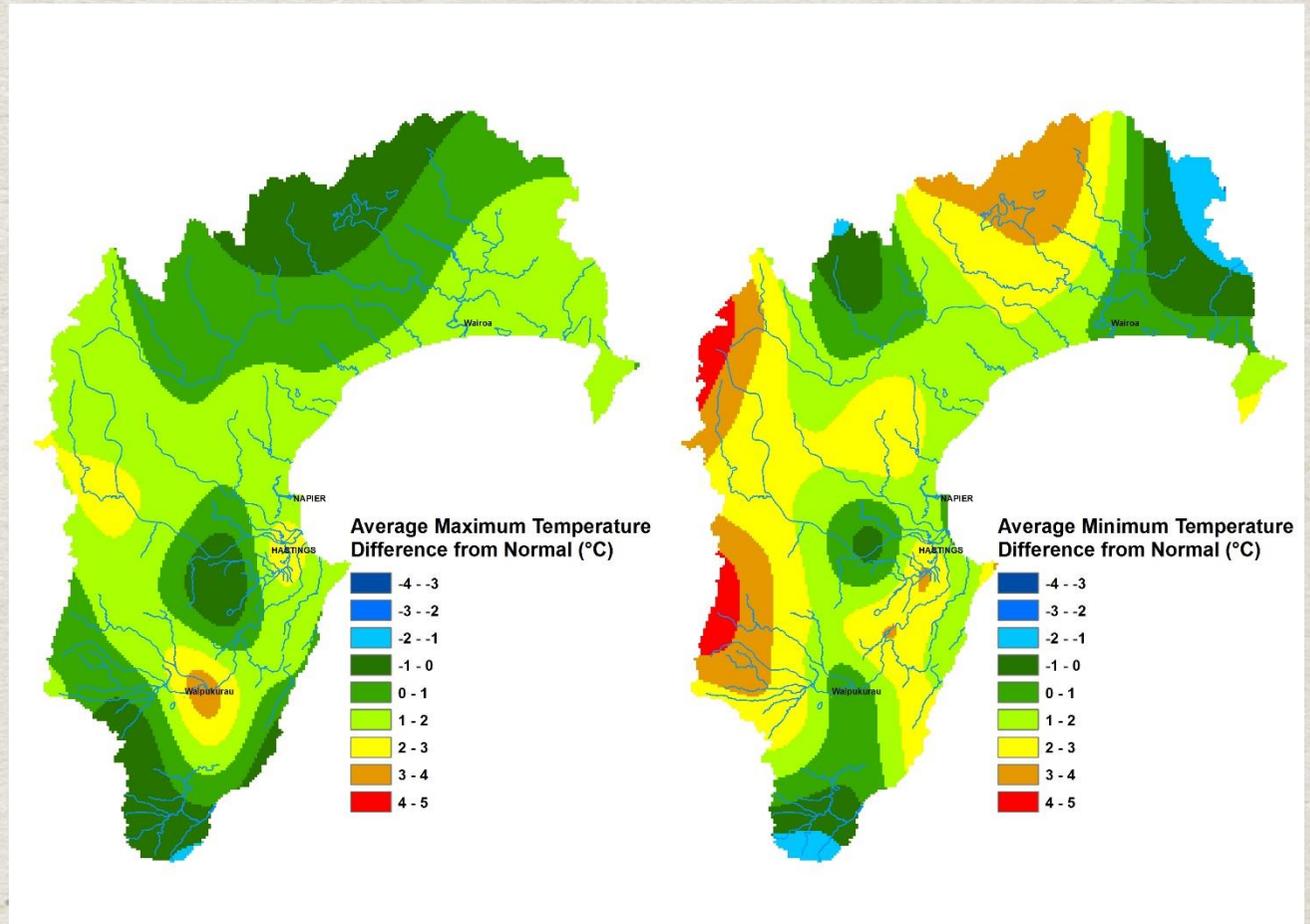
Mean Daily Minimum: 12°C

Highest Daily: 29.9°C

Location: Waipukurau

Lowest Daily: -0.1°C

Location: Taharua



GROUNDWATER & SOIL MOISTURE

Groundwater:

Heretaunga basin:

Mostly normal levels.

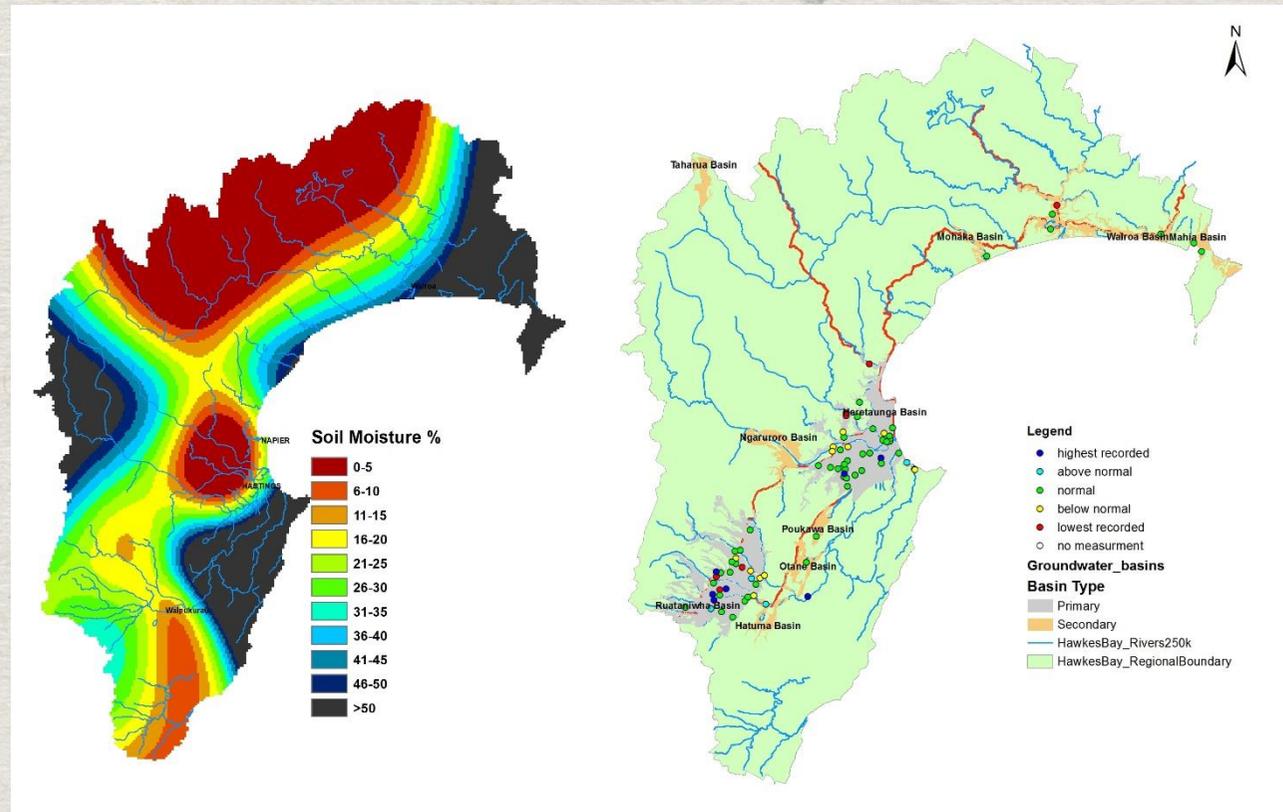
Ruataniwha basin:

Mostly normal and above normal levels.

Secondary basins:

Mostly normal and above normal levels.

Soil Moisture: Near or below normal



LONGER FORECAST

We have a weak central Pacific El Niño in place that may continue through autumn and winter.

The weather pattern for the next few months is characterised by high pressure in the west and low in the east, giving both a southerly and westerly tilt to the winds for the overall period. Seasonal models pick temperatures to be normal or above normal on the basis that we still have warmer than usual seas around us, but they could be tempered by the predicted southerly bent to the wind.

The westerly aspect diminishes the likelihood of the next three months being wetter than usual and the more likely scenario is normal or below normal rainfall. But just to confuse matters and make me look like a complete toss pot, the weather over the next week or so features easterlies and rain while westerlies appear more dominant later in the period.

Kathleen Kozyniak
Principal Scientist - Climate and Air

Pastures greened up after the late February rain but in the southern half of the region soil moisture dropped quickly in March. Pasture growth slowed and pasture quality declined in the dry, warm, windy conditions.

The growth early summer means there is still rougher cattle feed that needs to be cleaned up before winter. Some areas had very good amounts of clover in pastures this summer. Farms have been more lightly stocked than usual, partly as a result of lamb losses in spring. Stock have been held on longer but less trading stock has been bought than usual. Higher pasture covers have helped retain moisture especially in the north.

Rain in April while soils are still warm will be important, especially in the higher country, to build good pasture covers before winter. With good amounts of hay, baleage and silage made earlier in the season, farmers are not too concerned but are closely monitoring.

Ewes went to the ram in very good condition and this should lift lambing results later in the year. However, the lack of good quality pasture to 'flush' ewes, and the potential presence of facial eczema, may depress lambing percentages. Cattle are generally in very good condition.

Hawke's Bay dairy farmers are having a good season compared with other parts of the country, with adequate grass growth and twice the normal amount of pasture supplement made earlier. Cow condition is good. Cows are still milking well and most will be milked into May. Pregnancy test results have been pleasing.

Settled weather during March with warm days and cooler nights has helped with the ripening and harvest of the region's apple and wine grape crops. The settled weather has been appreciated by apple growers in particular who are harvesting a large crop with a shortage of labour.

Hawke's Bay wine makers are buoyed about the 2019 vintage. The rain in late February was not significant and accompanied by cool temperatures and breezy conditions which helped dry the canopy. Chardonnay has been harvested in optimum condition, with similar expectations for Merlot. Syrah and Cabernet Sauvignon should be harvested by the end of April.

Gillian Mangin and Annette Carey

