

Coastal Storm Database - Event Summary

Date: 13-14 May 1948	Wind Direction: S
Event Type: Wind/Wave	Gisborne Duration (Hours): -
Location: Gisborne/Napier/Wellington	Wellington Duration (Hours): -
Origin: Tasman Sea	Pressure Gradient: S to SE
Type: East Coast Low	

Synoptic Conditions

A cyclone was east (or northeast) of the North Island while an anticyclone in the south Tasman sea extended onto the South Island. A strong S to SE airstream developed between these systems over the eastern North Island.

Sea Conditions

Huge seas off Gisborne and Napier

Impact Area

Gisborne

Impacts and Damages

- Worst flood on record: largest in terms of peak flow and area inundated
- Gisborne totally isolated; no road, rail or air operations due to extensive flooding
- Waipaoa recorded at 30ft 6in above normal and the flow reached 3554 cubic meters/second
- Airport closed due to surface flooding
- Power outages, roofs blown off and one house lifted complete with concrete pile and tipped onto side
- Waipaoa river broke its banks and flooded Poverty Bay flats; several houses flooded or evacuated and big stock losses
- Coastal vessel heading south to Napier forced to shelter at Port
- Huge seas in Poverty Bay; waves reached right up city beaches (Waikanae and Kaiti)

Napier

- Coastal shipping disorganised by heavy seas

Wairoa

- Worst flood on record in Wairoa; town bridge closed and power cuts

Data Source

- 1 Settlers Race to Save Stock from Overflowing Rivers: Dominion Post, 14/05/1948, p8
- 2 Waipaoa River Breaks Banks - Gisborne Flats Inundated: Gisborne Herald, 14/05/1948, p6
- 3 Raging Floodwaters Isolate Gisborne: Gisborne Herald, 14/05/1948, p6
- 4 Interruptions to Power Lines: Gisborne Herald, 14/05/1948, p6
- 5 Roofs Blown Off: Gisborne Herald, 14/05/1948, p6
- 6 Gale Blows Te Hapara House 30YDS, Shifts Another: Gisborne Herald, 14/05/1948, p6
- 7 Extensive Area Inundated - Flood Peak Reaches Lowlands: Gisborne Herald, 14/05/1948, p6
- 8 'Drome Flooded: Gisborne Herald, 14/05/1948, p6
- 9 District Rivers Rising in Worst Storm for Years: Gisborne Herald, 13/05/1948, p6
- 10 Wild Night Experienced at Gisborne: Evening Post, 13/05/1948, p9
- 11 High Winds Cause Delays in Air Services: Dominion Post, 13/05/1948, p6
- 12 Hawkes Bay Shares in Prevalent Cold and Stormy Weather: Dominion Post, 14/05/1948, p8
- 13 Great Flood in Gisborne Area: Evening Post, 14/05/1948, p10
- 14 Flood Waters Cause Heavy Losses in East Coast Areas: Dominion Post, 15/05/1948, p8
- 15 Wairoa Flooding is Worst Yet: Dominion Post, 15/05/1948, p8
- 16 Wild Weather Continues in Hawkes Bay: Dominion Post, 15/05/1948, p8
- 17 Floods Ravage East Coast - Gisborne Isolated - Homes Evacuated: Evening Post, 15/05/1948, p1
- 18 Heaviest Flood Since P.B Settlement Began: Gisborne Herald, 25/05/1948, p6
- 19 Filled All Alluvial Flats: Waipaoa Reclaimed Its Own: Gisborne Herald, 25/05/1948, p6
- 20 Waipaoa River's Terrific Flow: Gisborne Herald, 15/04/1948, p5