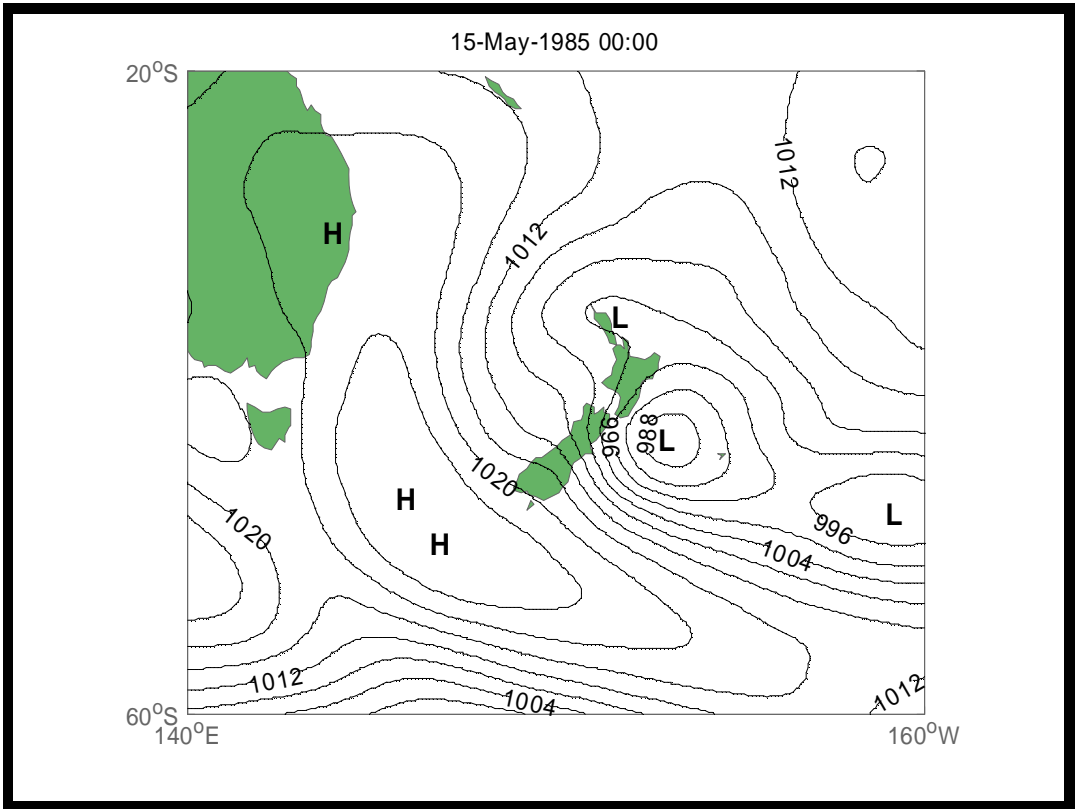


# Coastal Storm Database - Event Summary

Date: <b>14-17 May 1985</b>	Wind Direction: <b>S</b>
Event Type: <b>Wind/Wave</b>	Gisborne Duration (Hours): <b>-</b>
Location: <b>Gisborne/Wellington</b>	Wellington Duration (Hours): <b>90</b>
Origin: <b>Subtropics</b>	Pressure Gradient: <b>S to SSE</b>
Type: <b>East Coast Low</b>	



### Synoptic Conditions

A cyclone from the subtropics (NE of NZ) moved WSW towards the Chatham Islands. This cyclone then intensified and on the 14th spread a strong SSE airstream on its southwestern side over the South Island and lower North Island. As the parent cyclone moved away east a secondary centre developed west of the Chatham Islands and maintained the very strong S to SE airstream over the South Island and lower North Island. This cyclone remained west of Chatham Islands and off the central North Island through to late on the 15th and the very strong S to SSE airstream continued and spread along the entire eastern North Island. The cyclone began moving east on the 16th and the pressure gradient weakened slightly as an anticyclone in Tasman sea moved onto NZ.

This prolonged period of intense winds and stagnation of the cyclone was caused by the cyclone being almost completely enclosed by high pressure. For example, an intense anticyclone was to the west with a ridge to the north (into north Tasman sea) and another large anticyclone was situated at 140W,40S with a ridge to the NW.

### Sea Conditions

Waves estimated at 10m off Kaikoura and in Cook Strait  
Big Seas along the East Coast

### Maximum Wave Statistics

Location	Max Wave Height (m)	Period (s)
Wellington	5.5	9

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Napier	5.7	9
Gisborne	6.5	9

\*Highest Significant Wave Height

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### Maximum Wind Gusts (kph and dir)

Date	Gisborne	Napier	Wellington
14-May-85	43 (W)	48 (W)	132 (SW)
15-May-85	83 (SW)	89 (SW)	132 (SW)
16-May-85	74 (SW)	72 (SW)	126 (S)
17-May-85	56 (S)	45 (SW)	80 (S)

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### Impact Area

### Impacts and Damages

Gisborne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Power disruptions throughout city</li> <li>High seas off Gisborne coast, ripped boats from mooring</li> </ul>
Wellington	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Debris scattered over road from Houghton Bay to Island Bay; most of south road closed; part of road washed away at Lowry Bay</li> <li>Homes evacuated at high tide in Owhiro Bay</li> <li>Roofs torn from houses and garages around the city</li> <li>Met Office said weather conditions very similar to Wahine storm of 1968</li> <li>One freighter was turned back to Picton because of heavy seas at Port entrance</li> <li>Airport closed; upto noon on 15th 67 flights cancelled</li> <li>Petone-Johnsonville railway washed by waves; scouring near Ngauranga put railway out of action</li> <li>Power disruptions throughout city affected thousands of houses</li> <li>Power disruptions throughout region</li> <li>Moa Point Road was closed due to high seas</li> <li>Concrete seawall at Lyall Bay destroyed by storm waves; Queens Drive between Owhiro and Lyall Bay and from Moa Point closed</li> <li>Main doors of Lyall Bay surf club smashed in by storm waves</li> <li>Island Bay club has nearly 1m of sand in basement</li> <li>All ferry sailings cancelled</li> </ul>
Wairarapa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fallen trees and power outages</li> <li>Seas so big they sent spray as high as the light beam of Castlepoint lighthouse; waves swept away 75m of wooden accessway to lighthouse</li> </ul>
Canterbury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Heavy seas washed out main trunk line on State highway 1 near Kaikoura; waves estimated at 10m</li> </ul>

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### Data Source

- 1 Storm Swamps Houses: Evening Post, 16/05/1985, p3
- 2 Caught in Debris: Evening Post, 15/05/1985, p1
- 3 Chaos as Storm Smashes City: Evening Post, 15/05/1985, p1
- 4 Trauma on Ferry: Evening Post, 15/05/1985, p1
- 5 Southern Coast Takes a Pounding: Evening Post, 15/05/1985, p3
- 6 Ship Lost: Evening Post, 15/05/1985, p3
- 7 Wairarapa Battering Less Harsh: Evening Post, 15/05/1985, p3
- 8 Vital Light Snuffed Out by Storm: Evening Post, 15/05/1985, p3
- 9 Travel Disrupted, Properties Battered: Evening Post, 15/05/1985, p64
- 10 Storms Costs Counted: Evening Post, 16/05/1985, p1
- 11 Airport Becomes Centre of Stoicism For Travellers: Evening Post, 15/05/1985, p3
- 12 Counting the Costs: Evening Post, 16/05/1985, p3
- 13 Huge Seas Batter Kaikoura Coast: Dominion Post, 16/05/1985, p1
- 14 Causeway Collapses: Evening Post, 16/05/1985, p3
- 15 Seawall Repair Bills Top \$1/2m: Evening Post, 17/05/1985, p3
- 16 Surf Clubs Take Storm Battering: Evening Post, 17/05/1985, p1
- 17 Storm Disaster For Fishing Boats: Gisborne Herald, 16/05/1985, p1
- 18 Gisborne Escapes Serious Damage: Gisborne Herald, 16/05/1985, p1
- 19 Wild Wind, High Seas Batter Wellington: Dominion Post, 15/05/1985, p1

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- 20 Houses, Roads, Boats Hit As Storm Fury Blasts Capital: Dominion Post, 16/05/1985, p6
  - 21 Worst Storm in 10 Years: Dominion Post, 16/05/1985, p1
  - 22 Debris Clearing Starts as Transport Links Reopen: Dominion Post, 17/05/1985, p3
  - 23 Sea Fury Hurlled Rocks at Houses: Evening Post, 16/05/1985, p1
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