

Cyclone Bola 1988

(Napier City Council, n.d.)

Type of Event: Cyclone
When: 7 March, 1988
Where: East Coast, North Island

One of the most damaging cyclones to hit New Zealand, Cyclone Gisborne/East Cape region in March 1988. Slowing as it moved over, it brought torrential rain for three days.

What Happened?

- The East Coast of the North Island suffered devastating floods.
 - Winds up to 100kph toppled trees and tore off roofs. Heavy rain caused power outages, sewage services and road closures.
 - Three people died when their car was swept away by floodwaters. Two other occupants in the car were saved.
 - Te Karaka was evacuated when the swollen Waipoa River came close to flooding the township of 500 people.
 - State Highway 2 was closed in several places by slips and flooding. When people in one house couldn't be evacuated by helicopter, horses were brought in to get them out.
 - States of emergency were declared in Wairoa, Gisborne and the East Cape. In Gisborne, the water pipeline from the supplying dams was lost.
 - Cyclone Bola's force was also felt in Northland where torrential rain caused flooding and cut power and telephone services.
- A state of emergency was declared in Dargaville. The main water line was washed away with a bridge, disrupting supply to the township.

Other Impacts And Outcomes

- A Disaster Relief Committee was set up to assess storm damage on the East Coast.
- A peak rainfall of 916 millimetres over the three days was recorded inland from Tolaga Bay.
- The most intense rainfall was on steep East Coast hill country. Areas where there had been little or no soil conservation work done or no flood control schemes suffered the worst damage.
- Flooding affected some 3600 hectares of farming and horticultural land, with the associated losses estimated at \$90 million.
- 1765 farmers were affected by damage to their land and crops and stock losses. Cyclone Bola hit some areas just as harvesting was about to start.
- Repairs to Gisborne's water supply cost an estimated \$6.6 million. Damage to East Coast forests was estimated at \$8.6 million.
- An inquiry into flood management followed. Recommendations included soil conservation work, improved river control and management and better land use planning.

Statistics

Formed	February 24, 1988
Disrupted	March 4, 1988
Highest Winds	165 km/h (105 mph) (10-minute sustained) 195 km/h (120 mph) (1-minute sustained)
Lowest Pressure	940 hPa (mbar)
Fatalities	3 direct
Damage	\$87 million (1988 USD)
Areas Affected	Fiji, Vanuatu, New Zealand

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