

Friday, 31 May 2024

Cold, wet and windy conditions expected across large parts of the country this weekend into early next week (1 to 4 June 2024)

After a relatively dry and warmer-than-usual month of May, South Africans can expect the first significant drop in daytime temperatures over the coming days, with showers and thundershowers possible across most parts and even some snow over elevated areas. This is a result of a developing cut-off low-pressure system (the northwards displacement of a low-pressure in the upper levels of the atmosphere) over the western and southern parts of the country from Sunday into Monday (2 to 3 June). Cut-off low-pressure systems are commonly associated with widespread rainfall, snowfall, strong to gale-force winds, and rough sea conditions in Winter.

Showers and rain will develop along the coastal areas of the Eastern Cape later today (Friday) and extend over much of the province from tomorrow (Saturday). Heavy 24-hour rainfall, with accumulations of 50 to 100 mm are possible, particularly in places along the coastal belt, where there will also be strong to gale-force winds, and very rough sea conditions with wave heights of 5,0 to 6,0 meters. Wave heights of 7,0 to 8,0 meters are likely offshore. Strong winds and rough seas are also expected to spread along the south coast of the Western Cape from Saturday afternoon. **Marine operations and users, including large and small vessels at sea and beachgoers, should take note of the anticipated deteriorating weather and sea conditions.**

By Sunday, as the cut-off low moves over the country from the west, it will result in cold temperatures as well as widespread thundershowers across the western, central, and southern parts, then spreading to the eastern parts later in the day (figure 1A). Some of these storms may develop to become severe in places over the central and eastern interior, resulting in large amounts of small hail and strong damaging winds. Rainfall is expected to continue Monday (figure 1B) over the eastern and southern parts of the country.

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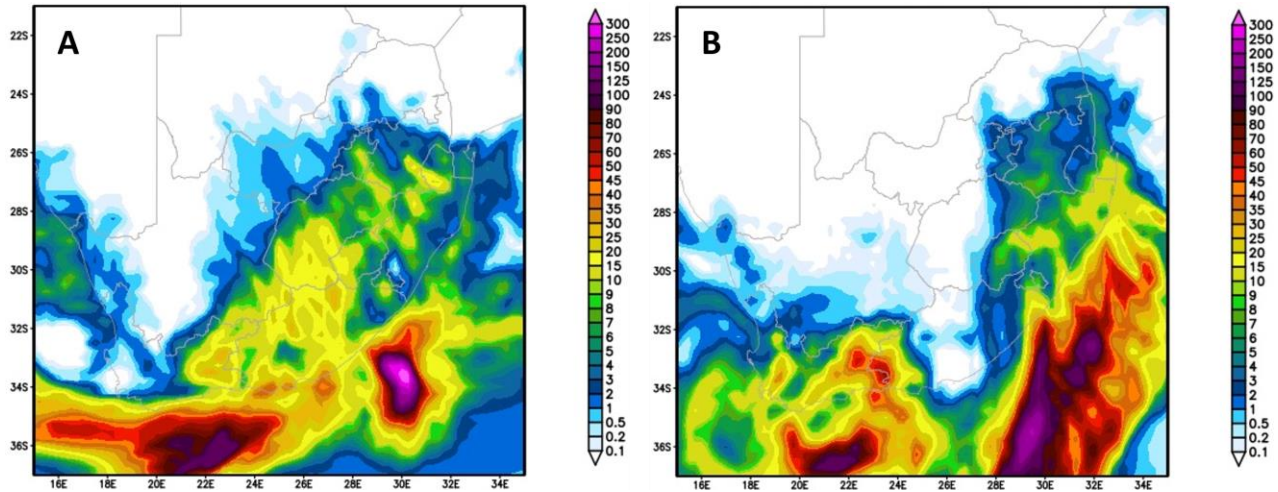


Figure 1: The predicted 24-hour rainfall accumulation (in mm) for Sunday (2 June) (A) and Monday (3 June) (B) over South Africa. Source: Global Forecasting System (GFS), 2024.

Cold temperatures (12-17°C) are expected across the western and southern parts of the country from today onwards, while spreading to the central and eastern parts (including the Free State, North West, Gauteng, Mpumalanga Highveld, and the interior of KwaZulu-Natal) on Monday (figure 2B).

Very cold temperatures (maximum temperatures below 10°C), with mountain snowfalls are possible over the northern high ground of the Eastern Cape, the eastern high ground of the Western Cape, the southern high ground of the Northern Cape, parts of the Drakensberg and in Lesotho on Monday (3 June).

The system is expected to weaken and exit over the country's southern coast on Tuesday, with rainfall still expected over parts of the Western and Eastern Cape. The remainder of the country will see the return of clear weather conditions, but temperatures will remain cold.

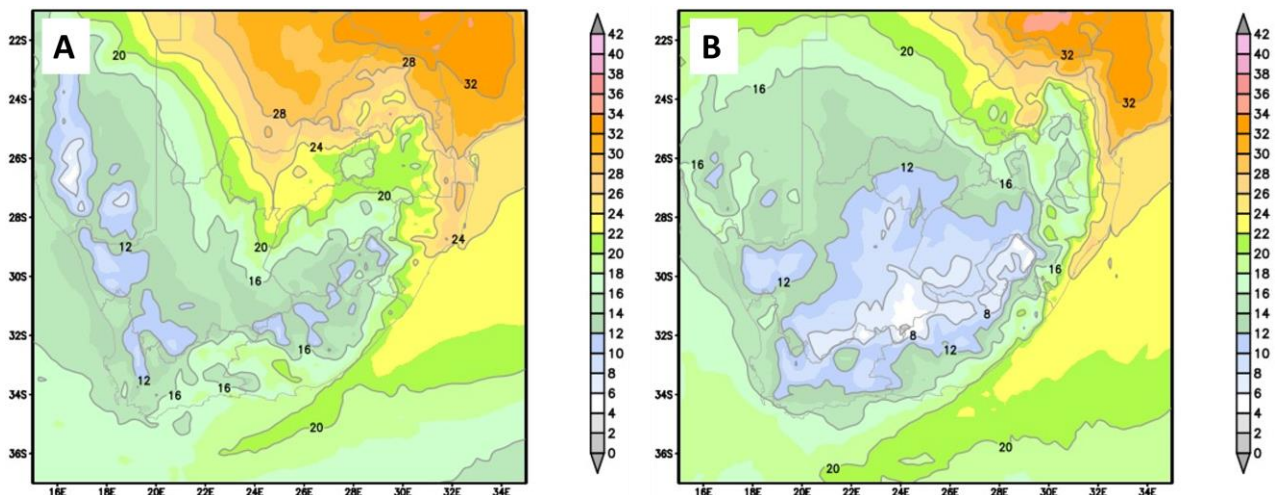


Figure 2: The predicted maximum temperatures (°C) for Sunday (2 June) (A) and Monday (3 June) (B) over South Africa. Source: Global Forecasting System (GFS), 2024.

This particular weather system is currently in the early stages of development and forecasts might change during the course of the weekend. The South African Weather Service will therefore continue to monitor any further developments relating to this weather system and will issue subsequent updates as required. Furthermore, the public is urged and encouraged to regularly follow weather forecasts on television and radio. Updated information in this regard will regularly be available at www.weathersa.co.za as well as via the SA Weather Service X account @SAWeatherServic

Compiled by Wayne Venter

Edited by Ezekiel Sebego

Approved by Mrs Vanetia Phakula, Acting Senior Manager: Disaster Risk Reduction

For technical and weather enquiries:

National Forecasting Centre: Tel: 012 367 6041

Media enquiries: Ms Hannelee Doubell: Manager, Communications; Tel: (012) 367 6104; Cell: 072 222 6305; E-mail: hannelee.doubell@weathersa.co.za

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