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## Cape Town's record-breaking July 2024 rainfall

July 2024 saw record-breaking rainfall totals in some areas of the south-western parts of South Africa, following a slow start to the winter rainfall season.

Beginning in June 2024, rainfall accumulation was notably below normal, consistent with seasonal forecasts that predicted a drier winter period. However, the landscape changed drastically in July, as a series of cold fronts swept through the region, some of which brought severe weather conditions and substantial rainfall.

An analysis of rainfall data from South African Weather Service (SAWS) stations reveals that the Cape Town City (Oranjezicht) station recorded 317,6 mm of rain in July 2024, far exceeding the long-term average of 128,0 mm for this month. This notable total not only exceeded the historical average, but it is also the highest monthly rainfall recorded for July since comprehensive records began in 1960. In contrast, the previous year saw only 81,8 mm of rain in July, highlighting the major difference in rainfall between these two years.

Additionally, the Cape Town International Airport station (**Figure 1**) recorded the highest monthly rainfall total since the station's inception in July 1956, exceeding three times the average for July. This remarkable record underscores the intensity and impact of the multiple cold fronts experienced throughout the month.

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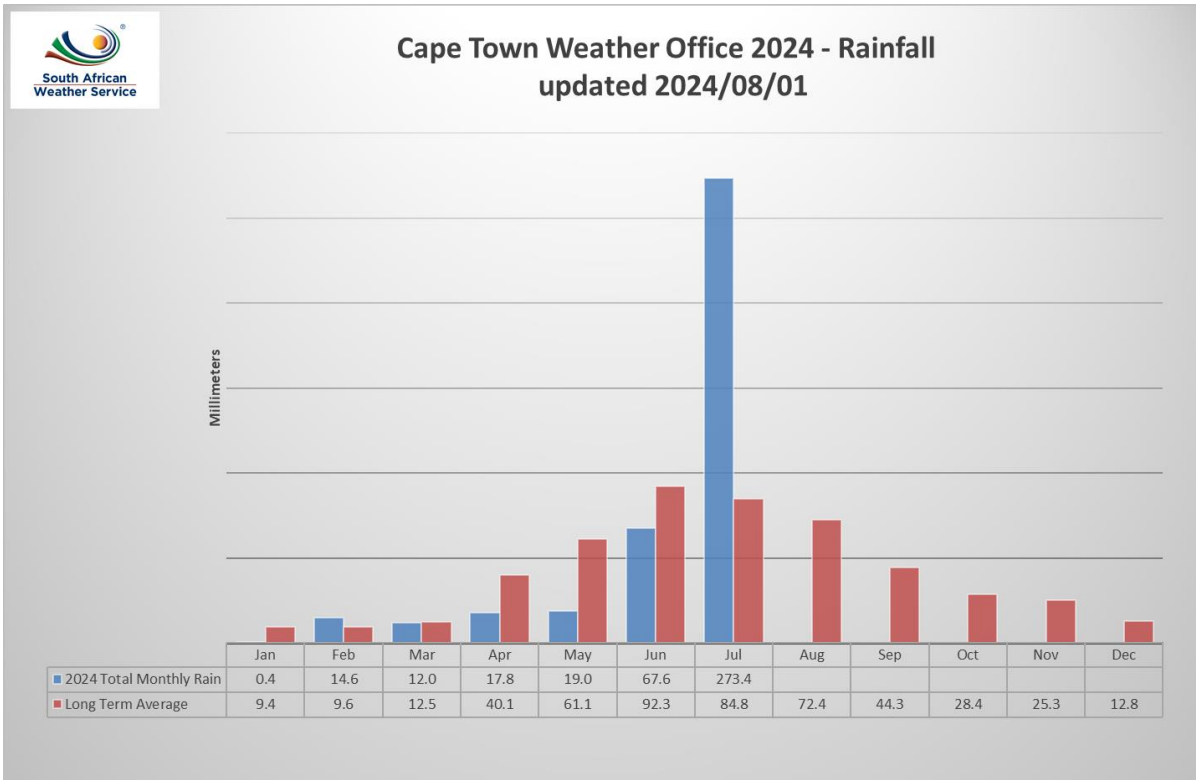


Figure 1: Long term average rain for Cape Town International Airport against 2024 monthly rainfall

Figure 2 shows a spatial rainfall map of South Africa for July 2023 (left) and July 2024 (right). Notably, the south-western parts of the country were significantly wetter in July 2024 than the previous year.

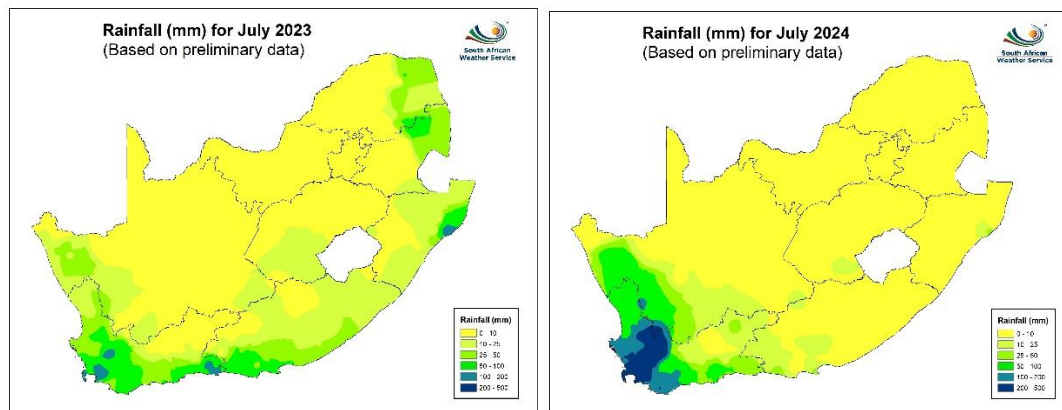


Figure 2: Rainfall map for July 2023 (left) and July 2024 (right)

A further examination of rainfall stations managed by the Cape Town Weather Office indicates that most recorded well above average rainfall during July, with some stations breaking longstanding records.

For example, the station in Newlands at the Kirstenbosch National Botanical Gardens received over 500 mm of rain for July 2024, making it the wettest month on record for this station since 1999. The stations in Franschhoek, Kenilworth, and Villiersdorp, with records dating back to the late 2000s, also reported significant rainfall for the month. These three stations set new records since their inception, even surpassing the total monthly rainfall recorded during the September storm of 2023.

Additionally, the Cape Winelands stations, including Paarl, Worcester, and Jonkershoek, have experienced substantial rainfall this winter season, with long-term monthly records being broken in these areas last month.

**Table 1:** The total rainfall received for July 2024 for the stations under the Cape Town Weather Office

| <b>Automatic Weather Stations</b>  | <b>Total mm</b> |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 712 - Cape Columbine               | 96,8            |
| 713 - Paarl                        | 455,6           |
| 714 - Langebaanweg                 | 96,6            |
| 715 - Malmesbury                   | 201,6           |
| 716 - Langgewens                   | 227,8           |
| 717 - Porterville                  | 130,0           |
| 718 - Robertson                    | 79,0            |
| 719 - Excelsior                    | 261,2           |
| 809 - Atlantis                     | 191,2           |
| 810 - Wellington                   | 280,6           |
| 811 - Geelbek                      | 158,8           |
| 813 - Robben Island                | 233,2           |
| 817 - Cape Town Harbour            | 215,6           |
| 819 - Cape Town City               | 317,6           |
| 820 – SAAO/Observatory             | 316,8           |
| 821 - Worcester                    | 209,2           |
| 822 - Jonkershoek                  | 418,0           |
| 912 - Slangkop/Kommetjie           | 259,3           |
| 916 - Cape Point                   | 89,0            |
| 918 - Hermanus                     | 144,8           |
| 919 - Grootbakenskap Overberg      | 147,8           |
| 920 - Cape Agulhas                 | 100,4           |
| 921 - Struisbaai                   | 151,2           |
| 922 - Swellendam                   | 103,4           |
| 923 - Tygerhoek/Riviersonderend    | 120,8           |
| 925 - Grabouw                      | 468,6           |
| <b>Automatic Rainfall Stations</b> |                 |
| Aston Cellar                       | 93,2            |

|                                 |       |
|---------------------------------|-------|
| Bellville Golf Course           | 308,8 |
| Bredasdorp Klipdale Agri        | 123,4 |
| Dbv - Blaauwblommetjieskloof    | 222,2 |
| Elim SAPS                       | 225,1 |
| Franschhoek                     | 619,2 |
| Genadendal Meulrivier           | 171,0 |
| Kenilworth Race Course          | 563,2 |
| Mitchell's Plain Wolfgat        | 46,8  |
| Montagu - Baden                 | 36,8  |
| Robertson - Heartstone Vineyard | 77,4  |
| Saldahna Kuspatrollie           | 144,2 |
| Stanford Walker Bay Vineyard    | 172,4 |
| Swellendam - Marloth            | 108,4 |
| Swellendam - Napkykmond         | 104,2 |
| Tulbagh - Obiqau                | 259,4 |
| Villiersdorp - SOS              | 499,0 |

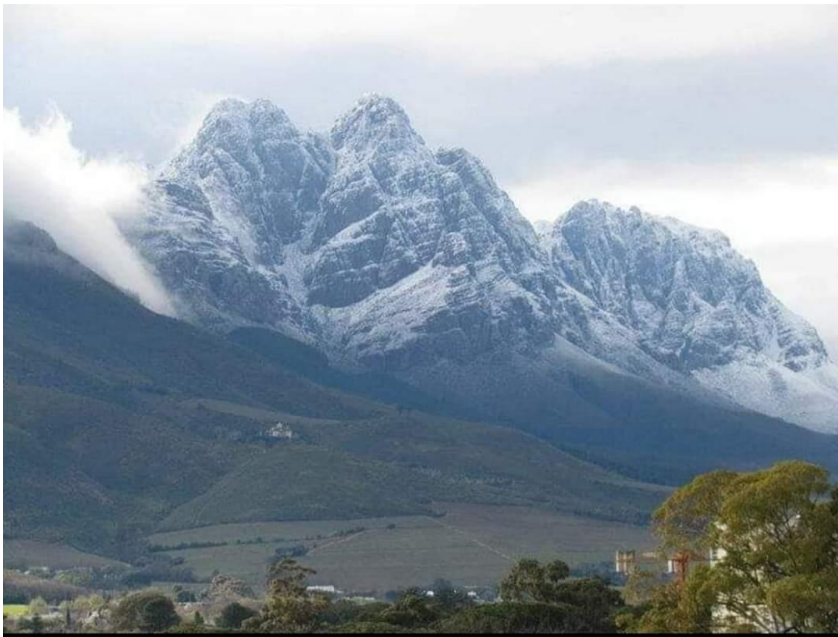
The transition from a dry start to a series of impactful weather systems reminds us of the complexities of our climate. It also emphasises the importance of our role in providing accurate forecasts and timely updates to the public.

This recent uptick in rainfall serves as a reminder of the vital role the SAWS plays in preparing communities for the varying weather conditions that can arise. The fluctuations in weather patterns do not only keep us on our toes but also highlight the importance of preparedness and resilience!

Widespread damage was reported from the start of July well into the month, including strong winds that blew off roofing and minor disruptive hail reported on 7 July 2024, in Stellenbosch's Helshoogte Pass. As usual, thick blankets of snow covered the mountainous areas of the Western Cape, bringing shivering temperatures during this period.



**Figure 3:** Hail in Stellenbosch town on 7 July 2024 (photo credit Facebook)



**Figure 4:** Snow blankets over the Stellenbosch Mountains 7-9 July 2024 (photo credit Facebook)

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