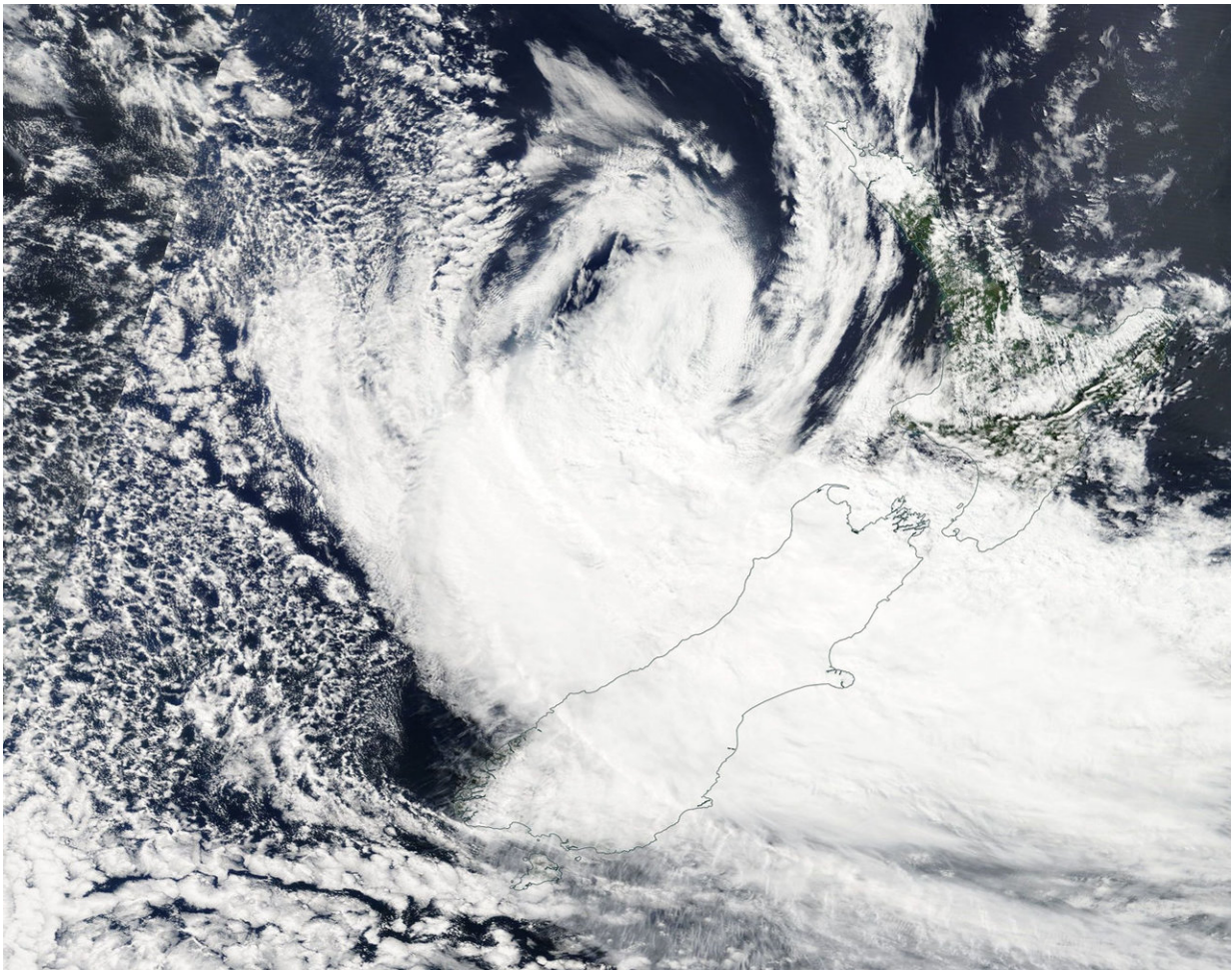


NASA sees ex-tropical cyclone Gita affecting New Zealand

February 20 2018



On Feb. 20, 2018 NASA's Terra satellite captured this visible light image of Ex-Tropical Cyclone Gita over New Zealand. Credit: NASA Goddard MODIS Rapid Response Team

NASA's Terra satellite passed over the Southern Pacific Ocean and saw the low pressure area previously known as Tropical Cyclone Gita, affecting New Zealand.

On Feb. 20 the Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer or MODIS instrument aboard NASA's Terra satellite captured a visible light image of Ex-Tropical Cyclone Gita. The imagery showed that northerly wind shear had blown the storm apart, and the bulk of clouds and thunderstorms were south and east of the center of circulation. Those clouds and storms blanketed the south island of New Zealand bringing gusty winds, ocean swells and heavy rain.

On Feb. 20, there was a state of emergency declared in the Buller, Grey, Westland, Nelson/Tasman and Christchurch regions.

The New Zealand Met Service (NZMS) reported the Buller and Taranaki region [wind](#) gusts of 118 kph (73 mph) recorded in Westport and 130 kph (81 mph) over Hawera. Power outages have been reported in the Taranaki region.

The NZMS forecasters noted on Feb. 20 (UTC/EST)/Feb. 21 local time, "Strong winds associated with Gita are also creating heavy swell on the western coasts from Northland right down into Buller this evening and into early Wednesday morning. Significant wave heights of around 9 meters (29.5 feet) are currently being recorded off the Taranaki coast. Heavy southeast swell is also expected along the Kaikoura, Canterbury and Otago coast for a time from this evening (Tuesday, Feb. 21 local time) and during Wednesday. In combination with high tides, strong onshore winds and low atmospheric pressures, low lying areas near the coast and Kapiti and Kaikoura have the potential for wave inundation for a time.

Heavy or persistent rain has also clocked up some huge accumulations

from Kapiti southwards - the Kaikoura ranges have seen 290mm (11.4 inches) of rain since 2am this morning. Many stations in the Marlborough, Nelson, Canterbury, Buller, Westland and Wellington and regions have also recorded rainfall amounts of 50mm (2 inches) or above in the last 24 hours. Kelburn station in Wellington has recorded its total historical average rainfall for February in the last 24 hours already."

The low pressure area is forecast to pass over the upper South Island on Feb. 21 (local time) and track southeast during Wednesday, Feb. 22 (local time). Most of the Severe Weather Watches and Warning are set to expire by early Wednesday, though rain and stronger winds will linger longer over the east of the South Island.

Provided by NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center

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