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# Islands were drier last year, data show

## Advertiser Staff

Despite a series of intense December storms, most rainfall totals throughout the state came up short in 2008, according to year-end data from the National Weather Service.

More than half of the gauges on O'ahu recorded more than double the normal rainfall for December, and most sites recorded their highest monthly totals since March 2006.

But rainfall totals for all of 2008 ended up in the near- to below-normal range at most locations, with most at 60 percent to 90 percent of normal, according to Kevin Kodama, senior hydrologist with the National Weather Service office in Honolulu.

Hawai'i Kai received 15 inches of rain last year, which was 53 percent of normal; Milliani, 48 inches, 107 percent of normal; Honolulu Airport, 15 inches, 80 percent of normal; Wai'anae Valley, 39 inches, 79 percent of normal; and Kahuku, 29 inches, 65 percent of normal.

The island's highest total was recorded at the O'ahu Forest National Wildlife Refuge, which experienced 170 inches of rain last year — the third-highest total in the state. But that's still only 83 percent of the normal amount, Kodama's report said.

It's no surprise that Kauai's Mount Wai'ale'ale had the most rainfall last year, with 352 inches — also 83 percent of normal.

The wet December conditions helped nudge rainfall totals on Kauai into near-normal range for 2008. North and northeast slopes finished in the near- to below-normal range, while gauges on east- and south-facing slopes ended up near to above normal, the weather service said.

Hanalei collected 80 inches during 2008, which was 67 percent of normal; Lihu'e Airport, 40 inches, 101 percent of normal; and Kalaheo 31 inches, 112 percent of normal.

The winter storms brought little relief to the drought-plagued districts of Hamakua, North Kohala and South Kohala on the Big Island, which had below-normal rainfall in 2008. Rainfall totals for the rest of the island were mostly in below-normal range, with the exception of South Hilo and Puna, which saw near-normal levels, the report said.

Laupahoehoe got 94 inches of rainfall in 2008, 62 percent of normal; Glenwood, 139 inches, 84 percent of normal; Kealakekua, 40 inches, 54 percent of normal; and Waimea, 22 inches, 37 percent of normal.

Waiakea Uka was the wettest spot, collecting 145 inches of rain during the year — about 81 percent of normal.

The gauge at Hilo Airport measured 127 inches of rain last year, with February and December contributing 39 and 30 inches, respectively. That was the first time since 1990 in which two months during the year had totals higher than 30 inches, Kodama said.

Maui County ended the year in the below-normal range at most locations. Pu'u Kukui recorded 210 inches, second-highest total in the state but only 54 percent of normal.

The only spot exceeding 100 percent of its normal rainfall was 'Ohe'o Gulch, which received 105 inches in 2008, 118 percent of normal. Kahului Airport got 9 inches of rain last year, only 48 percent of normal; Kula, 15 inches, 22 percent of normal; Lahainaluna, 6 inches, 32 percent of normal; and Hana, 58 inches, 72 percent of normal.