

USDA California Climate Hub News & Notes



**United States Department of Agriculture
California Climate Hub**

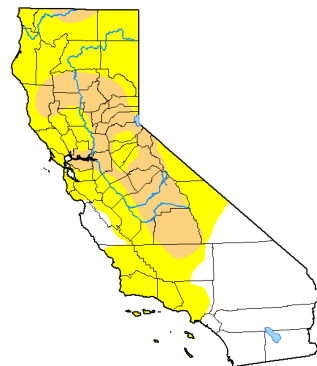
The USDA California Climate Hub within the Agricultural Research Service at the UC Davis John Muir Institute works with partners across federal and state agencies, universities, and industry to help enable climate-informed decision making and advance the adaptive capacity for California's working and managed agricultural, range, and forest lands. Through these newsletters we share news and information of relevance and interest to our stakeholders. We encourage you to get in touch with us if we can be of further service or assistance.

[Visit the USDA Climate Hub Website](#)

Drought Across CA After Dry Winter

January and February are two of California's wettest months of the year on average, with about 50% of the state's precipitation falling between December and February. Despite a bit of moisture early in the season, winter has shaped up to be quite dry. Drought has now crept back in across much of the state, with more than 45% of California reporting abnormally dry conditions, and ~23% of the state reporting moderate drought.

U.S. Drought Monitor
California



February 25, 2020
(Released Thursday, Feb. 27, 2020)
Valid 7 a.m. EST

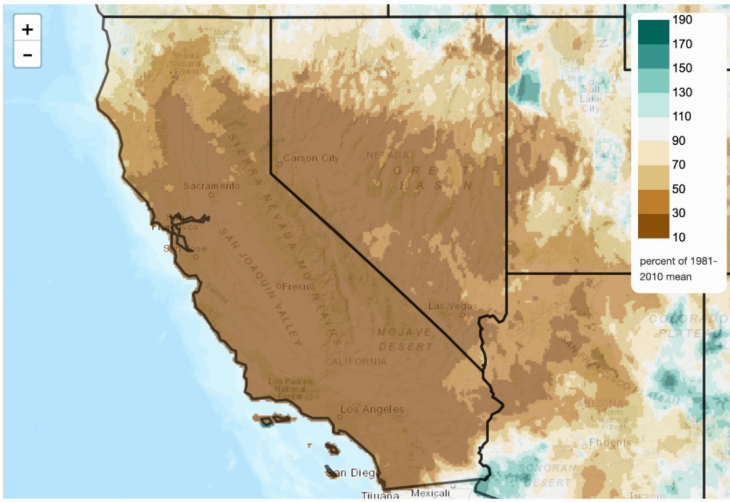
Intensity:
None
D0 Abnormally Dry
D1 Moderate Drought
D2 Severe Drought
D3 Extreme Drought
D4 Exceptional Drought

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/about.aspx>

Author:
David Miskus
NOAA/NWS/NCEP/CPC



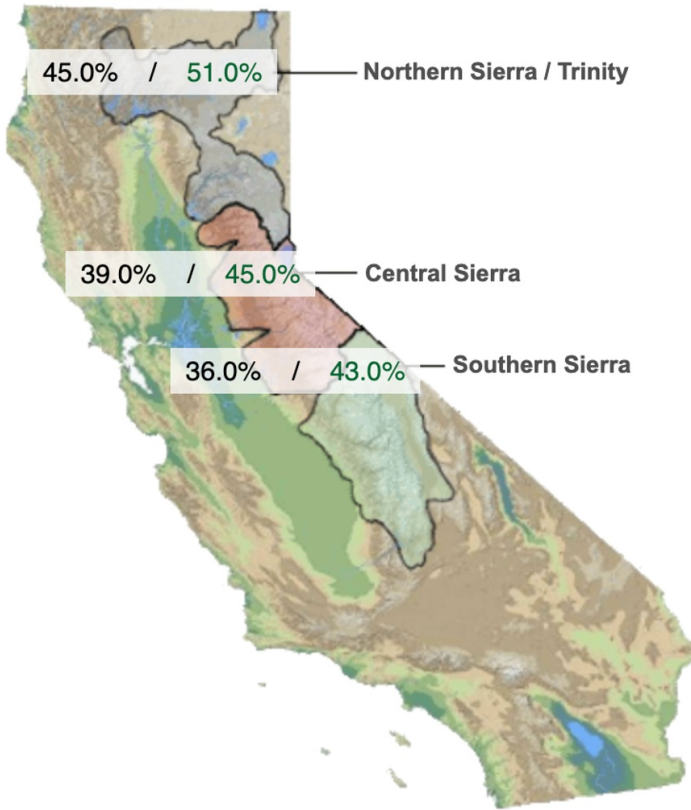
Since January 1st, precipitation across California has been well below average, with much of the state -- including mountain regions -- receiving less than 20% of normal



precipitation. This month may in fact wind up as the [driest February in more than 150 years](#) for the northern part of the state.

Data For: **27-Feb-2020**

% Apr 1 Avg. / % Normal for this Date



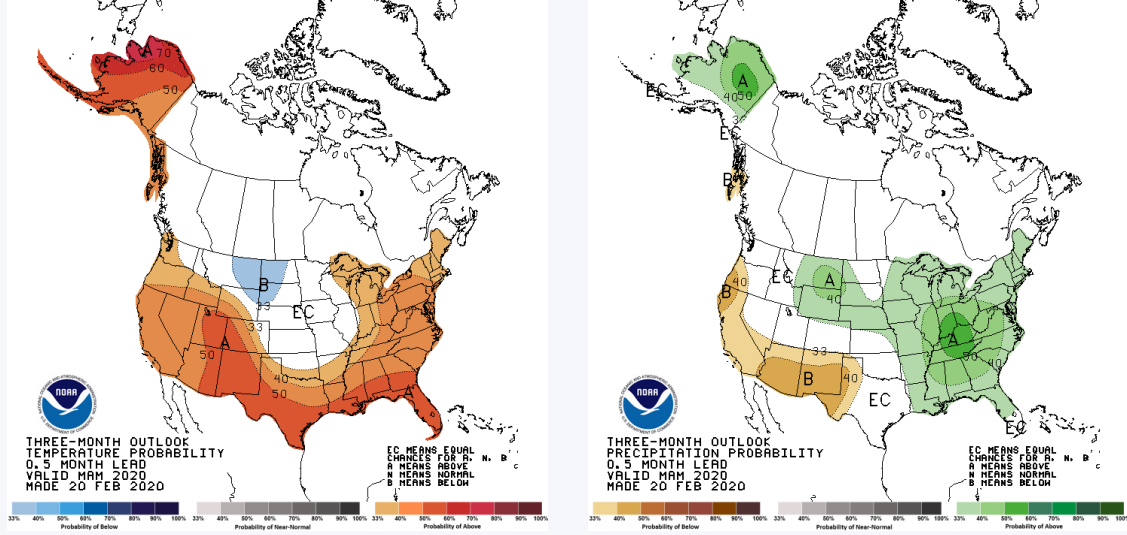
Average temperatures over the same period have been anomalously warm, particularly in the Sierra, which has undermined mountain snowpack. UCLA climate scientist and researcher, Daniel Swain, wrote on Weather West about what's behind this trend earlier in the month, and [highlighted the importance of March and April precipitation to abate some of the potential impacts of a dry winter.](#)

Further, Swain noted that although the state's reservoirs currently have sufficient water to carry California over to next year's wet season, natural landscapes don't see the

benefit of that water storage. This means that in the absence of a wet spring, California may see ecosystem impacts and increased wildfire risk come summer.

Will Spring Save Us?

Current long range forecasts suggest that the next opportunity for precipitation in Northern California may be early-mid March. Looking at the NOAA Climate Prediction Center forecasts for March through May, suggests that warm and dry conditions will largely persist. While it may be too early to speak to potential impacts with certainty, it is never too early to prepare for drought, wildfire, and heat-related stresses that may come with a warmer, drier climate.



Managing for Drought

Whether it's this year, next year, or years into the future, one thing is certain: drought will impact Californians again. Year-to-year cycles are part of California's climate, and climate change is expected to make these cycles more intense. As the wet season comes to a dry end, here are a few resources that can provide drought information and help guide your drought management planning, response, and recovery:

The [California Institute for Water Resources Drought and Water Management Tips](#) provides a number of informational resources for agriculture and rangeland management, including some crop-specific tips.

The [UC Rangelands Drought Hub](#) provides information relevant to rangelands and livestock on government programs, drought economics, options for livestock feed during drought, and ranch management during drought.

The [USDA Drought Programs](#) include a number of crop, farm, livestock, and forage assistance programs for drought recovery.

The [USDA Weekly Weather and Crop Bulletin](#) highlights up-to-date weather and drought related events and their impact on agriculture across the US, and summarizes crop developments, and soil moisture and weather patterns at the state level.

The [US Drought Monitor](#) provides a summary of drought conditions at a regional scale across the US, and the [National Drought Mitigation Center](#) provides resources on drought education, planning, and monitoring.

As part of NIDIS, the [California-Nevada Drought Early Warning System](#) provides up-to-date drought information specific to California and Nevada, including webinars, forecasts, and assessments.

In the News

[Northern California is having its driest February since 1864](#)

[Researchers examine climate change in the San Bernardino Mountains over](#)

[100,000 years](#)

[California snowpack half of average amid dry spell](#)

[A plan to protect California's coasts and ocean in the face of climate change has been approved by the Ocean Protection Council](#)

Upcoming Events

[California Forest Stewards Workshops -- March 7, Redding](#)

[Sierra Nevada Tree Mortality Data Network Workshop -- March 10, McClellan](#)

[Healthy Soils Workshops -- Multiple dates and locations](#)

[American Society for Horticultural Science Annual Conference -- August 9-13, Orlando, FL](#)

[National Tribal Leadership Climate Change Summit -- October 12-14, Seattle, WA](#)

Opportunities

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

[Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research -- Multiple Open RFAs, varying deadlines](#)

[USDA Rural Development Value Added Producer Grants -- Applications due Mar 10](#)

[USDA NIFA Beginning Farmer & Rancher Program Grants -- Applications due Mar 19](#)

[USDA Agriculture Demonstration Center Grants Program -- Applications due Mar 20](#)

Get Involved!

We would be pleased to share your newsworthy items, outputs or products, or associated resources with the USDA California Climate Hub community. If you would like to reach the Climate Hub community, provide a feature for this newsletter, or contribute content for our website, please contact [Steven Ostoja](#), USDA California Climate Hub Director, or to [Lauren Parker](#), USDA California

Climate Hub Postdoctoral Fellow.



STAY CONNECTED

USDA California Climate Hub | climatehubs.oce.usda.gov

