

CALIFORNIA DROUGHT UPDATE

MAY 9, 2022

Current Conditions

- January, February and March 2022 were the driest on record dating back over 100 years, with just six inches of precipitation observed across the Sierra Nevada.
- Statewide precipitation for the water year to date is 74 percent of average. Sierra-Cascades snowpack for the water year to date is 21 percent of average, down from 29 percent last week. Statewide reservoir storage is 71 percent of average for this time of year.
- All of California's 58 counties are under a drought emergency proclamation. Californians are being asked to reduce their water use by 15 percent over 2020 levels to protect water reserves and help maintain critical flows for fish and wildlife wherever possible.
- As of May 9, the state's voluntary household dry well reporting system received reports of 76 dry wells in the past 30 days. Forty-seven dry wells were reported in Fresno County alone. Dry wells were also reported in Butte, Kings, Lake, Madera, Plumas, Riverside, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, Siskiyou, Shasta, Stanislaus, Sonoma, Tehama and Tulare counties.

The California Drought Update is a weekly roundup of conditions, state actions and upcoming developments. It is produced by an interagency team that includes the California Natural Resources Agency, the California Environmental Protection Agency, the Governor's Office of Emergency Services, the California Department of Food and Agriculture, the Department of Water Resources, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, the State Water Resources Control Board and the Department of Public Health. For the latest on drought, please visit www.drought.ca.gov. For tips and resources for conserving water, please visit www.saveourwater.com.

Recent Events and State Actions

State Water Board approves Shasta Temperature Management Plan (May 6): The State Water Board's executive director approved a temperature management plan (TMP) developed by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. The approach in the TMP was developed in collaboration with NOAA Fisheries, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Cal EPA, DWR, CDFW and Sacramento River Settlement Contractors. The plan calls for record-low releases from Shasta Lake to the Sacramento River.

Adjustments made to Colorado River reservoir releases (May 3): Combined storage in Lake Powell and Lake Mead is at the lowest level since the lower Colorado River reservoirs were constructed, and Lake Powell is at risk of falling below levels that jeopardize power and water supplies. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation in consultation with the seven states, Mexico, and Native American tribes informed stakeholders that it would reduce scheduled releases from Lake Powell in 2022 by 480,000 acre-feet and increase releases from Flaming Gorge dam upstream of Lake Powell by 500,000 acre-feet. With these combined actions, nearly 1 million acre-feet of additional supply will remain in storage in Lake Powell. Reclamation will gauge the effectiveness of these 2022 actions and then consult with stakeholders in August 2022 to plan 2023 operations and any additional drought response measures that may be necessary.

Clear Lake fish stranded by water diversions (April 28-May 4): Staff of the Big Valley Band of Pomo Indians, Lake County, and Department of Fish and Wildlife rescued 326 adult hitch stranded in Adobe Creek. Hitch, or chi, are a large minnow found only in Clear Lake and culturally and biologically important to the indigenous people of the region. Hitch migrate each spring into creeks to spawn; only Adobe and Kelsey creeks still provide habitat suitable for hitch spawning, and those creeks are impacted by groundwater extraction for vineyards.

Coastal communities ordered to stop permitting new water-using development (April 19): The Coastal Commission warned San Luis Obispo County and the communities of Cambria and Los Osos that both communities are violating Coastal Commission permits by excessively pumping water from local creeks and aquifers. The Commission noted that these are long-standing problems, and there is insufficient water supply to serve even existing development without coastal resource harm, let alone new water-using development like hotels, guest houses, and homes. The Commission directed the local governments to stop issuing "will serve" notices for new development and to submit a plan for protecting local creeks. The Commission letters noted that violations are subject to fines of up to \$15,000 per day under the Coastal Act.

Low lake levels harm sucker fish (ongoing): Cumulative inflow to Upper Klamath Lake in Oregon is about 64 percent of average, second-lowest in the period of record. Low lake levels will impact spawning habitat for endangered Lost River and shortnose sucker fish, once a staple of Klamath and Modoc tribes but now endangered species.

Trucking of hatchery fish continues (ongoing): Trucking of juvenile hatchery Central Valley fall-run chinook salmon began April 19 with Mokelumne River fish being released at Sherman Island in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. To improve survival odds in this third dry year, CDFW will truck 16 million to 17 million hatchery salmon throughout the valley over the next two months, approximately 1.7 million more than last year.

Recent Events and State Actions

Curtailment adjustments (ongoing): As drought conditions persist, the State Water Board continues to monitor six critical watersheds where worsening conditions may threaten water supplies. Curtailments remain in effect in the Delta watershed, two sub-watersheds of the Delta and in the Shasta River watershed. Based on current conditions and available forecasts, curtailments in the Russian River watershed are temporarily suspended through the end of May and curtailments in the Scott River watershed are temporarily suspended through May 13. Water Board staff will continue to adjust curtailment orders as conditions change.

New Save Our Water content (ongoing): Multilingual Save Our Water ads communicate the urgent need to save water and provide actionable steps Californians can take. The Save Our Water campaign is reaching Californians with helpful videos and tips for fixing leaks and reducing outdoor watering. Visit www.saveourwater.com for more.

Tribal / Local Actions

- **Tribal governments:** Tribal emergency drought proclamations as reported by Cal OES to date: Buena Vista Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians, Karuk Tribe, Resighini Rancheria, Tule River Indian Tribe, Yurok Tribe, Wiyot Tribe.
- **Local government:** Local emergency drought proclamations as reported by Cal OES to date: Butte, Colusa, Fresno, Glenn, Humboldt, Lake, Marin, Mendocino, Modoc, Napa, Nevada, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, Siskiyou, Sonoma, Tulare, Tuolumne, Yolo.

Upcoming Decisions / Milestones

Water conservation rates for March: At its **May 10** meeting, the State Water Board will discuss water usage reported by urban water suppliers in March 2022 compared to March 2020.

Emergency regulations to curtail water rights in the Russian River watershed: The State Water Board on **May 10** will consider readopting the emergency regulation to curtail unauthorized water diversions in the Russian River watershed, before the current emergency regulation expires in July 2022. The meeting will be webcast live at <https://video.calepa.ca.gov/#/>.

Conservation impacts workshop: The State Water Board will host a workshop on the impacts of conservation on wastewater infrastructure and trees on **May 11**.

Upcoming Decisions / Milestones

Emergency regulations to curtail water rights in the Delta watershed: The State Water Board's Division of Water Rights will hold a workshop on **May 12** to receive public input on proposed changes to the emergency regulation to curtail unauthorized water diversions in the Delta Watershed and changes to the water unavailability method used for curtailments. The Board is tentatively planning to consider readoption of the emergency regulation in mid-July, before the current emergency regulation expires in August 2022. More information is available at the Board's Delta Drought Website.

Groundwater trading white paper: The California Water Commission on **May 18** will consider finalizing a white paper containing findings around how to shape well-managed groundwater trading programs and proposed next steps for State engagement. The white paper synthesizes the information the Commission gathered for its consideration of well-managed groundwater trading programs to support Water Resilience Portfolio Action 3.6.

Key Data Points and Resources

- Daily Hydrological & Climate Information summary: <http://cdec.water.ca.gov/reportapp/javareports?name=DLYHYDRO>
- Statewide water conditions: http://cdec.water.ca.gov/water_cond.html
- Daily Reservoir Storage Summary: <https://cdec.water.ca.gov/reservoir.html>
- Water Year Forecast and Monthly Distribution: <http://cdec.water.ca.gov/reportapp/javareports?name=B120DIST>
- Monthly water supplier reports on water production and conservation: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/conservation_portal/conservation_reporting.html
- Latest groundwater conditions and information: <https://sgmatest.water.ca.gov/CalGWLIVE/>
- Information on state drought actions and assistance: <https://www.drought.ca.gov>
- Conservation tips and resources for consumers: <https://saveourwater.com/>