



# California



Published September 2023 by the National Drought Mitigation Center, through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Office of the Chief Economist

## Lead Representative

Craig Shoemaker  
NWS Meteorologist  
NWS Sacramento  
[craig.shoemaker@noaa.gov](mailto:craig.shoemaker@noaa.gov)

## Monitoring Team

- NWS and NWS Weather Forecasting Offices throughout the state
- U.S. Department of Agriculture
- U.S. Forest Service and Fish and Wildlife
- Bureau of Land Management
- U.S. Air Force
- University cooperative extension
- Irrigation districts
- Desert Research Institute

## USDM Recommendation Process

- To discuss drought conditions in California, members of the monitoring team maintain a consistent dialogue via email. Every two weeks, the team holds a coordination call. A U.S. Drought Monitor (USDM) author is invited to attend every other coordination call (i.e., monthly meeting with USDM author). The host of the coordination call rotates among the NWS offices in the state.
- Each NWS office reports on their respective area and identifies areas on a draft map where they would like to see changes to the USDM drought depiction.
- California regularly coordinates with Oregon, Nevada and Arizona to discuss drought conditions along the borders with neighboring states.

## Drought Characteristics

- Hydrological drought and reservoir storage are important drought-related concerns in California.
- The timing of precipitation in California is also unique, with most precipitation falling between November and April.

## Drought Impacts

- Water storage
- Reservoir levels
- Drinking water
- Irrigation
- Agriculture

## Monitoring Challenges

- Summers are always hot and dry with virtually no precipitation, which can make it hard to differentiate normal dryness from that of drought.
- Impacts are often more related to reservoir storage and groundwater rather than precipitation deficits, which makes typical drought indices less reliable.