



DROUGHT 2008

September

WATER CONDITIONS

Precipitation

In California, most precipitation falls as snow and rain during the fall, winter and early spring. Summers in California, especially in the Central Valley and Southern California are mostly dry. The amount of precipitation that falls is one way of making year-by-year comparisons as to whether the state is experiencing wet or dry conditions.

Current Conditions

- The water year so far, October 2007 - August 2008, has seen a deficit of as much as 15-25 inches of precipitation in the Northern and Central Sierra, source of much of our water supply.
- The five-month period March-August 2008 was the driest on record in the Northern Sierra. Only 3.4" of rainfall was received; merely 24% of average.
- Statewide precipitation for the six-month period February through July 2008 was 45%

of average; the fourth driest of 114 years on record.

- Statewide average precipitation for the last 2 years has been about 70% of average.
- For the Northern Sierra, 2007 and 2008 is the ninth driest two-year period in 88 years of record.
- Southern California experienced its driest year on record last year.

Reservoirs

In California, winter precipitation and spring snowmelt are captured in surface water reservoirs to provide both flood protection and water supply to the state. Reservoir storage also factors into drought assessment.



Lake Oroville

Current Reservoir Levels	
Shasta	34%
Oroville	32%
Folsom	31%
Trinity	51%
New Melones	47%
Don Pedro	55%
Exchequer	31%
San Luis	13%
Millerton	44%
Pine Flat	13%
Pyramid	97%
Castaic	91%

Percent of Capacity as of Sept. 1, 2008



Current Conditions

- Statewide average reservoir levels are 75% of average for this date. Last year at this time they were at 85% of average.
- By the end of this water year on Sept. 30, 2008, Lake Oroville will reach its lowest carryover storage since the drought of 1977.
- By the end of this calendar year, Lake Oroville may fall to a new record low. The previous record low was set on September 8, 1977 at 882 Thousand Acre Feet (TAF).

Runoff

Since the bulk of California's precipitation falls over higher elevations, river runoff is a substantial indicator of the state's water supply.

- Statewide runoff for the end of this water year (Sept. 30, 2008) is forecast to be 57% of average.
- The Sacramento and San Joaquin River systems, which represent the bulk of the state's reservoir inflow, will have two-year streamflow in the lowest 10% of historical range by the end of this water year.

