



CALIFORNIA HYDROLOGY UPDATE

CONDITIONS AS OF APRIL 30, 2026



The California Hydrology Update is a regular summary of current weather conditions in the State of California and serves as a supplement to the data on the [California Water Watch](#) website. It is produced by the California Department of Water Resources Hydrology Section and Sustainable Groundwater Management Office teams. For tips and resources on how to make water conservation a way of life, please visit [saveourwater.com](#).

PRECIPITATION

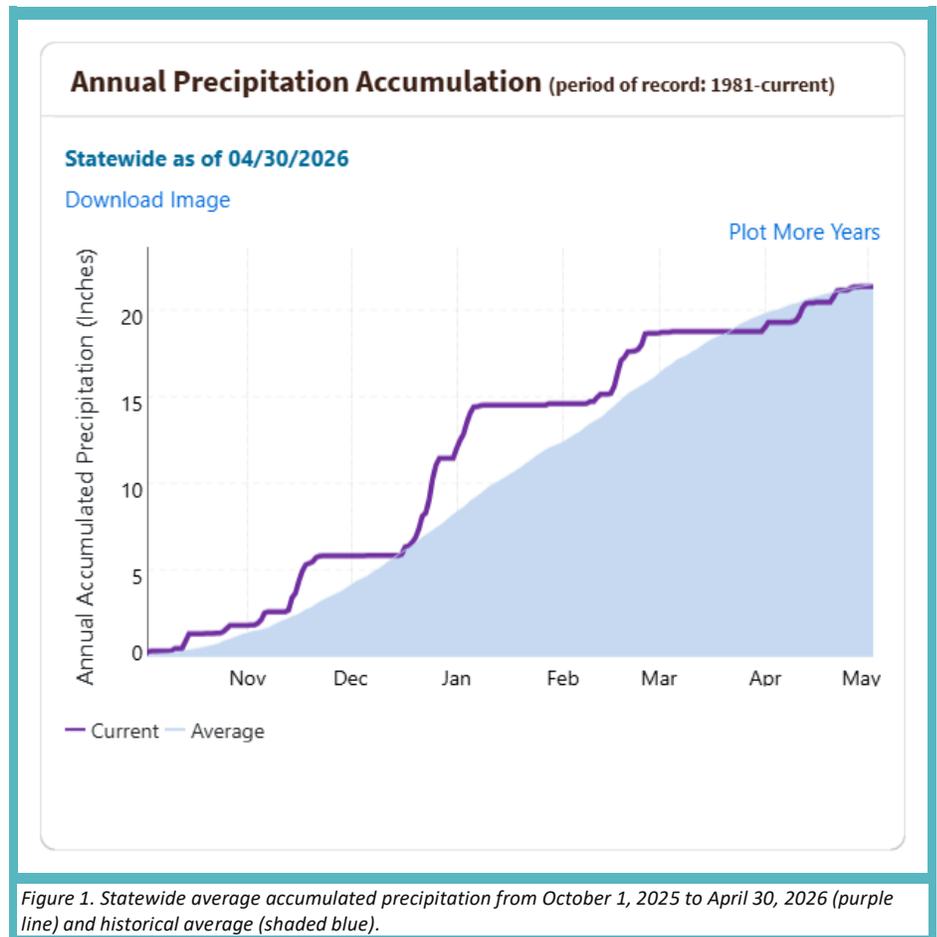
Water year 2026 accumulated precipitation is average when considering across the state at the end of April. The statewide accumulated precipitation through the end of April 2026 was about 21.4 inches, which is 100% of average. During the past month in April 2026, the main periods of precipitation were generally during April 1, 8-13, 20-22, and 25-28 (shown in Figure 1).

The series of storms near the end of March 2026 continued into April 1, which resulted in precipitation across Northern California, part of Central Coast, and along Sierra Nevada. There was minor snowfall during this period as freezing elevations lowered during April 1 (before rising again the following day). After April 1, high pressure began to build off the west coast and resulted in dry conditions across the state during April 3-7. Starting April 8, a low-pressure system moved into Northern California with a secondary low-pressure system that traveled into the state late April 11. Widespread precipitation was observed during April 8-13, with higher amounts along Sierra Nevada, North Coast, and Central Coast. Precipitation totals during April 7-13 include 1.0 to 4.0 inches for North Coast, 1.0 to 8.0 inches for Sierra



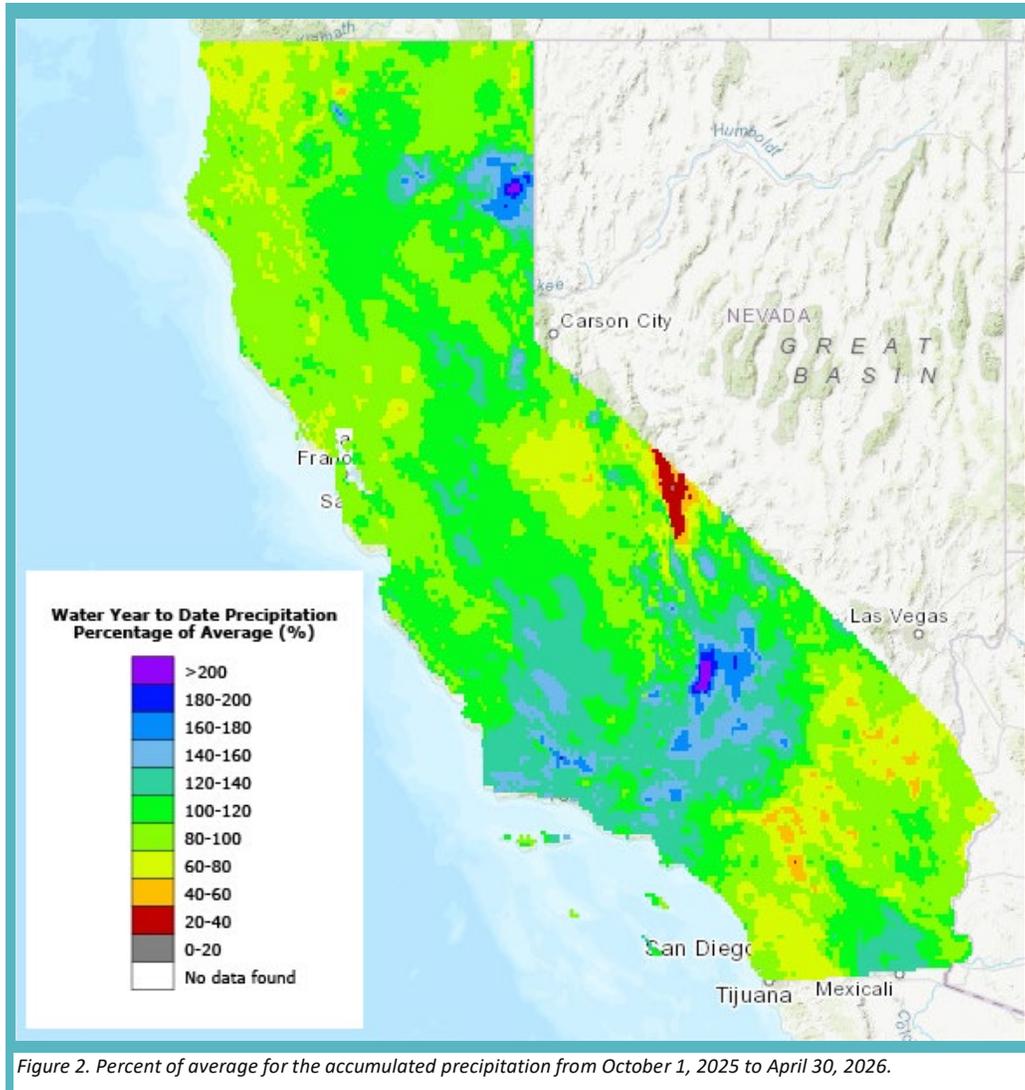
Nevada, 1.5 to 5.0 inches for Shasta Basin, 0.5 to 4.0 inches for Central Coast, 1.0 to 3.0 inches for Sacramento Valley, and up to 0.5 inches for the rest of the state. April 14 was dry across the state while in between systems. During April 15 a trough pass through California bringing minor precipitation over Northern California. During April 16-19, dry conditions were observed across the state. During April 20-22, a slow-moving low-pressure system traveled across Northern California, with higher precipitation amounts across Sierra Nevada. During this period, freezing levels lowered which helped to retain and add to the limited snowpack for this year. During April 23-24, dry conditions were observed across the state while between systems. During April 25-28, troughing conditions over the state resulted in minor precipitation and scattered showers mainly for the Central Coast, Central Valley, Shasta Basin, along Sierra Nevada, and Southern California. The end of April resumed to have dry conditions.

As shown in Figure 2, for water year 2026 through end of April, Northern California received below to near average accumulated precipitation, Central California received near to well above average accumulated precipitation, and below to near average accumulated precipitation for most of Southern California. The North Coast has accumulated about 42.5 inches of precipitation for the water year through end of April, which is 88% of average. The Sacramento River region has accumulated about 34.4 inches of precipitation for the water year through end of April, which is 104% of average. The San Joaquin River region has accumulated about 24.3 inches of precipitation for the water year through end of April, which is 97% of average. The Central Coast has accumulated about 22.8 inches of precipitation for the water year through end of April, which is 118% of average. The Tulare Lake region has accumulated about 16.4 inches of precipitation for the water year through end of April, which is 112% of average. The South Coast has accumulated about 17.5 inches of precipitation for the water year through end of April, which is 107% of average.





The Climate Prediction Center (CPC) monthly outlook issued on April 30, 2026 indicates equal chances of below, near, or above normal precipitation across the state for the month of May 2026. The CPC seasonal outlook covering the period of May 2026 through the end of July 2026 also indicates equal chances of below, near, or above normal precipitation across the state.



Sources: [Statewide Hydroclimate and Water Supply Conditions, Forecast Information](#),
[Center for Western Weather Water Extremes \(CW3E\) Event Summaries](#),
[California Nevada River Forecast Center \(CNRFC\) Data Archive](#), [Western Regional Climate Center \(WRCC\) Monthly Updates](#)



TEMPERATURE

The statewide average temperature for the end of April was 58.3°F, which is near the historical average for this time of year. The statewide average temperature was near average for the entire month of April, excluding around April 4-11 when it was above average temperature. The two graphs in Figure 3 show the statewide mean temperatures for the water year through April 30 (on the left) and month of April 2026 (on the right).

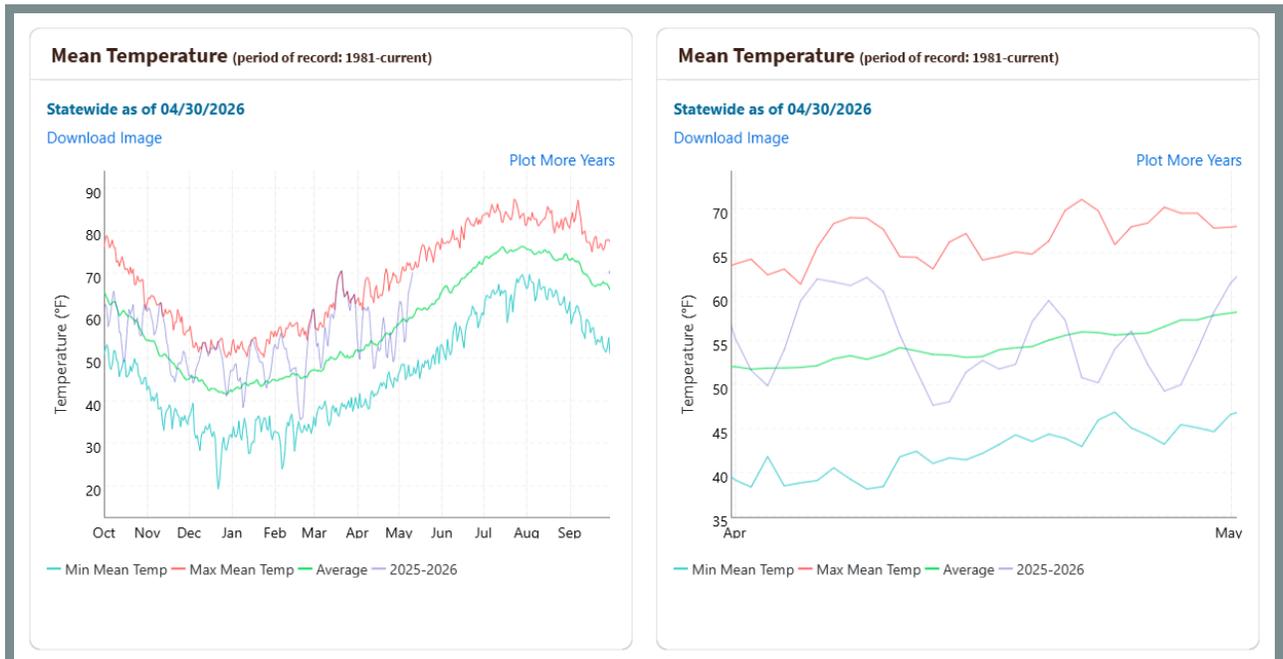


Figure 3. Water year 2026 statewide mean temperature is shown in dark blue as of April 30, 2026 (left) and displayed for the month of April 2026 (right).

El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) neutral conditions continue to be observed, due to near-average sea surface temperatures (SSTs) across the equatorial central and east-central Pacific Ocean. According to the Climate Prediction Center (CPC), ENSO neutral conditions will continue with 80% chance through April-June 2026. CPC forecasts El Niño conditions to emerge with 61% chance during May-July 2026 period and continue for the rest of the calendar year. The CPC temperature outlook issued on April 30, 2026 indicates above normal temperatures with 50-60% chance for Northern California, 40-60% chance for Central California, and 33-50% chance for Southern California during the month of May 2026. The CPC seasonal outlook covering the period of May 2026 through end of July 2026 indicates above normal temperatures with 50-60% chance for Northern California, 33-40% for Central California, and 33-40% chance for Southern California.

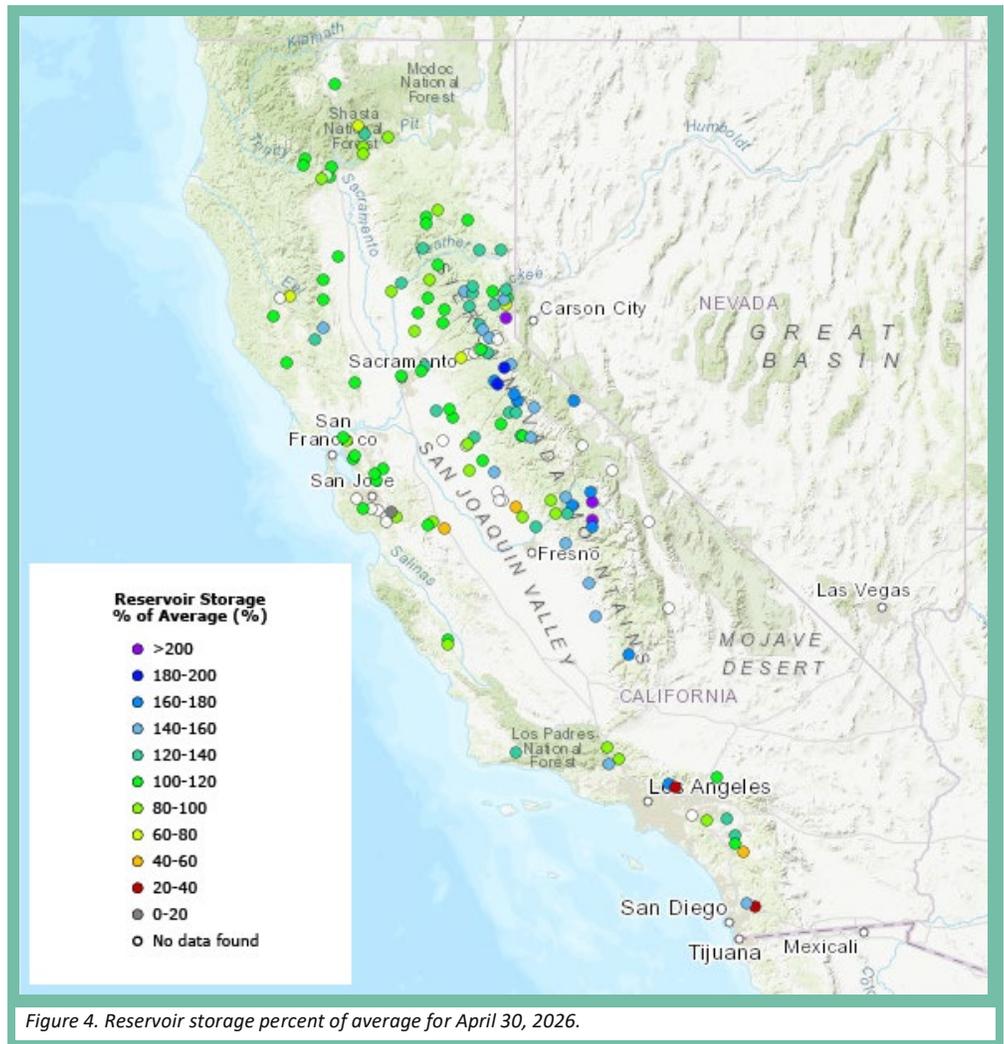
Sources: [Statewide Hydroclimate and Water Supply Conditions](#), [CPC 30-Day Forecasts](#)



RESERVOIRS

Statewide reservoir storage at the end of April was 118% of average. As shown in Figure 4, several reservoirs have near to well above average storage for this time of year.

All major water supply reservoirs are near or above their historical average for storage at the end of April. A reservoir's top of conservation level gradually increases during spring and is higher by summer as it captures the snowmelt runoff which will be used for water supply during the dry months when water demand increases across the state. This was observed in the past month, where reservoirs captured as much inflow from rain or snowmelt and made necessary releases to remain near respective top of conservation levels.

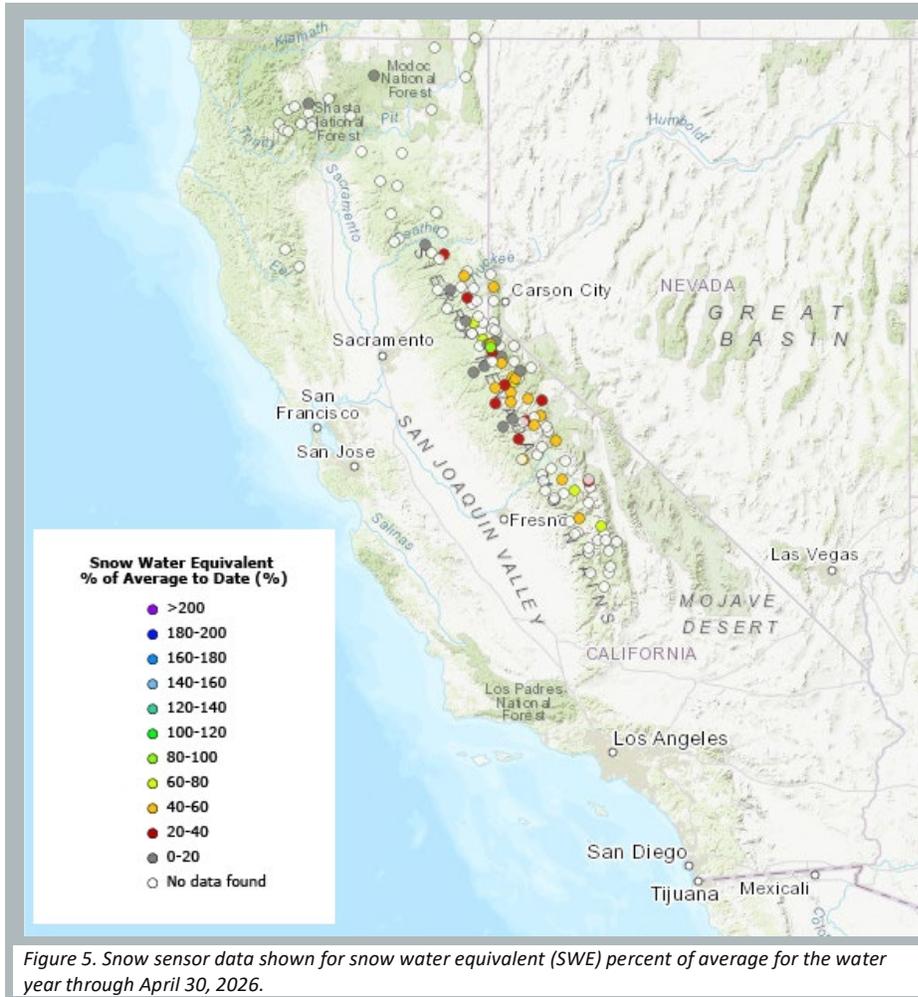


Sources: [California Water Watch](#), [California Data Exchange Center Reservoirs Flood Control](#), [CNRFC Observed Date of Peak Flow](#)



SNOWPACK

The statewide average snow water equivalent (SWE) was 4.4 inches for April 30, which is 22% percent of normal for this time of year. California snowpack for this year peaked much earlier than what is typical (with a steady decline during March 2026), but the series of storms and periods of lower freezing levels during April 2026 helped to add minor snowpack accumulation and lower melt rates. Near the end of



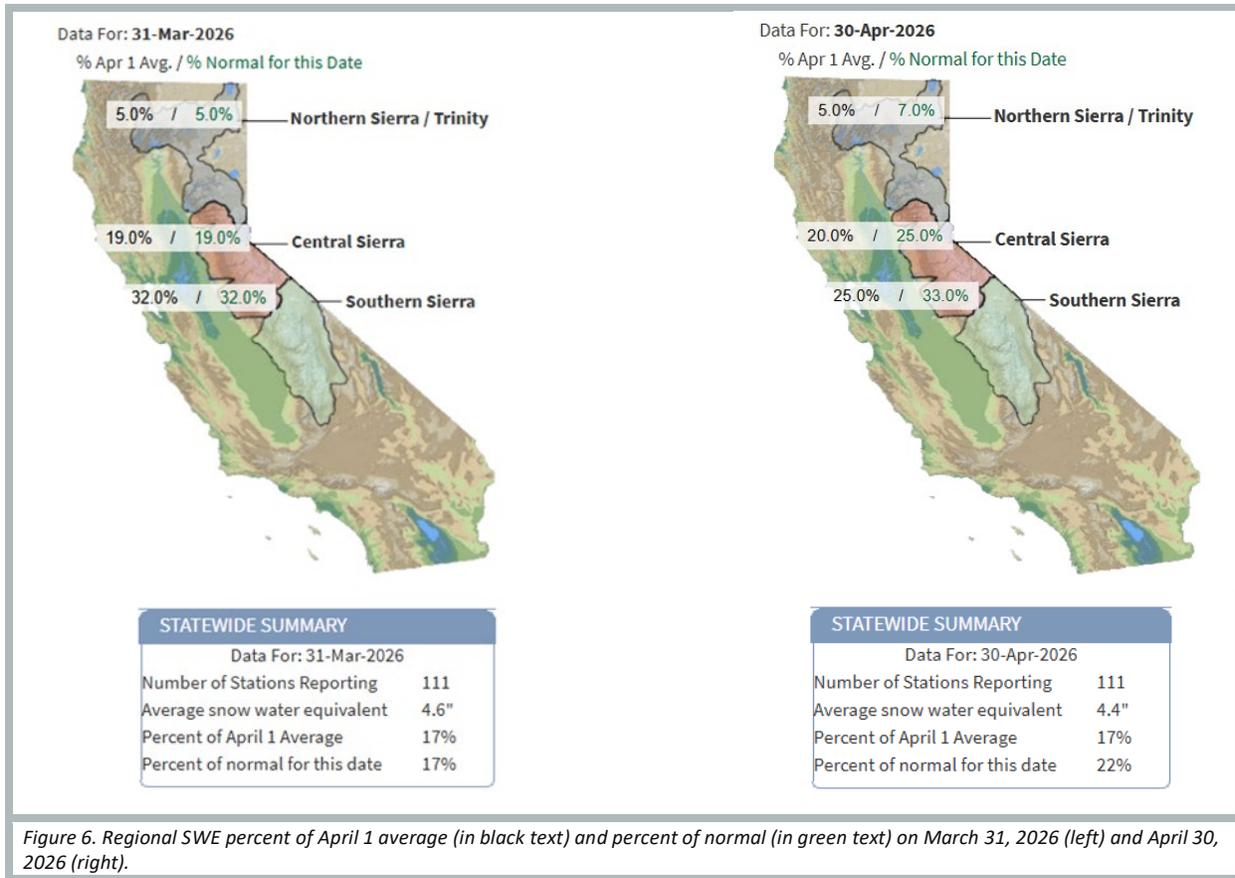
April with the return of clear skies and warmer temperatures, snowmelt gradually resumed.

The snow sensor readings for SWE percent of average at the end of April for each region include 7% of normal for Northern Sierra and Trinity, 25% of normal for Central Sierra, and 33% of normal for Southern Sierra. Figure 6 shows regional SWE conditions at the end of March 2026 (left) and end of April 2026 (right).

In general, for the Sierra Nevada, snowpack accumulation peaks around April 1 each year, and

thereafter begins to melt with longer days and longer exposure to solar radiation. Several factors involving the timing, pace, and scale of storms and their temperature characteristics through the end of March can influence the total amount of snowpack and when it will begin to melt. The snowmelt period typically is from April through July, where the runoff is collected by major reservoirs for water supply during the dry months of summer and beginning of fall.

Sources: [California Water Watch](#), [CDEC Snow Water Equivalent Plot](#)





STREAMFLOW

Streamflow for about 27% of locations across California was near normal flow rate for the water year to May 12, 2026 according to California Nevada River Forecast Center (CNRFC) locations (Figure 7). About 35% of streamflow locations were flowing greater than normal, while about 38% of streamflow locations were flowing below normal for the water year to May 12, 2026. Almost all Sierra Nevada river basins were flowing below their monthly average for April (excluding American River observed near average for the month). Although there were rises in rivers from either snowmelt or runoff from rain, none of the CNRFC forecast locations exceeded their respective flood stages during April.

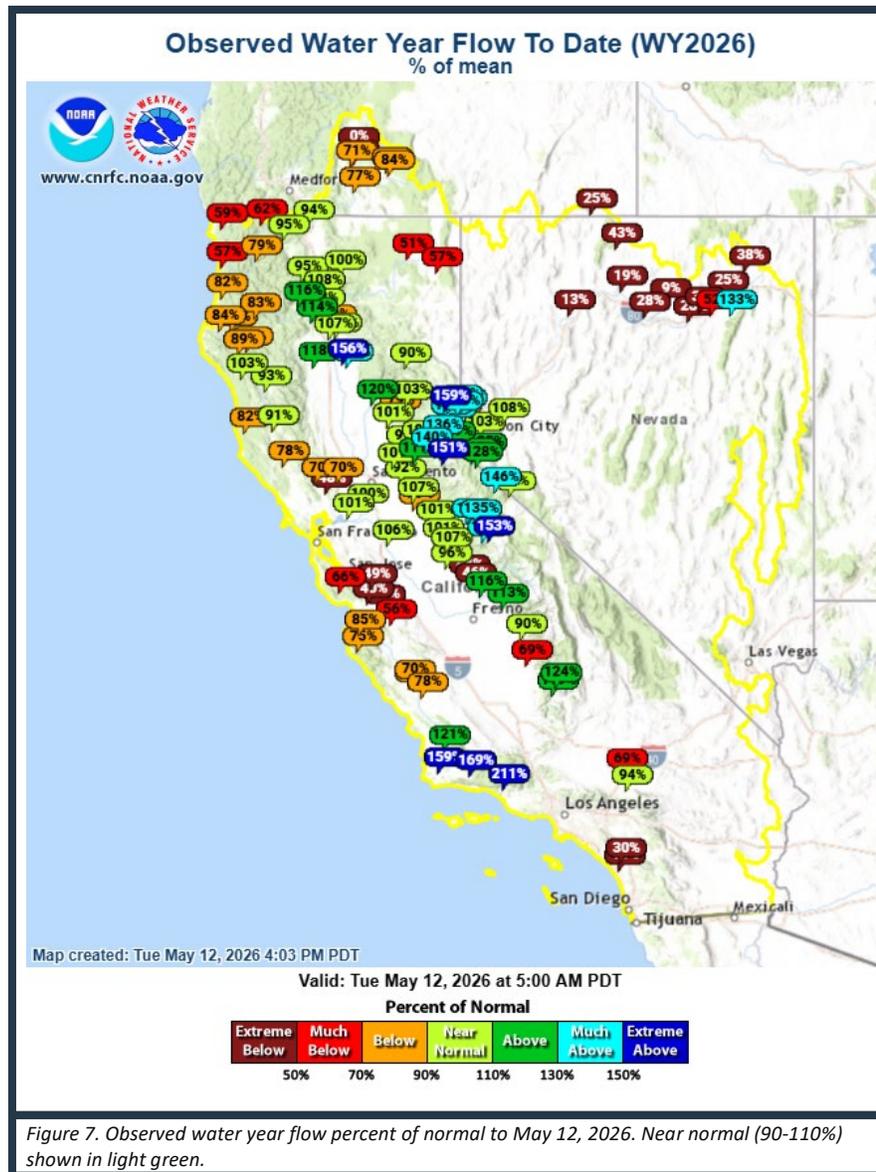


Figure 7. Observed water year flow percent of normal to May 12, 2026. Near normal (90-110%) shown in light green.

Sources: [USGS Water Watch](#), [California Nevada River Forecast Center \(CNRFC\)](#), [CDEC Daily Full Natural Flows](#)

GROUNDWATER

Despite below-average precipitation in Water Year 2025, statewide groundwater levels remained relatively stable compared to recent years and show improvements compared to the severe drought conditions of a decade ago. While wetter years like 2019 and 2023 provided short-term relief, groundwater systems have not fully recovered, and multiple consecutive wet years combined with reduced pumping will be needed to achieve long-term aquifer sustainability.

Recently-measured monitoring wells show groundwater levels in 37% of monitoring wells across California are below normal, 48% are normal, and 15% are above normal. These statistics are based on 1,363 wells where groundwater levels have been collected for at least 10 years, and the most recent measurements were collected within the last 60 days. There were no dry domestic wells reported in the last 30 days. Data reported is as of May 11, 2026. Visit DWR’s California’s Groundwater Live for the latest groundwater conditions across the state.

Source: [DWR California’s Groundwater Live](#)

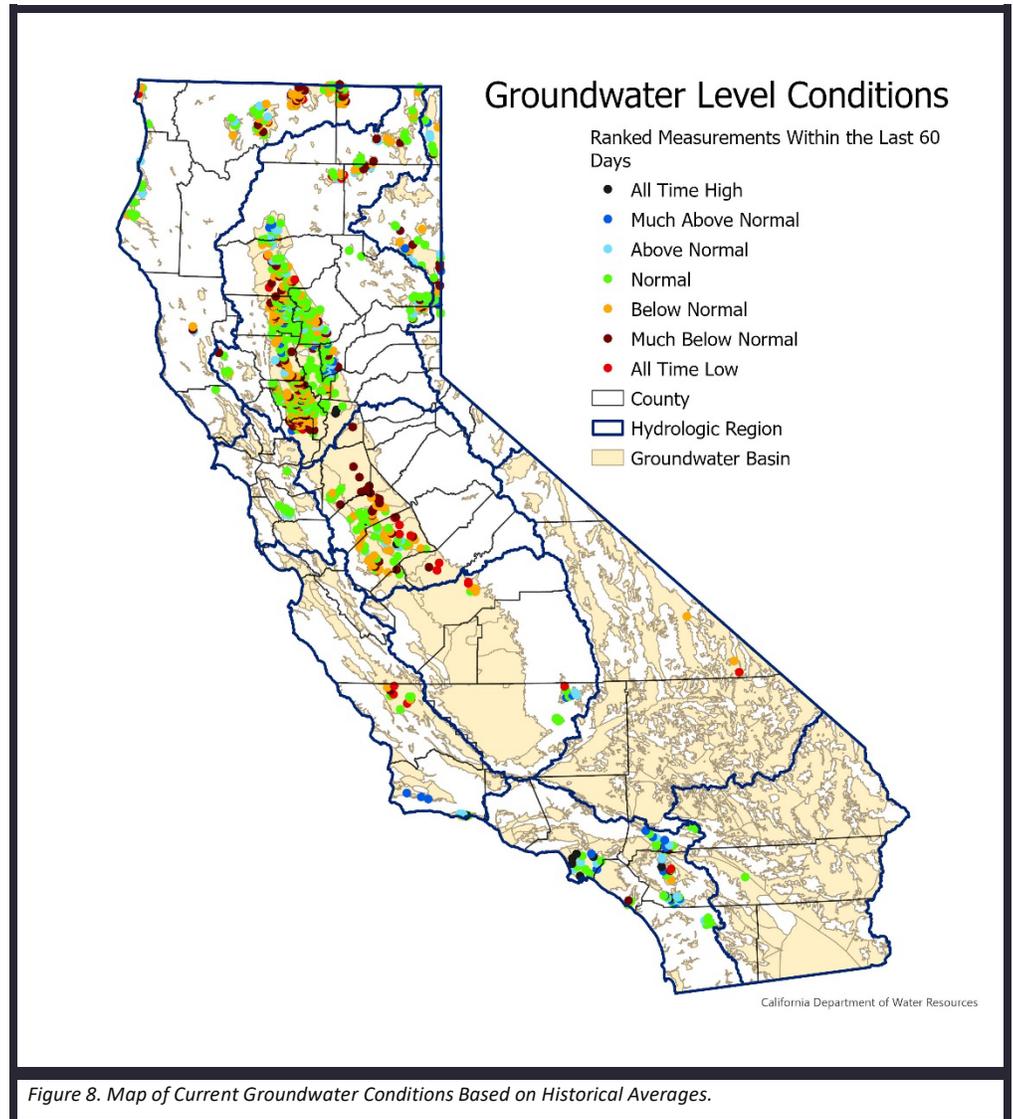


Figure 8. Map of Current Groundwater Conditions Based on Historical Averages.

Cover page photo: A drone view of New Spicer Meadow Reservoir in Tuolumne County, included in the study area for the Stanislaus River’s watershed in DWR’s San Joaquin Basin Flood-MAR (Managed Aquifer Recharge) Watershed Studies, covering five San Joaquin tributaries: Calaveras, Stanislaus, Tuolumne, Merced, and Upper San Joaquin rivers. The Watershed Studies explore two Flood-MAR strategies and examine how changing flood patterns, water supply, and ecosystem health can be jointly managed through coordinated recharge and reservoir operations. Photo taken April 17, 2026.