

We've finished the April 12, 2016 Bulletin 120 (B120) forecast update. The forecasts include observed conditions through the morning of April 12, 2016.

The forecasts are posted at: <http://cdec.water.ca.gov/cgi-progs/iodir?s=b120up> .

Forecast Summary:

The projected median April-July runoff in the major Sierra river basins ranges from 55 percent on the Tule River to 99 percent on the Stanislaus River. The forecasts for all rivers north of the Stanislaus remained the same or decreased while the forecasts for rivers from the Stanislaus southward increased except for the Kaweah and Kern which have the same forecast as the April 1 expectations. The largest percentage increase was in the San Joaquin which increased six percent.

Runoff:

Through the first 13 days of April, rivers in the Sierra are flowing from 46 percent of average on the Kern to 132 percent of average on the Stanislaus. All rivers from the Yuba through the Kings are flowing at a rate greater than 95 percent of average. The Kaweah, Tule, and Kern rivers, however, are flowing at a rate less than 85 percent of average.

Precipitation:

Precipitation for the 2015-2016 water year accumulated at the following rates of average:

Region/Index	WY accumulated precipitation in percent of average through April 14, 2016	April 1-14, 2016 accumulated precipitation in percent of average
Northern Sierra 8-Station Index	122 (52.8 inches)	23 (0.9 inches)
San Joaquin 5-Station Index	106 (37.5 inches)	47 (1.7 inches)
Tulare Basin 6-Station Index	98 (24.9 inches)	46 (1.2 inches)

Snowpack:

The snowpack as of the morning of April 14, 2016 stands at the following (based on snow sensors):

Region	Snow Water Equivalent (inches)	% of Average (Apr 1)	% of Average (April 14)
Northern	19.0	67	73
Central	20.1	69	72
Southern	14.6	54	56
Statewide	18.1	64	68

Weather and Climate Outlooks:

The 6-day weather forecast predicts no precipitation anywhere in the state except for about 0.3 inches or less today in the basins from the American River northward. On Wednesday and early Thursday, a weak cold front passed over the state. So, the current freezing elevations vary from near 5,000 feet over the northern Sierra to near 8,000 feet over the southern Sierra. By Sunday, however, a significant warming trend is expected to raise the freezing levels to near 13,000 over all of the Sierra.

The NWS Climate Prediction Center (CPC) one-month outlook for April, issued March 31, indicates slightly increased chances of above normal precipitation over the northern ¾ of the state. For the rest of the state, equal chances of above and below normal precipitation are expected. Temperatures are expected to be above normal over all of California.

The CPC three-month (April-May-June) outlook, issued March 17, indicates increased chances of above normal precipitation for the entire state except for the far northwestern corner and the southern quarter where equal chances of above or below normal precipitation are expected. The three-month forecast also predicts increased chances of above normal temperatures statewide.

A strong El Niño is present and weakening. Positive equatorial sea surface temperature (SST) anomalies continue across most of the Pacific Ocean. A transition to ENSO-neutral is likely during late Northern Hemisphere spring or early summer 2016, with close to a 50 percent chance for La Niña conditions to develop by the fall.

Next Update:

Bulletin 120 update forecasts for conditions as of April 19 will be available Thursday, April 21. If you have any questions regarding this forecast, please contact a member of the Snow Surveys staff.