



COLORADO

Department of Natural Resources

January 24, 2024

Water Conditions Summary - WY 2024

Observed temperature

This winter started with much higher than average temperatures. December 2023 was the 7th warmest December in the 129 year record. Temperatures averaged +5.6°F above the 20th century average and +4.4°F above the 1991 to 2020 Normal. However, average temperatures statewide in January 2024 have been below or well-below the 1991 to 2020 normal. The cold blast in the middle of the month contributed strongly to these temperature anomalies.

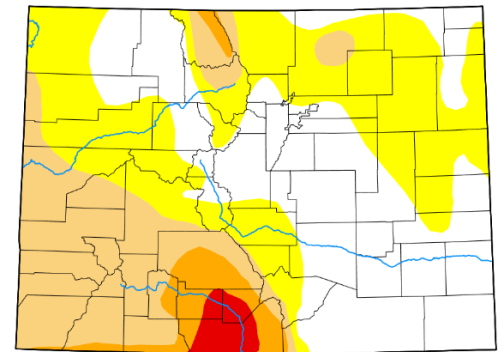
Observed precipitation and drought conditions

Statewide average precipitation remained near normal in December 2023. There were wetter than average pockets in eastern Colorado and drier than normal conditions in the northwestern corner of the state. In the first few weeks of January 2024, wetter than average conditions persisted, which brought needed relief to a relatively dry start to the water year and well-below normal snowpack in early winter.

The US Drought Monitor shown to the right depicts much of the state in at least abnormally dry conditions. All of southwest Colorado is experiencing moderate drought conditions. The San Luis Valley is showing some severe and extreme drought. This is an improvement, however, compared to drought conditions in early January.

Map released: Thurs. January 18, 2024

Data valid: January 16, 2024 at 7 a.m. EST



Observed streamflows and soil moisture

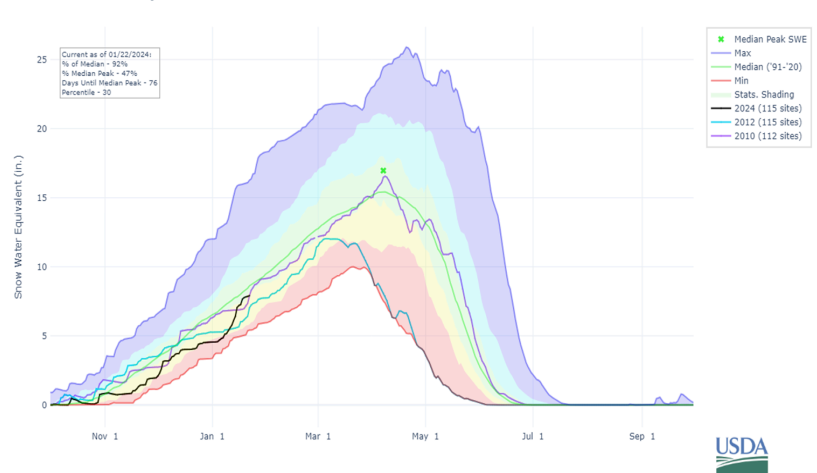
Streamflows statewide have improved over the past month, but most basins are still below average. Streamflows range from 105% in the North Platte to 64% in the Upper San Juan. Models project streamflow will remain below normal conditions in most major basins for the remainder of the month.

Soil Moisture in the northeastern and northwestern corners of the state are drier than normal. It's important to track soil moisture because soils soak up snowpack that would otherwise turn into runoff in the spring season. Wetter than normal soil moisture is reported in central Colorado and the Front Range.

Snowpack and reservoir storage

Snowpack has been well below normal at the start of water year 2024, especially at the beginning of January. However, after a mid-January winter storm, snowpack has improved to closer to normal at 92% of the median. The dark line on the graph to the right depicts the bump in snowpack over the past month. Statewide reservoir storage is at 100% of the median, largely due to last year's wetter than normal conditions.

SNOW WATER EQUIVALENT IN STATE OF COLORADO



Seasonal outlook

In the next couple weeks, models have projected a potential large change in moisture during the first week of February in the southwestern portion of the US, and Colorado is likely to experience some of those effects. Looking further out into the next couple months, El Nino conditions are highly likely to persist through early spring, which tends to be associated with wetter than normal springtime conditions in Colorado. However, the El Nino conditions are expected to collapse in late spring giving way to more neutral conditions.

The next Water Conditions Monitoring Committee Meeting will be on February 20, 2024.

Co-Chairs: Emily Adrid, CWCB and Sarah Brucker, DWR

Additional info at <https://cwcb.colorado.gov/Water-Conditions-Monitoring-Committee>

Special thanks to Peter Goble, Colorado Climate Center; Brian Domonkos, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services