



COLORADO

Department of Natural Resources

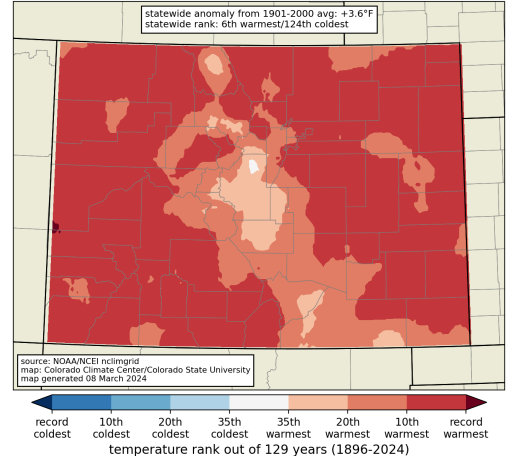
March 19, 2024

Water Conditions Summary - WY 2024

Observed temperature

Temperatures during the first five months of the water year (October - February) rank 6th warmest in the 129-year record. October and November temperatures were above average, and December ranked 7th warmest. January remained near average, while February temperatures ranked 11th warmest. Temperatures in March so far have been variable across the state. There are areas, especially in Gunnison County and along the eastern plains, that have experienced well above average temperatures. However, the northwest corner of the state has experienced below normal average temperatures.

average temperature rank: 5 months ending February 2024 (Oct-Feb)



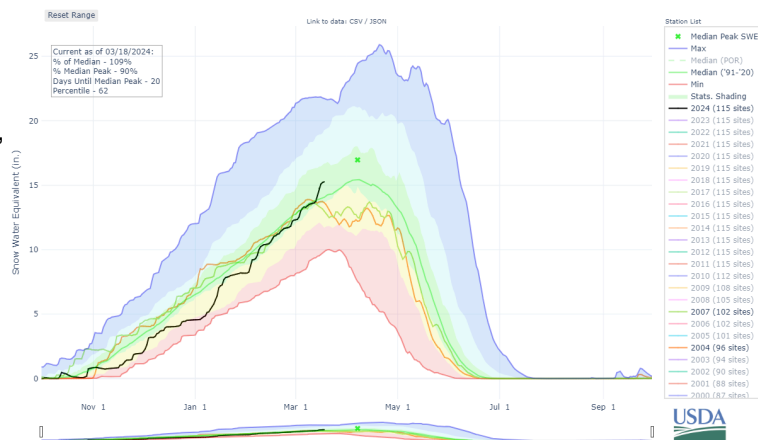
Observed precipitation and drought conditions

The water year so far is the 48th driest in the 129-year record, with drier conditions focused in the southwest. Although the beginning of the water year was dry, this February ranked 19th wettest. A big winter storm in March brought statewide precipitation average above the median for the first time this water year. Currently, statewide precipitation is currently at 102 percent of the median, ranging from 116 percent in the Arkansas basin to 92 percent in the San Miguel-Dolores-Animas-San Juan basin.

Drought conditions have improved this month. The US Drought Monitor downgraded the D2 drought classification (severe drought) in the Rio Grande basin to D1 (moderate drought). About 66 percent of the state is not classified under any drought conditions, and about 8 percent of the state is classified in D1 drought.

Snowpack and reservoir storage

Snow water equivalent (SWE) has improved considerably across the state since the beginning of the water year, especially during the month of March. Similarly to precipitation, SWE measured above the median for the first time this water year this month. Currently, the statewide SWE is 109 percent of median, and all major basins are above 100 percent of median, ranging from 101 percent in the Upper Rio Grande basin and 114 percent in the South Platte basin. Average reservoir storage statewide is 100 percent of median, ranging from 137 percent in the Eastern South Platte basin to 87 percent in the San Miguel-Dolores-Animas-San Juan basin.



Streamflows and soil moisture

The streamflow forecast as of March 1 was near normal for most of the central and northern portions of the state, especially in the Gunnison and Yampa-White-Green basins and particularly low streamflow forecasts for the Upper Rio Grande and San Miguel-Dolores-Animas-San Juan basins. However, with March snow accumulation, it is likely that we will see some improvement to the streamflow forecasts when they are updated on April 1. In terms of soil moisture, shallow soil moisture is high in most areas reflecting the recent storm. There are a few areas where deep soil moisture is low, but nothing is especially concerning.

Seasonal outlook

The three month seasonal outlook (April-May-June) indicates potential for above average temperatures for late spring with a slight chance of above average precipitation in the northeast portion of the state. Climate models for the month of April indicate higher chances for a warm and dry April in the southwest portion of the state. The El Niño signal is strong for the moment, but the signal is likely to shift to neutral by June 2024 and shift again to La Niña in late summer.

The next Water Conditions Monitoring Committee Meeting will be on April 23, 2024.

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

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

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