



COLORADO

Department of
Natural Resources

November 28, 2023

Water Conditions Summary - WY 2024

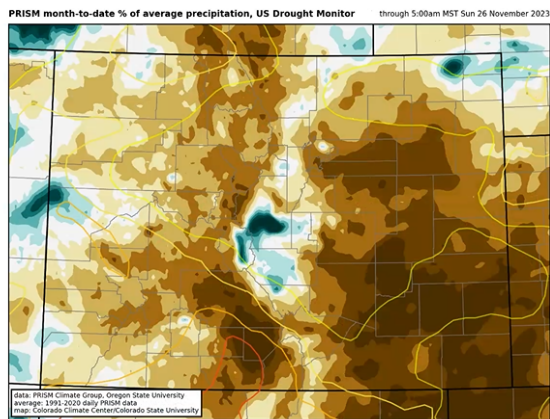
Observed temperature

The start of Water Year 2024 was warmer and drier than normal across much of Colorado, especially in southern Colorado. Areas near Durango and in the San Luis Valley experienced a top 10 warmest October. The Front Range and most of eastern Colorado experienced near normal temperatures in October. Overall, October 2023 was the 26th warmest October in the 129-year record.

Temperatures in November 2023 varied across the state. Pockets of above average temperatures were observed over the high elevations, portions of the Front Range, and Eastern Plains. Conversely, there were areas in southern Park county, along the I-70 corridor mountains, and in the eastern plains that experienced below average temperatures this November.

Observed precipitation and drought conditions

November Precipitation

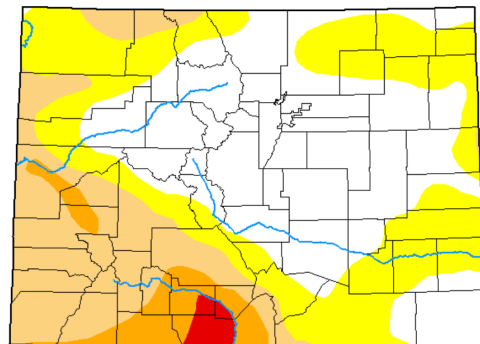


The statewide precipitation average is about 70% of normal. There are small geographic exceptions in the central mountains, near Grand Junction, and in the northeast corner of the state that experienced wetter than average conditions. Across southern Colorado, specifically along the Sangre de Cristo mountain range and into southeast Colorado, drier conditions persisted. There were areas along the eastern plains that received zero inches of precipitation, while some higher elevation areas received anywhere from an inch to an inch and a half in the month of November.

Drought conditions have expanded and intensified, which has decreased soil moisture statewide. The six month standard precipitation index (SPI) illustrates evidence of long-term drought in southwestern Colorado. This is reflected in the US Drought Monitor map above. In total, 27% of the state is in a drought category.

U.S. Drought Monitor November 21, 2023
(Released Wednesday, Nov. 22, 2023)
Valid 7 a.m. EST

Colorado



Observed Streamflows

Streamflows statewide were largely below average throughout the month of October averaging about 80% of normal. The North Platte basin and the headwaters of the Colorado River Basin are the exceptions with streamflows above normal. The lowest observed streamflow was in the San Miguel/Dolores/Ánimas/San Juan Basin at 51% of normal throughout October.

Snowpack and reservoir storage

Snowpack has been well below average for this time of year across the state. Snow water equivalent (SWE) is lowest in the Yampa-White-Green basin at 48% of normal, while SWE is highest in the Gunnison basin at 79% of normal. The statewide SWE average was 61% of normal as of November 28. Although precipitation and snowpack are below normal, statewide average reservoir storage is right at normal for this time of year, largely due to last year's snowpack.

Seasonal outlook

NOAA's Climate Prediction Center released its seasonal outlook in mid-November. Colorado is likely to have near normal temperatures for the December-January-February season. Precipitation outlooks for the winter season indicate a slightly increased chance of wetter than normal conditions. El Niño conditions will remain through the winter, which increases the chances of drier than normal conditions in the northern and central mountains. El Niño conditions are predicted to weaken in the spring with neutral conditions more likely by the summer 2024.

Next Water Conditions Monitoring Committee Meeting will be in January 2024.

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

Additional info at cwcb.colorado.gov/water-availability-flood-task-forces

Special thanks to Becky Bolinger, Colorado Climate Center; Brian Domonkos, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services