

Wacky weather patterns throughout California

By Matt Weiser, Sacramento Bee

La Niña is back in control of California's weather, and like last winter, her temper seems to be flaring.

First it was strafing November winds. Then persistent December frost. Now half the state is dry – not a drop of rain in Sacramento this month, and Lake Tahoe ski resorts are yearning for snow. And at the other end, Los Angeles is breaking rainfall records.



Lots of ice to be found on the shoreline of Lake Tahoe, but not any snow.

Photo/LTN

“It’s been a strange La Niña,” said Ken Clark, a senior meteorologist at AccuWeather based in Southern California. “It’s playing havoc with our precipitation amounts so far. We’ve got a lot of signs that were right on track, but the weather pattern’s been kind of screwy.”

What’s screwy is a high-pressure system parked offshore of Northern California, diverting storms around the region and

into Southern California instead. That's not normal La Niña stuff.

La Niña is a periodic cooling of the equatorial Pacific Ocean that causes the jet stream to arc far to the north. It is a fickle phenomenon in California because the position of the jet stream determines whether the state is wet or dry in La Niña conditions.

In Central California latitudes, including Sacramento and Lake Tahoe, the outcome is often a tossup.

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