

Many California lakes are shockingly low



El Dorado Beach in South Lake Tahoe on Nov. 9. Photo/LTN

By Tom Stienstra, San Francisco Chronicle

In 35 years, nobody's seen numbers like these.

In a personal survey last week of 125 recreation lakes, 33 are under 25 percent full, and that includes 19 that are less than 10 percent full and four that are empty.

The big picture is this: On the eve of what's forecast to be an El Niño-driven winter, it appears most of California has gone to the bank of chances and is going all-in on the hopes of a big winter of rain and snow to bail it out.

The Tahoe region provides a bleak scene, though a fast start to winter also provides hope.

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