

# Forecasters: Wet winter a 'crapshoot'

By Ryan Sabalow, Sacramento Bee

Last year at this time, weather forecasters had a pretty good idea of what was in store as California headed into the rainy season. The Pacific Ocean surface was warming, and they were predicting one of the strongest El Niño weather patterns in recorded history.

El Niño ended up making an appearance, but it wasn't the series of gully washers for which some had hoped. This year, the forecast is even less certain.

"It really is a crapshoot," said Michelle Mead, a meteorologist with the Sacramento office of the National Weather Service. "We don't know what exactly we're going to get, and it's going to be storm-by-storm dependent."

In other words, there's nearly as much chance that California experiences average precipitation or even flooding as there is for another dry winter akin to 2015 when Gov. Jerry Brown stood on a patch of bare grass where several feet of Sierra snow should have been and declared a statewide drought emergency.

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