

# Wet start to season puts dent in Calif. drought

By Ellen Garrison, Sacramento Bee

October was wet, November dry. And December? The soft but steady rains this weekend were enough to push the Sacramento region to 155 percent of normal precipitation for the season.

And there's more to come. After a break between storms, wet weather is expected to return Tuesday, according to the National Weather Service. The wet system should linger over the region through Thursday, dropping 2 to three 3 of rain in Sacramento and 5 to 8 inches of rain and snow in the Sierra.

So what does that mean for California's drought, now entering a sixth year? While Northern California has seen a wet start to winter, the situation is more complicated across the state. Central and Southern California continue to experience unusually dry conditions. And even in the north state, it's not clear how the rest of the rainy season will shape up.

Still, the early-season rains are making a dent. A year ago, the U.S. Drought Monitor listed all four counties in the Sacramento region as being in "exceptional drought," the worst classification. This year, the drought monitor's weekly report shows conditions in Sacramento and Yolo counties have been upgraded two categories to "severe drought," while El Dorado County is another step up in "moderate drought," and parts of Placer are listed as just "abnormally dry" – the least severe category.

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