

# Mammoth snowstorms take toll on Sierra wildlife

By Scott Smith, AP

California's mammoth snow drifts, a welcome sight following five years of harsh drought, have killed off dozens of endangered bighorn sheep, lengthened hibernation for bears and should cause some hikers to think twice before seeking high Sierra adventures, officials say.

"We've gone from flat-out dry conditions to just an overabundance of moisture," said Doug Carlson, a spokesman for the California Department of Water Resources. "It shows the incredible variation of California's weather."

The iconic Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep, which butt their coiled horns on rocky cliffs, have not fared well. During the drought, they migrated to lush mountain peaks of the southeastern Sierra for food.

When harsh snowstorms came, more than 100 of the 600 protected animals may have perished.

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