

Drowning fears surge as snowmelt fuels raging rivers



Rafters this month paddle through the class V Maytag rapid on the Yuba River. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

By Scott Smith and Hallie Golden, AP

Massive waterfalls in Yosemite National Park and rivers raging in mountains throughout the western United States are thundering with greater force than they have for years – and proving deadly as warm weather melts the deepest mountain snowpack in recent memory.

Record snowfall on towering Western peaks this winter virtually eliminated California's five-year drought and it is now melting rapidly.

But it has contributed to at least 14 river deaths and

prompted officials to close sections of rivers popular with swimmers, rafters and fishing enthusiasts.

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