

# Second La Niña winter could mean drought

By Matt Weiser, Water Deeply

Winter is off to a dry start across the West, raising the specter of ongoing drought in many locations. The culprit could be La Niña – a periodic cooling of Pacific Ocean waters near the equator that often brings drought. And not just any La Niña, but a “double whammy” effect, which latest research concludes may cause even worse water shortages.

La Niña is popularly known as the opposite of El Niño, a warming of equatorial Pacific waters that can result in wet winters. But that is a misconception, according to Yuko Okumura, a research associate at the University of Texas Institute for Geophysics.

In reality, La Niña is unpredictable. As we found out last winter in California, for example, it can also produce wetter than average conditions.

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