

Experts: Wet weather great, but no 'Miracle March'

By Peter Fimrite, San Francisco Chronicle

It has all the earmarks of a "Miracle March" – heavy dousings of rain, intense flurries of snow in the Sierra mountains and roadway havoc – but the showy display of stormy weather across California this week isn't fooling the experts.

Despite encouraging signs, including a Sierra snowpack that has risen to respectability from record-breakingly meager depths this month, meteorologists say California will almost certainly emerge from the winter drier than normal.

"I would call it a very helpful March," said Daniel Swain, a climate scientist at UCLA. "It has brought us up from the bottom of the barrel in a lot of places, but it is not close to" a miracle recovery. "It may not actually increase the snowpack at all."

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