



California's **DROUGHT**

Why are we in a drought?

Snowpack, precipitation, and reservoir storage are several indicators commonly used to evaluate California water conditions. 2008-09 is the third dry year for the State, with below average precipitation and runoff beginning in Fall of 2006. Some parts of Southern California received their driest year on record ending in July, 2007. River runoff in Northern and Central watersheds was well below average two years in a row, ending in October, 2008. Statewide Sierra snowpack, which represents a third of the State's water supply, was only 60 percent of normal in mid-January, 2009.

Other drought factors

- Water supplies for customers of the State Water Project and federal Central Valley Project will be affected by limitations on diversions from the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta to protect the Delta smelt.
- Those rules are expected to reduce water deliveries by as much as 30 percent this year to 25 million Californians.
- Initial allocations from the State Water Project were the second lowest in history, at only 15 percent.
- Efforts to capture water last year were hampered by lack of spring rain, and sublimation of some mountain snowpack that provides water supply.



Lake Oroville, November 2008

- Statewide runoff was 60 percent of normal for the water year-ending October 1, 2008. The previous year, statewide runoff amounted to 53 percent of normal.
- Several key reservoirs are standing at one-fourth capacity, following two dry years.
- Runoff for the Sacramento and San Joaquin River systems — the source of much of California's developed water supply — will likely be low for a third year, based on current forecasts.