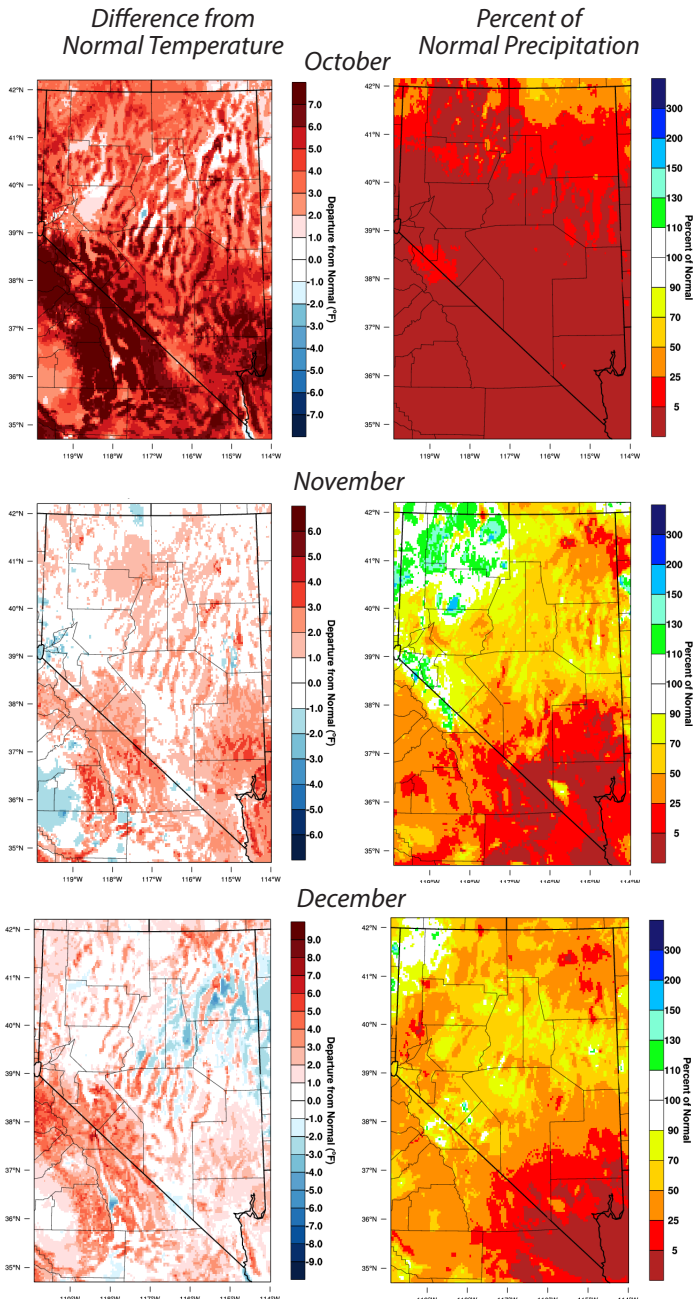


# Nevada State Climate Office

Photo by A. Csank

## Quarterly Report & Outlook October - December 2020

### Notable Weather & Climate in Nevada

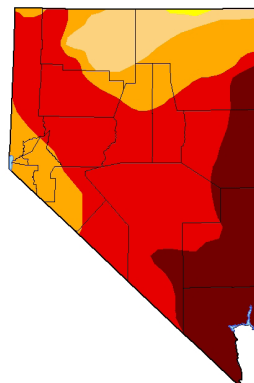


If you were confused about what season it was in October, you weren't alone. Normally, we expect the arrival of autumn in October, with cooler temperatures and, in much of the state, an uptick in precipitation. After a scorchingly hot August and September, October was 1- 6°F warmer than average (1981-2010). In addition to the heat, large portions of the state received almost no rain, getting less than 5% of their usual monthly precipitation. Las Vegas experienced a record dry spell, going 240 days between late April and mid-December without any rain at McCarran International Airport.

November and December were more seasonal, with temperatures and nearer and, in some locations, even slightly below normal. Mineral and Esmerelda counties remained warmer than normal through December. Parts of Humboldt and northern Washoe county, as well as areas around Carson City, did receive slightly more than the normal amount of precipitation in November. However, the rest of the state was dry, and the southernmost part of the state was particularly so with less than 25% or even 5% of normal precipitation. Dry conditions continued into December, with nearly no precipitation in southern Clark county, 50-90% of normal over the central part of the state, and less than half of normal in Elko county.

### U.S. Drought Monitor Nevada

**December 29, 2020**  
(Released Thursday, Dec. 31, 2020)  
Valid 7 a.m. EST



	Drought Conditions (Percent Area)					
	None	D0	D1	D2	D3	D4
Current	0.00	100.00	99.71	91.18	72.49	23.68
Last Week (12-22-2020)	0.00	100.00	99.71	91.18	72.49	23.68
3 Months Ago (09-29-2020)	0.44	99.56	97.13	79.39	51.41	5.80
Start of Calendar Year (01-01-2020)	98.08	1.02	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Start of Water Year (09-01-2019)	0.44	99.56	97.13	79.39	51.41	5.80
One Year Ago (12-29-2019)	98.08	1.02	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Intensity:**

- None
- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Moderate Drought
- D2 Severe Drought
- D3 Extreme Drought
- D4 Exceptional Drought

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/about.aspx>

Author:  
Adam Hartman  
NOAA/NWS/NCEP/CIAC



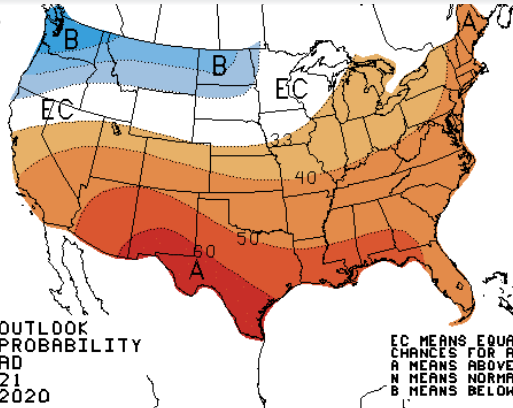
[droughtmonitor.unl.edu](https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu)

WestWideDroughtTracker, <https://wrcc.dri.edu/wwdt/archive.php> using PRISM

State Climatologist, Steph McAfee ([smcafee@unr.edu](mailto:smcafee@unr.edu) or [climate@unr.edu](mailto:climate@unr.edu))

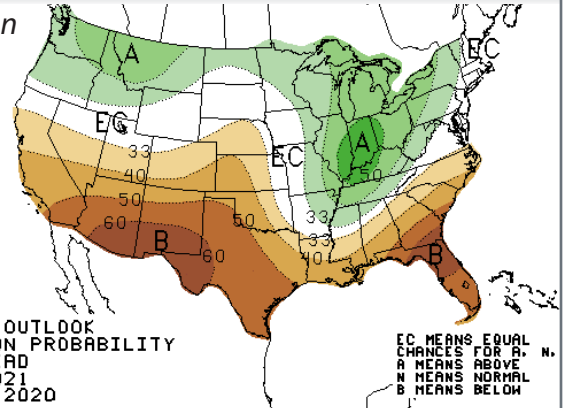
## Outlook for January - March

Temperature



THREE-MONTH OUTLOOK  
TEMPERATURE PROBABILITY  
0.5 MONTH LEAD  
VALID JFM 2021  
MADE 17 DEC 2020

Precipitation



THREE-MONTH OUTLOOK  
PRECIPITATION PROBABILITY  
0.5 MONTH LEAD  
VALID JFM 2021  
MADE 17 DEC 2020

EC MEANS EQUAL CHANCES FOR A, N, B  
A MEANS ABOVE NORMAL  
N MEANS NORMAL  
B MEANS BELOW

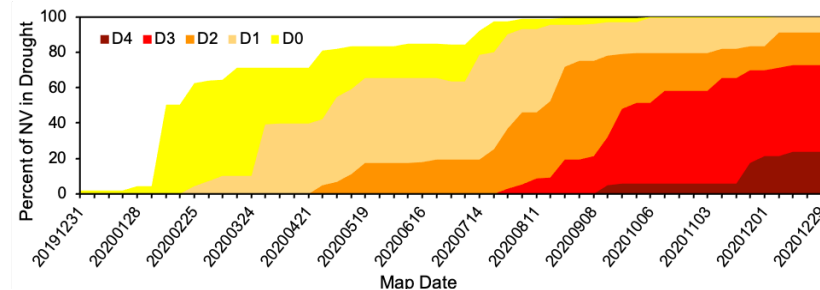
La Niña conditions developed this fall, continued into the early part of winter and are likely to persist into the spring. For southern Nevada, this is not great news. La Niña winters are often warmer and drier than normal in southern Nevada, and that is reflected in the temperature and precipitation outlooks for January - March shown above. There is a 40 - 50% chance of above normal temperatures and a 40 - 50% chance of below normal precipitation in southern Nevada, which is already experiencing Extreme and Exceptional Drought. La Niña winters are more variable in the northern part of the state, where the outlook shows equal chances of warm, cool, or normal winter temperatures, and equal chances of a wet, dry, or normal winter. So, be prepared for anything, but the precipitation deficit already accumulated makes a wetter than normal water year unlikely. Projections are from the NOAA Climate Prediction Center (<https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/predictions/90day/>).

## In-depth: a look back at Nevada's 2020 climate

### 2020 was the driest year on record and the fourth warmest.

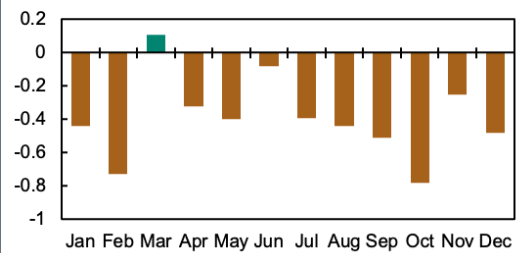
It's time to look back on 2020's weather and climate. The drought that expanded and deepened throughout the year is probably Nevada's biggest climate story. In early January of 2020, the Drought Monitor did not indicate any drought, and less than 2% of the state was even Abnormally Dry (D0).

The 2020 water year did start dry, and that continued into the early part of the 2020 calendar year. A somewhat warm and dry spring for most of the state (though not for the south) was followed by very warm and dry conditions from August through October that allowed drought to deepen significantly. Statewide, only March had above average precipitation for the month. Only March and June had below normal temperatures for the time of year. When everything was said and done, it was Nevada's driest and fourth warmest year, since 1895, when the statewide data from NOAA start.

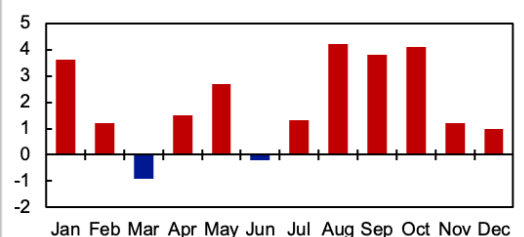


Percent of the state experiencing abnormally dry or drought conditions.  
Data from <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>

Departure from Normal Precipitation (in)



Departure from Normal Temperature (°F)



Statewide average precipitation (top) and temperature (bottom) in 2020 relative to the 1981 - 2010 average in each month. Data from NOAA NCEI Climate at a Glance.  
<https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/cag/>