

More rain lashes storm-battered California

January 9 2023, by Huw GRIFFITH



Waters have risen in a flooded neighborhood in Aptos, California.

Heavy rain lashed water-logged California Monday, with forecasters warning of floods as a parade of storms that have killed 12 people battered the western United States.

Warnings were issued for a swathe of the Golden State as it struggled to

cope with yet more rain on top of near-record downpours in recent weeks—with even more forecast over the coming days.

"Two major episodes of heavy rain and heavy mountain snow are expected to impact California in quick succession during the next couple of days in association with two of the more energetic and moisture-laden parade of cyclones that are aiming directly for California," the National Weather Service said.

Up to five inches (13 centimeters) of rain could fall throughout Monday in coastal regions of central California, the NWS said.

More rain will follow on Tuesday, spreading down into the drier southern portion of the state, while the Sierra Nevada mountains could get hit with up to six feet (1.8 meters) of snow.

Governor Gavin Newsom said 12 people had died over the last 10 days in [extreme weather](#).

Last week he declared a state of emergency and on Sunday asked for, and was granted, a presidential emergency declaration.

"We expect to see the worst of it still ahead of us," Newsom told reporters.



San Francisco has seen its wettest 10-day period in 150 years.

Around 120,000 people were without power on Monday.

"The cumulative effect of successive heavy rainfall events will lead to additional instances of flooding," the NWS warned.

"This includes rapid water rises, mudslides, and the potential for major river flooding. Susceptible terrain and areas near recent burn scars will be most at risk for debris flows and rapid runoff."

Wildfires that regularly tear through the normally parched landscape strip hillsides of the vegetation that keeps soil in place.

When [heavy rains](#) come the hillsides are vulnerable to dangerous mudslides that can threaten homes.

Evacuation orders

Parts of the swanky oceanside settlement of Montecito, 90 minutes northwest of Los Angeles—home to Britain's Prince Harry and his wife Megan Markle—were under evacuation orders Monday.

Firefighters who battled a deadly 440 square mile (1,100 [square kilometer](#)) fire there in 2017-2018 urged residents to leave, with upwards of eight inches of rain expected on already saturated mountains, creating the danger of landslides.



The pier at Capitola Wharf took a hammering in the bad weather.

"Over the last 30 days, Montecito has received 12-20+ inches of rain across the community, exceeding our yearly average of 17 inches," Montecito Fire said on Twitter.

"This cumulative, saturating rain puts the community at greater risk of flooding and debris flow."

While heavy [rain](#) is not unusual for California during the winter, these downpours are testing the state.

They come as much of the western US is more than two-decades into a punishing drought which has seen a big increase in the frequency and intensity of wildfires.



San Francisco was battered by a storm last week, and is now being hit by another.

Scientists say human-caused climate change, brought about by the unchecked burning of fossil fuels, has supercharged these wild swings in weather, making the wets wetter and the dries drier.

Storms last week around San Francisco left tens of thousands of people without power as they caused flooding.

That came on the heels of a ferocious downpour on New Year's Eve, which left the ground sodden and waterlogged.

© 2023 AFP

Citation: More rain lashes storm-battered California (2023, January 9) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2023-01-lashes-storm-battered-california.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.