

# Reports says Nevada is virtually drought-free

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Southern Nevada's lengthy and bone-crushing drought has received

oodles of attention in recent years, particularly as it concerns water use and Lake Mead. Getting less attention is that recent weather patterns have helped alleviate the distress.

August was cooler than normal in the Las Vegas area and brought monsoon rains. Last summer, similar weather hit the region. As a result, Clark County can no longer be classified as suffering from drought. In fact, the entire state of Nevada has benefited from the relief.

As of September, more than "94% of the state is drought-free, which is the largest percentage of zero drought that we've seen in three and a half years. At the end of August last year, over 50% of the state was in D3-Extreme Drought." This news comes from UNR's Nevada Today in a report by Klaire Rhodes of the Nevada state climate office and Thomas Albright, the interim state climatologist.

The West overall has also seen improved conditions. While some parts of Colorado, Arizona, Oregon, Washington, Montana and New Mexico have seen patches of increased drought, the Great Basin "is almost entirely drought-free, except for a stubborn area of central Utah," the authors note. Drought conditions have improved significantly in California, Utah, Wyoming and Idaho.

California, in particular, has made huge strides. According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, virtually the entire state was under severe drought in 2022. By August of this year, however, only a small area in Southern California was not drought-free. Golden State reservoirs were filled and, as Time magazine noted in August, "the main challenge now for California is no longer about getting enough precipitation; it's about finding somewhere to store all that water, so farmers and urban-dwellers can use it in the likely dry spells to come."

As for the months to come, a map issued by the National Oceanic and

Atmospheric Administration Climate Prediction Center shows Nevada and California are expected to remain out of drought into early 2024.

None of this is to minimize the importance of long-term water conservation and planning. Lake Mead is over-allocated, and long stretches of [drought](#) in the Southwest have further stressed the region's water supplies. While recent relief is certainly welcome, most climate analysts believe the persistent dry spells will potentially worsen in the arid region in coming decades. This makes it even more important for Colorado River basin states to reach an agreement on a sustainable path forward.

For now, however, these improvements bring welcome news to Nevada and other states.

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