

**SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY - HANFORD, CA**

REPORT FOR:

MONTHLY REPORT OF RIVER AND  
FLOOD CONDITIONS

MONTH: **APRIL** YEAR: **2019**

**TO:** Hydrometeorological Information Center, W/OH12x1  
National Weather Service/Office of Hydrology  
1325 East-West Highway #7116  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

**SIGNATURE:**

Kevin Durfee  
(In Charge of Hydrologic Service Area)

DATE: May 5, 2019

When no flooding occurs, include miscellaneous river conditions, such as significant rises, record low stages, ice conditions, snow cover, droughts and hydrologic products issued (WSOM E-41).

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| | An **X** inside this box indicates that no flooding occurred for the month  
+---+ within this hydrologic service area.

April, 2019 was much warmer and drier than normal throughout the central California interior. In Fresno, it was the 4<sup>th</sup> warmest April ever and in Bakersfield it was the 7<sup>th</sup> warmest on record. High temperatures topped 80 degrees in Fresno on 14 days of the month and of those 14 days, four of them peaked above 90 degrees. In fact, much of the San Joaquin Valley experienced a mini heat wave between the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> of April with thermometer readings as high as the mid to upper 90s. It was the first occurrence of 90-degree heat in the San Joaquin Valley of the year and since late September. Unseasonably warm temperatures over the HSA during this period accelerated snowmelt over the higher elevations of the Sierra and produced substantial water rises on many rivers and streams in the foothills and mountains. The upper Merced river in Yosemite National Park swelled to nearly bankful during the last weekend of April. Fortunately a cooling trend during the final two days of the month slowed the rate of melting snow over the high Sierra and water levels receded without incidence of flooding. The Merced river at Pohono Bridge crested nearly a foot below its respective flood stage during the early morning hours of the 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> while the Happy Isles point upstream crested about 1.5 feet below its flood stage.

In the broader synoptic picture, the storm track remained well north of the HSA for much of the month. It dipped southward on only two occasions; once around the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April and again during the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>. Although storm systems tracked far enough south during these periods to bring scattered showers and thunderstorms to the central California interior, precipitation was relatively meager. Each of these storm systems delivered up to 6 inches of snow over the highest elevations of the Sierra. During the afternoon of the 16<sup>th</sup>, thunderstorms that rolled out of the Tulare county mountains into northeastern Kern county spawned a weak (EFO) tornado in the vicinity of Ridgecrest. This short-lived tornado ripped through an auto junk yard and fortunately skirted a safe distance away from residences. A storm system that tracked through southern California on the 29<sup>th</sup> brought isolated showers as far north as Kings county and Tulare county. In Kern county, Meadows Field airport received six hundredths of an inch of rain that day and it was Bakersfield's wettest day of the month. From a hydrologic perspective, April 2019 was a dud over the central California interior. Precipitation totals of a half inch to an inch occurred in the Sierra foothills with upwards of 1 to 3 inches over the higher elevations of the Sierra. Elsewhere over the HSA, precipitation for the month averaged less than a half inch. Much of the rest of the Golden State also experienced a drier than normal April. Only the extreme northern part of the state and the Colorado River Valley ended up slightly wetter than normal. Graphical maps depicting total precipitation for the month, the departure from normal precipitation and the percentage of normal precipitation for April throughout California are included below this summary.

A deep snowpack existed over the Sierra the entire month. Despite some melting, the snowpack still averaged about 140 percent of normal by the end of April. In addition to the rivers, appreciable water rises were observed in the reservoirs with a monthly average increase in water content of about 10 percent. By May 2<sup>nd</sup>, the water capacity of the reservoirs averaged about 71 percent of normal.

## HYDROLOGIC PRODUCTS ISSUED

### Flood Watches

Foothills & higher elevations of the Sierra;

1700Z 26-APR

### Flood Advisories

Urban/Small Stream for the east side of the San Joaquin Valley  
in Madera county and Fresno county

2316Z 02-APR

### Hydrologic Outlooks

Foothills and higher elevations of the Sierra

1707Z 25-APR

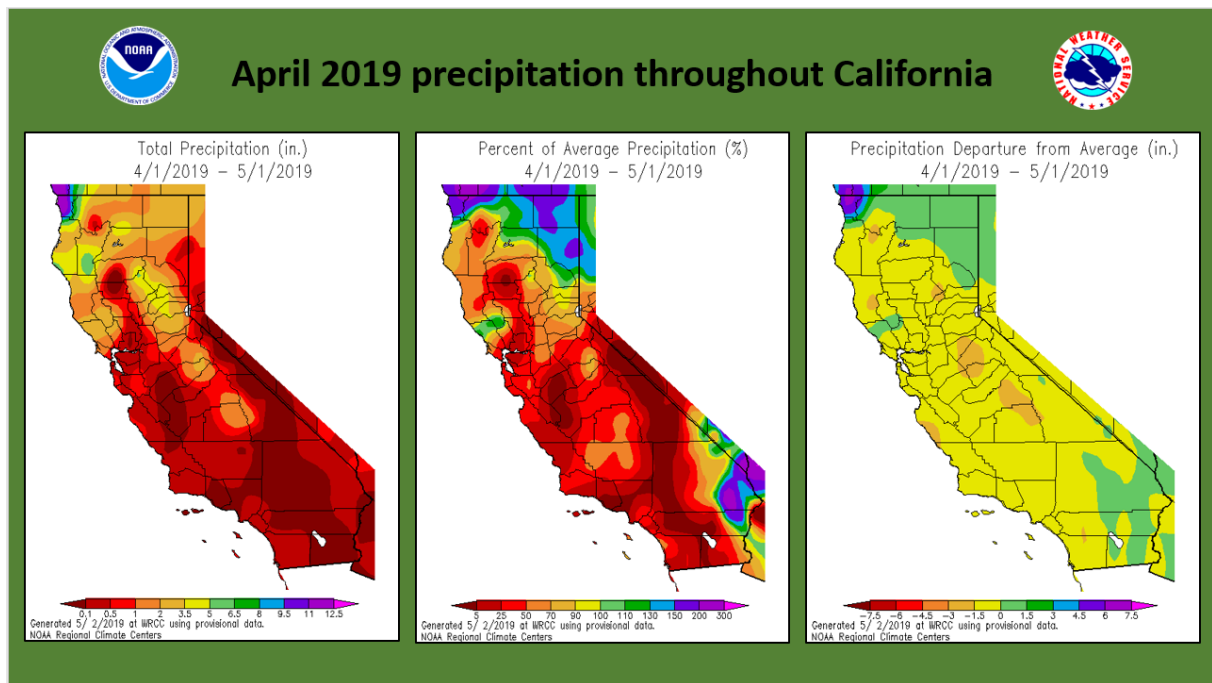
### Hydrologic Statements

Merced River @Stevinson

1559Z 02-APR

Merced River @Stevinson

1639Z 03-APR



CC:

W/OH12X1  
W/WR2  
CNRFC  
WFO HNX  
WFO STO