

Storm Data and Unusual Weather Phenomena - March 2015

Location	Date/Time	Deaths & Injuries	Property & Crop Dmg	Event Type and Details
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CALIFORNIA, South Central

(CA-Z089) W CENTRAL S.J. VALLEY, (CA-Z090) E CENTRAL S.J. VALLEY, (CA-Z091) SW S.J. VALLEY, (CA-Z092) SE S.J. VALLEY, (CA-Z093) S SIERRA FOOTHILLS, (CA-Z094) TULARE CTY FOOTHILLS, (CA-Z095) KERN CTY MTNS, (CA-Z096) S SIERRA MTNS, (CA-Z097) TULARE CTY MTNS, (CA-Z098) INDIAN WELLS VLY, (CA-Z099) SE KERN CTY DESERT

03/01/15 00:00 PST	0	Drought
03/31/15 23:59 PST	0	

The California drought continued in full force during the month of March, 2015. The month was exceptionally warm and much drier than normal. In fact, it was the warmest March ever in Fresno and the 3rd warmest on record in Bakersfield. March, 2015 was the 6th driest March on record in Fresno, tied with March, 1923 with a measly precipitation total of only six hundredths of an inch. The month's unseasonably warm weather tied or established new records for high minimum and maximum temperatures on several occasions in the San Joaquin Valley. In fact, temperatures averaged above normal every single day of the month except the 1st, 2nd and 3rd.

The U.S. Drought Monitor continued to report exceptional drought conditions across the entire Central California region. This extent of exceptional drought is extremely unusual for California. The 2013-2014 water year (July 1 - June 30) concluded with Fresno setting its second driest on record (4.81 inches) and Bakersfield setting its third driest (2.41 inches). For the calendar year, 2014 was the warmest year on record for Fresno and Bakersfield. The trend of below normal precipitation and above normal temperatures has continued through the first few months of 2015.

There continues to be significant media coverage on the on-going drought conditions. These reports include discussion of significant re-allocation of water resources from the east to west side of the San Joaquin Valley, farmers forgoing planting of some crops, a decrease in the snow-related tourism activity in the Southern Sierra Nevada, reduction in air quality due to persistent stagnant air, loss or reduction of ground water, wells drying up in several communities leaving them with no water, and an unprecedented increase in fire danger across the Southern Sierra Nevada and Tehachapi Mountains.

KERN COUNTY --- TAFT [35.13, -119.48]

03/01/15 19:20 PST	10K	Heavy Rain
03/02/15 22:00 PST	0	Source: Local Official

Rainfall of 0.49 inches fell at the APRS station in Taft. The rain contributed to the development of a sinkhole that was 200 feet long, 1 to 2 feet wide, and 1 to 4 feet deep. Five homes were evacuated as a precaution, but no damage was reported to any buildings or utilities.

KERN COUNTY --- DEMOCRAT SPGS [35.53, -118.67]

03/01/15 22:30 PST	0	Heavy Rain
03/02/15 11:25 PST	0	Source: Law Enforcement

Rainfall on 0.74 inches at Democrat RAWs with the heaviest rain between 0225 and 0625 PST. This resulted in several small rock slides being reported at 0647 PST. The rock slides resulted in Highway 178 being closed for several hours to allow crews to clear the road.

A low pressure system dropping south along the California coast brought showers and thunderstorms to central California March 1st and 2nd. Although many areas received some rain, the greatest impacts from the storm were across Kern county. Parts of Kern county received 0.25 inches to 0.75 inches of rain, especially the area in the lower Kern River Canyon east of Bakersfield. This resulted in minor rock and mud slides onto Highway 178, closing the road for several hours. On the west side of Kern county, rain was a contributing factor the the development of a sink hole in the city of Taft.

Snow also fell across the mountains of Kern County during the early hours of March 2nd. Snowfall amounts ranged from 1 inch to 5.5 inches at elevations above 5000 feet. Since snow levels remained above the level of the major highways, no significant impacts were reported.

(CA-Z095) KERN CTY MTNS, (CA-Z099) SE KERN CTY DESERT

03/23/15 02:20 PST	0	High Wind (MAX 69 kt)
03/23/15 17:45 PST	0	

A trough of low pressure moving through California brought strong winds to the Kern County Mountains and Desert areas on March 23. Although most of the wind gusts were 40 to 50 mph, there were a few gusts as high as 56 mph at Jawbone RAWs and Cache Creek APRS station. At the Bird Spring Pass RAWs station, winds gusted 70 to 79 mph for several hours, while Mojave AWOS gusted to 62 mph. No damage was reported from the winds.

(CA-Z095) KERN CTY MTNS, (CA-Z098) INDIAN WELLS VLY, (CA-Z099) SE KERN CTY DESERT

03/31/15 14:00 PST	0	High Wind (MAX 58 kt)
03/31/15 23:59 PST	0	

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A series of dry troughs of low pressure moved across California in the last few days of the March. The trough that moved through on March 31, increased the surface pressure gradients resulting in strong, gusty winds across the mountains and desert areas of Kern County, along with breezy conditions in the San Joaquin Valley. Winds were west-northwesterly 15-30 mph with gusts generally 45-55 mph across the mountains and desert areas. However, there were some gusts of 58-66 mph in a few wind-prone locations. The gusty winds continued into April 1st and 2nd.