

Major California Reservoir Conditions During Peak of 2012-2016 Drought

Comment: Why were Southern California reservoirs full when Northern California reservoirs were empty during the last drought?

Response: From 2012–2016 much or all of California was under severe drought conditions, with greatly diminished precipitation, snowpack, and streamflow and higher temperatures. This drought was broad and deep enough to stress all water management sectors in California. Figure 1 shows reservoir levels for major reservoirs across California at the beginning of 2014 & 2015 Water Years (Peak of the last drought). This figure includes reservoirs that are managed by the state, federal, and local entities. Reservoirs were at historically low levels for both Northern and Southern part of the state. Majority of these reservoir levels were well below 50% of the historical average.

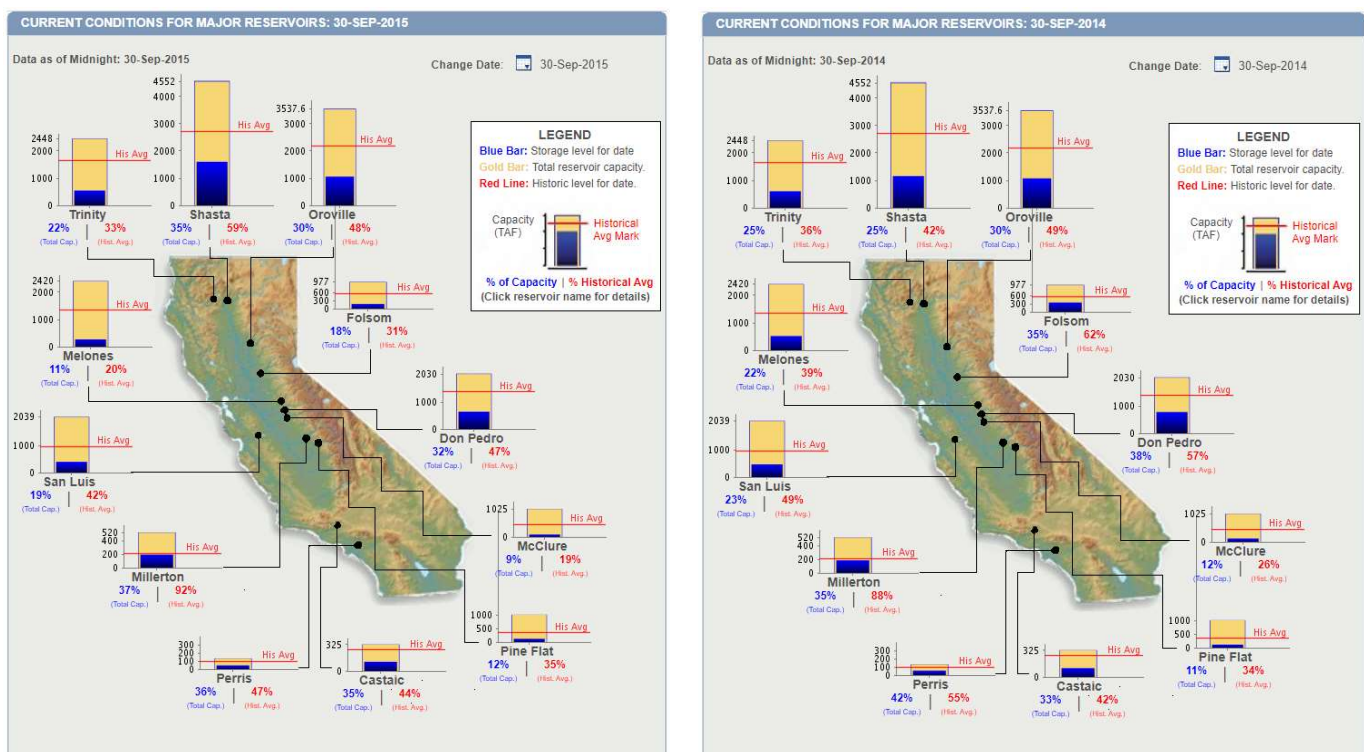


Figure 1: Major Reservoir Conditions during Peak of Drought (Source: California Data Exchange Center)