

# 'Cranked up' snowpack up to 5 times deeper than normal in Washington mountains as ski resorts open

[seattletimes.com/seattle-news/weather/cranked-up-snowpack-up-to-5-times-deeper-than-normal-in-washington-mountains-as-ski-resorts-open/](http://seattletimes.com/seattle-news/weather/cranked-up-snowpack-up-to-5-times-deeper-than-normal-in-washington-mountains-as-ski-resorts-open/)

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Get your skis, sleds and snow shoes ready, winter-sports lovers, the snowpack level is “cranked up” and calling, according to the Northwest Avalanche Center.

Snow levels are higher than average across the region. At Hurricane Ridge in the Olympic Mountains, the 53-inch snowpack is more than 500 percent of normal, with 10 inches usually seen at this time, according to the center’s first [snow-depth climatology report](#) released Wednesday.

At Mission Peak in the Cascades, the snowpack is 325 percent of normal.

And at Mount Baker — which claims to hold the world record for verifiable measured snow in a season with 1,140 inches of snow in the 1998-99 season — there were 48 inches this week, 209 percent of average.

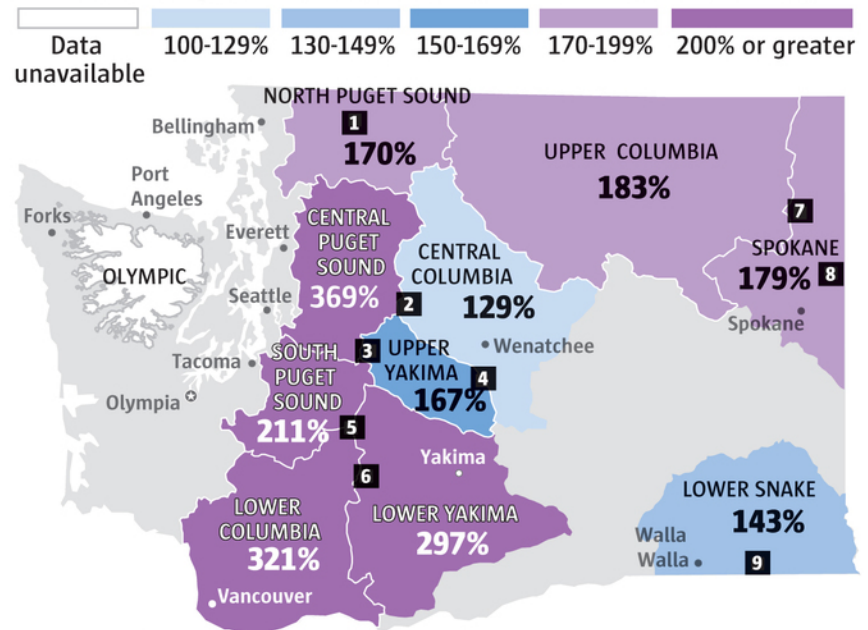
# Washington snowpack

Snowpack as of Nov. 15 as a percentage of annual average for this date (based on the first reading of the day):

## WASHINGTON SKI RESORTS

- 1** Mount Baker Ski Area
- 2** Stevens Pass
- 3** Summit West, Snoqualmie  
Summit Central, Snoqualmie  
Summit East, Snoqualmie  
Alpental, Snoqualmie
- 4** Mission Ridge Ski & Board
- 5** Crystal Mountain
- 6** White Pass
- 7** 49 Degrees North Mountain
- 8** Mount Spokane Ski Area
- 9** Ski Bluewood

## SNOW WATER EQUIVALENT\* BASIN-WIDE (Percent of 1981-2010 normal)



\*Snow water equivalent represents the depth of water in the snowpack, if the snowpack were melted, in inches.

Source: [nrcs.usda.gov](http://nrcs.usda.gov)

MARK NOWLIN / THE SEATTLE TIMES

“We’ve had an active weather pattern and it only takes a few storms to get the snowpack cranked up,” said Kenny Kramer of the Northwest Avalanche Center. “That’s the pattern we’re now in across the Olympics and northwest Cascades and the last couple days have been pretty tremendous.”

Hurricane Ridge went from 17 inches of snow to 53 inches in just the past few days, he said.

Crystal Mountain, which has 14 inches of snow on the ground, opened its season with some fanfare [on Wednesday](#). Mount Baker and Stevens Pass ski areas opened Thursday. Whistler in British Columbia is set to open Friday.

[\[What’s new at ski areas across the Northwest and B.C.\]](#)

“People are anxious to start their winter recreation season and some back-country skiers are already out there,” said Kramer, who explained that the mission of the avalanche center is to keep people safe when they’re outside of designated ski areas. “But it’s not always good news.”

Two [Bellingham snowboarders went missing](#) on Sunday, and the search for the men was suspended Wednesday.

“The storms have been basically nonstop since then,” Kramer said.

In addition, avalanche conditions are present though it’s not known if avalanches played any role in the snowboarders’ disappearance.

*Correction: A previous version of this story incorrectly stated snowpack percentages.*