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Tips for Knitting a Precipitation Blanket

This precipitation blanket was a project I started in Spring 2020 as a PhD student in ecohydrology who suddenly had a lot of time on my hands sitting at home. It was inspired by the [warming stripes](#) visualization for temperature created by climatologist Ed Hawkins, but instead shows variation in annual precipitation for a region over time. The blanket I made shows annual precipitation for California from 1895-2019, with each stripe representing a year and the color corresponding to how wet (blues) or dry (reds) the year was. If you are interested in making your own, here are some tips and references for how I made mine!

Skills Needed:
I knitted mine, but you could also use the color pattern to crochet!
- Cast on/Cast off
- Switch yarns and weave in ends
- Knit stitch

Materials:
- US size 9 circular needles with long cable to fit width of blanket (mine was 60 inch cable)
- Yarn needle (to stitch ends in)

- Yarn
  - I used [this yarn](#) in the seven different colors below. The amount of each color you need will vary depending on the size of your blanket and the number of times each color appears for your location. For mine, I needed 2 skeins (285 yds each) of each color, with the exception of the hot pink color where I had to start a third skein at the end.
  - Colors:
    - Burgundy
    - Rich Orchid
    - Soft Rose
    - Aran
    - Blue Haze
    - Aqua
    - Royal

Size of Blanket:

I cast on 210 stitches and did 4 rows for every year (1895-2019). The finished size of my blanket is around 5 ft wide and a little over 6 ft long. To adjust the width, you can cast on more or fewer stitches. To adjust the length, you can change the number of rows you do for each year, however, *make sure you do an even number of rows* so that all the you end up with the wrong sides created by switching colors all on the backside of the blanket. You can also change the number of years you use in your pattern to change the length. I recommend doing a test swatch to check the gauge of your knitting before starting your blanket to make sure that you'll end up with the dimensions you are aiming for.

Pattern:

I downloaded data from the [NOAA climate database](#). For mine I used annual precipitation in California, which you can access with the search input below and by then hitting "Plot". However, they also have all sorts of data for different places so I encourage you to explore!

Climate at a Glance

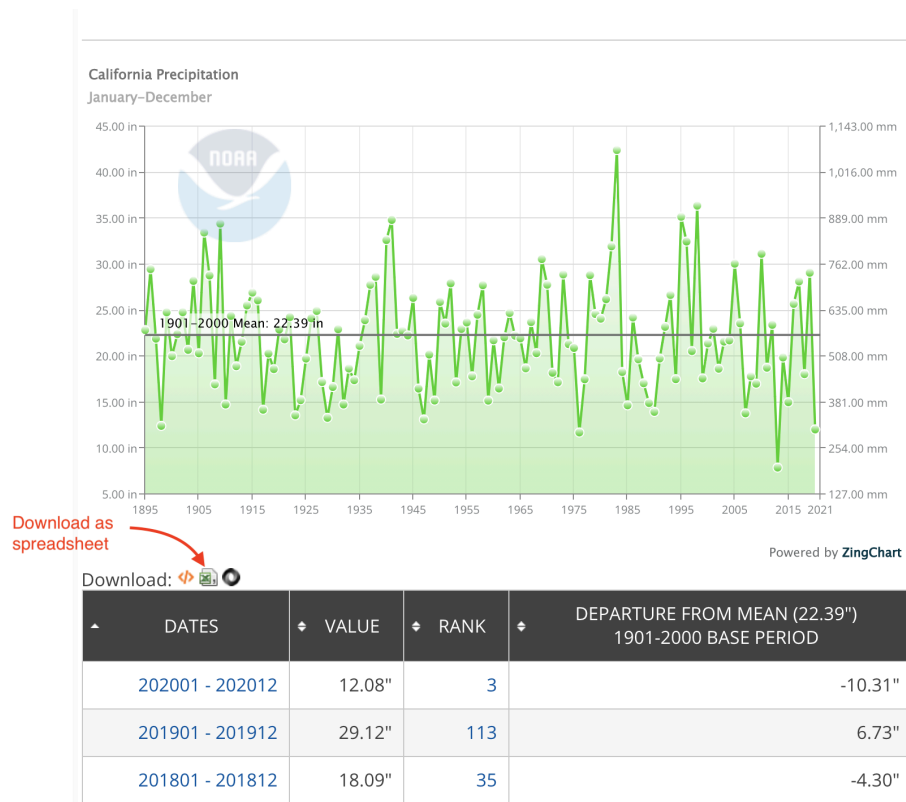|	
Climate Monitoring	Global National Regional **Statewide** Divisional County City
State of the Climate	
Temp, Precip, and Drought	Mapping Time Series Rankings Haywood Plots Data Information Background
Climate at a Glance	
Extremes	**Statewide Time Series**
Societal Impacts	
Snow and Ice	Choose from the options below and click "Plot" to create a time series graph.
Teleconnections	*Please note, Degree Days and Palmer Indices are not available for Alaska. Palmer Drought Severity Index (PDSI), Palmer Hydrological Drought Index (PHDI), and Palmer Modified Drought Index (PMDI) are not offered for multiple-month time scales.*
Monitoring References	

Parameter: Precipitation

Time Scale: Annual

Month: July

Start Year: 1895

End Year: 2021

State: California

Plot

Options

☑ Display Base Period
Start: 1901 End: 2000

☐ Display Trend
○ per Decade ○ per Century
Start: 1895 End: 2021

☐ Smoothed Time Series
○ Binomial Filter ○ LOESS Filter

Once you hit the plot button, you can then scroll down to see a table with the data, where there is then an option to download the data into a spreadsheet at the top of the table.

Once you have the data downloaded from NOAA, you can then download or make a copy in your own Google Drive of my Pattern Worksheet. Then you can follow the directions in the worksheet to copy and paste the data you want to knit, adjust the ranges, and get the resulting pattern for what yarn color to use for each year.

This pattern categorizes the years based on how much the precipitation differed from the long-term average from 1895-2000 (aka the "Anomaly" column in the downloaded data). Positive anomalies represent years that were wetter than the average, and negative anomalies represent years that were drier than the average.

Please reach out over Twitter (where you can find me @jvwilkening) or send me an email (jvwilkening at berkeley.edu) if you have any questions, or to share pictures of anything you create! Happy knitting!