

Forecasters say El Nino may be developing

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(AP) -- A new El Nino could be approaching. Sea-surface temperatures have been warming in the tropical Pacific Ocean, suggesting the potential for the development of the El Nino climate phenomenon this summer, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

El Nino conditions are associated with increased rainfall across the east-central and eastern Pacific and with drier than normal conditions over northern Australia, Indonesia and the Philippines. A summer El Nino can lead to wetter than normal conditions in the intermountain regions of the United States and over central Chile. In an El Nino year there tend to be more Eastern Pacific hurricanes and fewer Atlantic hurricanes.

In recent months conditions have been neutral - between the warmer than normal El Nino and the cooler La Nina conditions.

Water below the sea surface has been warmer than normal, NOAA said, and warm conditions both on the surface and below normally precede the development of an El Nino, changing wind patterns and potentially affecting [climate](#) worldwide.

Computer models that forecast climate differ, the agency noted, with some predicting arrival of El Nino while others expect continued neutral conditions.

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