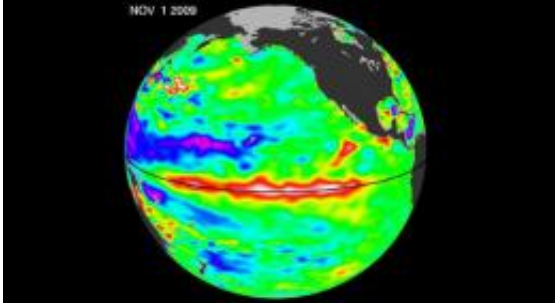


# El Nino Picking Up Steam

November 13 2009

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This image was created with data collected by the U.S./French satellite during a 10-day period centered on November 1, 2009. It shows a red and white area in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific that is about 10 to 18 centimeters (4 to 7 inches) above normal. Image credit: NASA/JPL Ocean Surface Topography Team

(PhysOrg.com) -- The latest image from the U.S./French Jason-2 satellite finds a strong wave of warm water heading toward the Americas, fueling El Nino.

El Niño is experiencing a late-fall resurgence. Recent [sea-level](#) height data from the NASA/French Space Agency [Ocean](#) Surface Topography Mission/Jason-2 oceanography satellite show that a large-scale, sustained weakening of trade winds in the western and central equatorial Pacific during October has triggered a strong, eastward-moving wave of warm water, known as a Kelvin wave.

In the central and eastern equatorial Pacific, this warm wave appears as

the large area of higher-than-normal sea surface heights (warmer-than-normal sea surface temperatures) between 170 degrees east and 100 degrees west longitude. A series of similar, weaker events that began in June 2009 initially triggered and has sustained the present El Niño condition.

This image was created with data collected by the U.S./French [satellite](#) during a 10-day period centered on November 1, 2009. It shows a red and white area in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific that is about 10 to 18 centimeters (4 to 7 inches) above normal. These regions contrast with the western equatorial Pacific, where lower-than-normal sea levels (blue and purple areas) are between 8 to 15 centimeters (3 and 6 inches) below normal. Along the equator, the red and white colors depict areas where [sea surface](#) temperatures are more than one to two degrees Celsius above normal (two to four degrees Fahrenheit).

"In the American west, where we are struggling under serious drought conditions, this late-fall charge by El Niño is a pleasant surprise, upping the odds for much-needed rain and an above-normal winter snowpack," said JPL oceanographer Bill Patzert.

Provided by JPL/NASA ([news](#) : [web](#))

Citation: El Nino Picking Up Steam (2009, November 13) retrieved 9 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2009-11-el-nino-steam.html>

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