

NOAA trims forecast for busy hurricane season

August 8 2013, by Seth Borenstein

This Atlantic hurricane season may not be quite as busy as U.S. forecasters once thought, but they still warn of an unusually active and potentially dangerous few months to come.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration updated its hurricane season forecast Thursday, trimming back the number of hurricanes they expect this year to between six and nine. That is a couple less than they predicted back in May.

The forecast calls for three to five of those hurricanes to be major, with winds greater than 110 mph (175 kph). The updated forecast also predicts 13 to 19 named storms this year. Both of those predictions are just one less forecast three months ago.

The chance that 2013 will be busier than normal remains at 70 percent. A normal year has 12 named storms, six hurricanes and three major storms.

"Make no bones about it, those ranges indicate a lot of activity still to come," said lead seasonal hurricane forecaster Gerry Bell of NOAA's Climate Prediction Center. "We're coming to the peak of hurricane season now."

Hurricane season starts in June and runs until the end of November, but peak hurricane season runs from mid-August to mid-October.

So far, there have been four named storms, the last one being Tropical Storm Dorian. Four storms in June and July is more than normal, when usually there are just one or two, Bell said.

Bell is predicting a busier-than-normal season because of larger [climate patterns](#) that have been in place since about 1995. Atlantic waters are warmer than normal, wind patterns are just right, and there has been more rain in West Africa. This fits with a larger 25-to-40-year cycle of hurricane activity that meteorologists have seen over the decades.

Bell slightly reduced the earlier forecast because a La Nina [weather event](#)—the cooling of the central Pacific that acts as the flip side of El Nino—is not happening and that usually increases [hurricane activity](#). While the Atlantic is as much as half a degree Fahrenheit warmer than normal, it's not as warm as some of the busier years, nor is it predicted to be, Bell said.

The forecasts don't include where storms might land, if any place.

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Citation: NOAA trims forecast for busy hurricane season (2013, August 8) retrieved 17 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2013-08-noaa-trims-busy-hurricane-season.html>

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