

Hurricane season expected to be weaker than normal

August 6 2015



US weather forecasters said Thursday there is a 90 percent chance that the 2015 hurricane season in the Atlantic, which runs through November 1, will be less active than normal.

Earlier predictions had placed the likelihood of a below-normal season at 70 percent, but the latest projections raise that likelihood to a record high confidence level.

There is a ten percent chance the [hurricane season](#) will be near-normal and "no realistic expectation" the season could be above-normal.

The new projections, from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association's Climate Prediction Center, lower the predicted number of

hurricanes from between three and six to between one and four. Of those, one, at most, is expected to become a [major hurricane](#), of category 3 or higher.

They are predicting six to 10 named storms.

The official seasonal averages are 12 named storms, six hurricanes and three major hurricanes. NOAA has classified only three of the previous 20 seasons as below-normal, including two of the past six seasons.

Three named storms have already occurred this year off the United States, which are included in NOAA's predicted tally. Two of those made landfall, Ana in May in South Carolina and Bill in June in Texas.

Despite Ana's premature arrival the official hurricane season runs from June 1 through November 31.

The peak months are generally mid-August through October, as NOAA's lead seasonal hurricane forecaster Gerry Bell cautioned. "Regardless of our call for below-normal storm activity, people along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts should remain prepared and vigilant, especially now that the peak months of the hurricane season have started," he said.

His team attributes the high likelihood of a below-average season to the El Niño weather system, which has been strengthening and which creates atmospheric conditions that make it difficult for storms to develop.

They also noted the dampening effects of below-average sea-surface temperatures in the tropical Atlantic. Hurricane formation is associated with warmer waters.

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