

Pacific hurricane forecast complicated by coronavirus

May 21 2020, by Caleb Jones

The Central Pacific basin including Hawaii should expect to see between two and six tropical storms or hurricanes this year, federal forecasters said Wednesday.

The annual National Weather Service prediction came as wary Hawaii residents begin to emerge from coronavirus isolation and face massive unemployment and economic uncertainty.

The forecast means there is about a 75% chance of an average or below normal season, and a 25% chance of higher than average storm activity.

State, federal and local officials said in a video news conference Wednesday that plans are being developed to deal with a [major hurricane](#) amid the looming threat of the novel coronavirus.

Hawaii has had among the lowest COVID-19 infection and [mortality rates](#) in the nation, but officials had to effectively shut down the state's tourism-based economy to contain the pandemic.

Systems need to be established to deal with potential hurricane victims who have the coronavirus while seeking shelter during an emergency, officials said. Isolating the sick will be key, officials said, but few details were provided about the logistics of handling a second natural disaster atop the pandemic.

Destructive winds, [storm surges](#) and flooding can "wreak havoc within

our communities and impact the lives of thousands of residents all across our state," said Hawaii Gov. David Ige.

Ige encouraged people to prepare 14-day emergency kits, which for the first time should now include hand sanitizer and masks.

Last year four [tropical cyclones](#) developed in the Central Pacific. None directly impacted Hawaii.

In 2018, the massive and powerful Hurricane Lane made a last-minute turn and narrowly spared Oahu, Hawaii's most populous island. The last major [hurricane](#) to strike the state was Hurricane Iniki in 1992, which hit Kauai and caused massive damage across the island.

Hurricane season in Hawaii lasts from June 1 until the end of November. August and September are historically active months for cyclones in the region.

© 2020 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed without permission.

Citation: Pacific hurricane forecast complicated by coronavirus (2020, May 21) retrieved 20 March 2024 from

<https://phys.org/news/2020-05-pacific-hurricane-complicated-coronavirus.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--