

Forecasters Predict El Nino This Year

Updated 6:10 AM PDT, Sun, Jun 7, 2009

Related Topics: [Major League Baseball](#) | [National League \(Baseball\)](#) | [NL West Division](#) | [San Diego Padres](#) | [Baseball](#) | [Climatology](#) | [Earth Science](#) | [Meteorology](#) | [Professional Baseball](#) | [Science and Technology](#)



Weather patterns over the Eastern Pacific may be setting up for an El Nino pattern this fall, possibly portending an end to [California's](#) recent drought, it was reported today.

The last two El Nino weather patterns saw nasty floods in Southern California and gigantic snowpacks in the Sierra Nevada. But scientists caution that some El Ninos are dry in California.

And Caltech's venerable climate expert, [Bill Patzert](#), expressed caution to the San Diego Union-Tribune, and said he doesn't "see the white horse charging over the horizon to give us a good drenching."

Longterm forecasts generated at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography indicate that an El Nino is forming, as the conditions seem ripe for an increase in sea temperatures and ocean levels off Peru, climate researcher [David Pierce](#) told the newspaper.

"We are forecasting an El Nino this year," said Pierce. "Hopefully, it will bring a little more rain, not only to [San Diego](#) but to the entire Southwest.

"That would be quite nice," he told the Union-Tribune.

That forecast was echoed by the lead scientist at the Climate Prediction Center in Maryland, as well as the University of Washington's Climate Impacts group.

And the forecasts come as the region is in the midst of an unusual summer weather pattern, with winter-style cold pressure systems dropping significant rainfall during what is usually the driest month of the year.

El Ninos are the name given by Peruvian fishermen to a periodic migration of tropically-warm water to the Eastern Pacific, where water is usually cold because of polar flows. They have sometimes caused rainfall to double or triple from normal levels in California.

Within the past few days, meteorologists around the world have sounded the alarm about a possible El Nino. The forecasts include possible droughts in Australia, more typhoons to hit the Philippines, and a decrease in Atlantic Coast hurricanes making landfall on the U.S.

Five years of drought have left major water storage lakes in California half-full, and the governor has proclaimed a statewide drought emergency. But strange weather patterns have left full storage lakes to the east, in Arizona, and the deserts of Riverside County are green this June, when they are usually seasonally brown.

"If winds and currents start working in concert, the ocean could warm rapidly," said [Nathan Mantua](#) at the Washington school. "A powerful El Nino on the level of the 1997-98 event is possible."

Pasadena's Patzert, known for his colorful colloquialisms, wouldn't go that far, and told the San Diego paper that the chances for a big, wet El Nino are "about the same as the Padres winning the pennant."

The Padres, a third of the way into the season, are 11-1/2 games behind the Dodgers.

Copyright City News Service

Find this article at:

<http://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/local/Forecasters-Predict-El-Nino-This-Year.html>

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.

© NBC Universal, Inc. | All Rights Reserved.