

Inside Wallops

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La Niña not Expected to Affect 2006 Atlantic Hurricanes

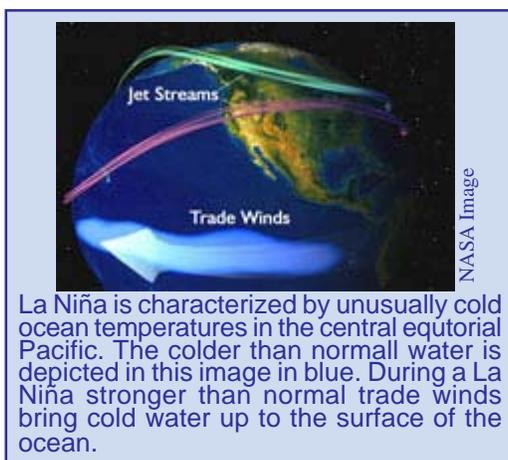
NASA oceanographers agree that the recent La Niña in the eastern Pacific Ocean is not expected to have an effect on the Atlantic hurricane season this year. That is good news, because normally a La Niña tends to increase Atlantic hurricane activity and decrease Pacific Ocean hurricanes.

Although La Niña occurs in the Pacific, it affects weather in the Atlantic Ocean as well, through changes in the winds. La Niña changes the wind patterns in the upper and lower levels of the atmosphere, making it easier for hurricanes to form in the Atlantic and harder in the eastern Pacific. In the Atlantic, the winds that would normally tear a hurricane's circular motion apart are lessened but they increase in the eastern Pacific.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Climate Prediction Center monitors La Niña conditions such as cooler than normal sea surface temperatures, precipitation and winds. According to their latest report on April 6, 2006, sea surface temperatures were warming back to normal. That latest report stated that during the month of April, sea surface temperatures were

slightly cooler than normal in the extreme eastern equatorial Pacific, and conditions returned to near average in that region.

David Adamec, an oceanographer at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center, said that "the current temperature signal



La Niña is characterized by unusually cold ocean temperatures in the central equatorial Pacific. The colder than normal water is depicted in this image in blue. During a La Niña stronger than normal trade winds bring cold water up to the surface of the ocean.

at the end of April is near normal and the ocean surface temperature has not yet caused the atmosphere to respond in a La Niña-like way." Adamec used a Goddard developed computer model for experimental forecasts 3-12 months in the future of the ocean, land and atmosphere. The data used came from 2 NASA satellites: Jason and QuikSCAT. Jason

provided sea-surface height information, and QuikSCAT provided surface wind data.

Adamec said that in order for La Niña to have an effect on the Atlantic Ocean hurricane season, it would have to exist for a much longer time, especially into peak hurricane season, which is August and September.

According to 12 major ocean-atmosphere computer models, the equatorial Pacific will be neutral to warm in August. August and September are the peak season for hurricane formation in the Atlantic Ocean. According to scientists, the atmosphere takes about two weeks to "react" to a change in ocean surface temperature.

Forecasters and other scientists still expect a greater than average number of Atlantic Ocean hurricanes this year, but La Niña will not be a factor in that. The more active season is expected because of other environmental conditions favorable to hurricanes, such as the location of the Bermuda high removing much of the wind shear in the western Atlantic that thwarts hurricanes, warm sea surface temperatures in the Gulf of Mexico.

The Atlantic hurricane season begins on June 1.

2006 Hurricane Names

ALBERTO
BERYL
CHRIS
DEBBY
ERNESTO
FLORENCE
GORDON

HELENE
ISAAC
JOYCE
KIRK
LESLIE
MICHAEL
NADINE

OSCAR
PATTY
RAFAEL
SANDY
TONY
VALERIE
WILLIAM

Supervisory Feedback

The web-based Supervisory Feedback Tool is open through May 10.

Civil service employees may anonymously assess their supervisor in the areas of Organizational Communication, Diversity, Accountability, Teamwork, Human Resources Management, Change Management, and Financial/Technical/Technological Management.

To complete the Supervisory Feedback visit: <http://supvysurvey.gsfc.nasa.gov>

For additional information call Lori Moore at x66-5087 or Danielle Tolbert at x66-7283

Events at The Visitor Center During May

Saturday, May 13 "Milky Ways and Globular Clusters"
Discover the Milky Way and our neighboring galaxies. Following the presentation, each family will make their own Galactic Mobile. The program begins at 1 p.m. and will last 35 minutes.



Saturday, May 20: "Ring Around the Planet"
Learn more about Saturn and build your own model of the giant gas planet to take home. The program begins at 1 p.m. and will last 30 minutes.

Saturday, May 27: Bizarre Stars!
Have you ever wished upon a shooting star? Did you wonder what it really was that you saw? Learn the truth about shooting stars in this 30-minute program. Following the presentation children can create their own shooting star. Program begins at 1 p.m.

April Rains are a Welcome Relief

by Bob Steiner, Meteorologist

Finally some meaningful rain fell in the local area. Measurable rain fell on 15 days during April, 5 more than normal, giving us a total of 2.35 inches, 2.83 inches being average. The greatest 24 hour total was 0.78 inches on April 21 and 22.



April also was warmer than normal by 3.2 degrees. We experienced 17 days with above normal temperatures and 19 nights above normal. The maximum temperature recorded was 81 degrees on the 15th while the coolest morning was the 34 degree reading on the April 10.

Winds gusting to 30 mph or greater occurred on 9 days during April with the strongest gust being 41 mph at 12:57 p.m. on Sunday the 30th.

Summer begins in June and along with that comes an increase in thunderstorm activity. Rainfall totals average 3.17 inches, normally falling on 8 days during the month. The wettest June on record was in 1972 when 7.93 inches fell.

Maximum temperatures average in the high 70's at the beginning of June and increase into the mid 80's by months end. The overnight lows begin the month near 60 degrees warming into the upper 60's by the end of the month. The warmest temperature on record for June is a 97 degree reading on June 10, 1964. Forty degrees is the coolest reading on record, and occurred on both June 1 and 2, 1967.



Wallops Auto Club

The Wallops Auto Club has use of Building H-30, just outside the Wallops Main Base in the old Coast Guard Housing.

The facility offers a garage with four bays, work benches, shop press lighting, power and oil reclamation facility.



Meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month between 5 - 6 p.m. at the Rocket Club.

For further information contact Will Mast at x1468, Jim Brady at x2112, Alex Lawson at x1772, or Dwayne Turley at x1135.

Steak Dinner With all the fixings

May 19
6 p.m. in the Rocket Club

\$16 per person

Tickets may be purchased at the Wallops Exchange, Bldg. E-2, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. or in the Rocket Club, Bldg. F-3, after 4:30 p.m.



The deadline to purchase tickets is May 10. for further information contact Mike Barnhill at x1641

Health Fair

The annual Wallops Health Fair, held May 4, was well attended. Employees had an opportunity to talk to and receive free tests from health and wellness providers from across the lower Eastern Shore.



Photos by James Mason-Foley



Inside Wallops is an official publication of Goddard Space Flight Center and is published by the Wallops Office of Public Affairs, Extension 1584, in the interest of Wallops employees. Recent and past issues of *Inside Wallops* also may be found on the NASA Wallops Flight Facility homepage: www.wff.nasa.gov

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