

# El Niño is here, and could help water supplies

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WASHINGTON — El Niño has arrived again, which could be good news for water supply managers in the drought-plagued southwest United States, according to a July 9 [statement](#) by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the nation's weather forecasting agency.

A warming of the waters of the central and eastern Pacific Ocean that occurs about every two to five years, an El Niño event lasts about 12 months. Among its likely positive effects are more winter precipitation for the Southwest, as well as less-wintery weather to the North, a reduced risk of wildfires in Florida, and reduced Atlantic hurricane activity, NOAA said.

Negative effects can include damaging winter storms in California, more storminess across the southern US, flooding and mudslides in Central and South America, drought in Indonesia and diminished food for fish, birds and marine mammals in the Pacific, the agency said.

"El Niño's impacts depend upon a variety of factors, such as intensity and extent of ocean warming, and the time of year," the NOAA statement said. The most recent El Niño occurred in 2006.