

2026-27 El Niño Briefing

Current Status: El Niño Advisory

National Weather Service LOX/SGX



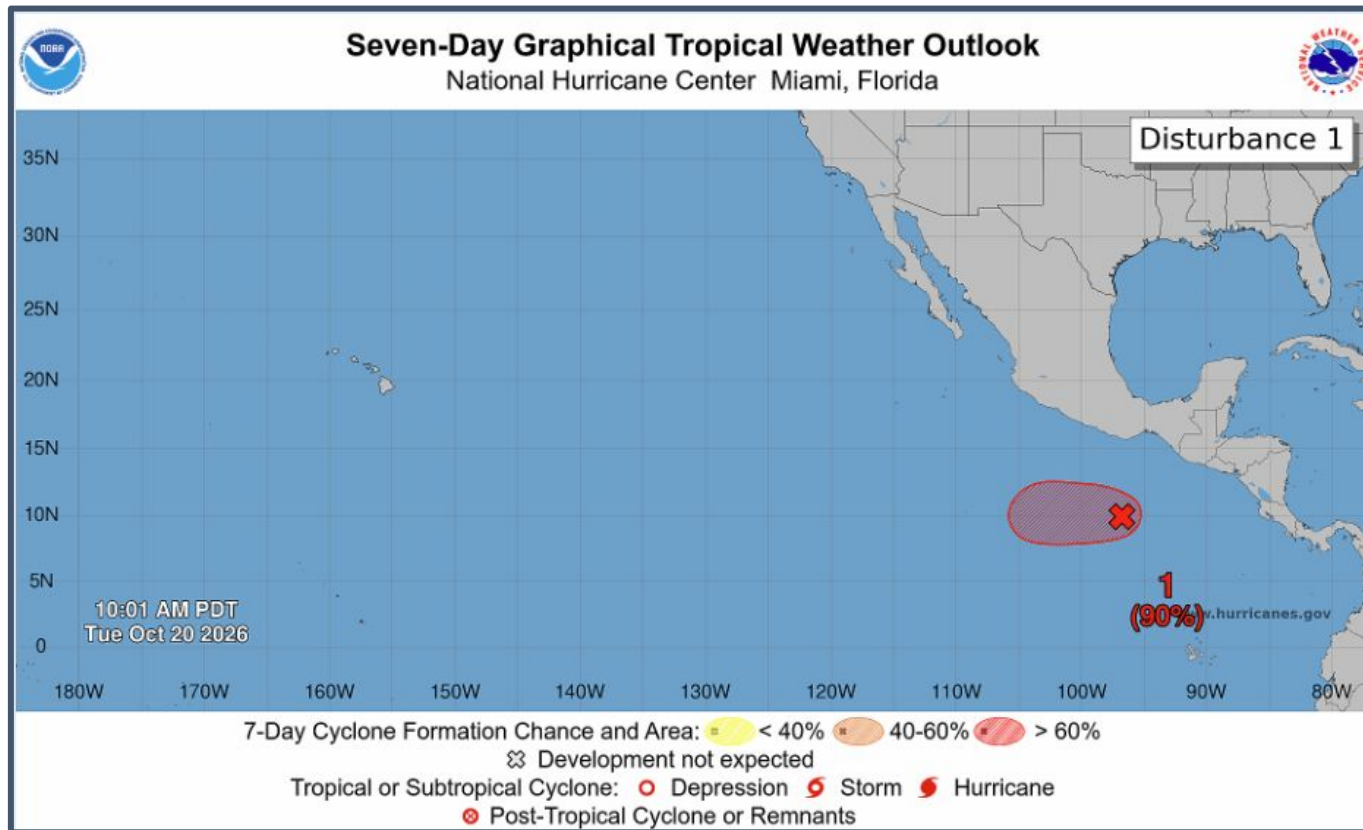
U.S. Department of Commerce
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Weather Service



Current Tropical Outlook: Activity is less than earlier

NHC is watching a disturbance

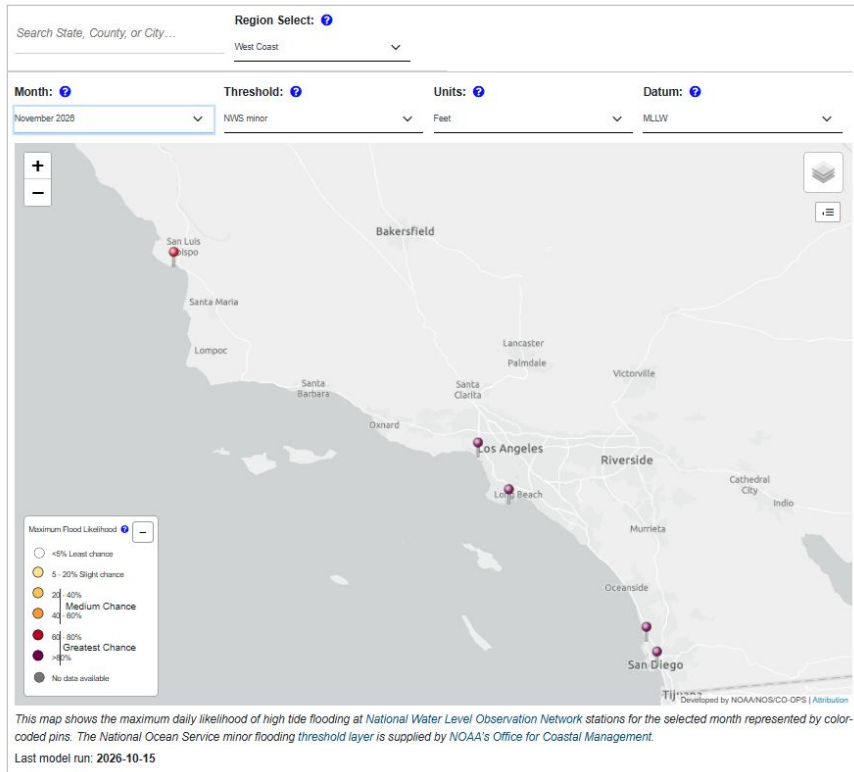
- No precipitation expected at this time
- There is a **low chance** of coastal flooding for early next week
- Stay tuned! Much uncertainty with the movement





What are Coastal Flooding chances?

Monthly High Tide Flooding Outlook



There is a higher likelihood of coastal flooding for **November through January**

- Individual storm or events will determine the outcomes
- Key dates to keep track of due to minor tidal overflows
 - November 21st-28th
 - December 20th-27th
 - January 18th-25th

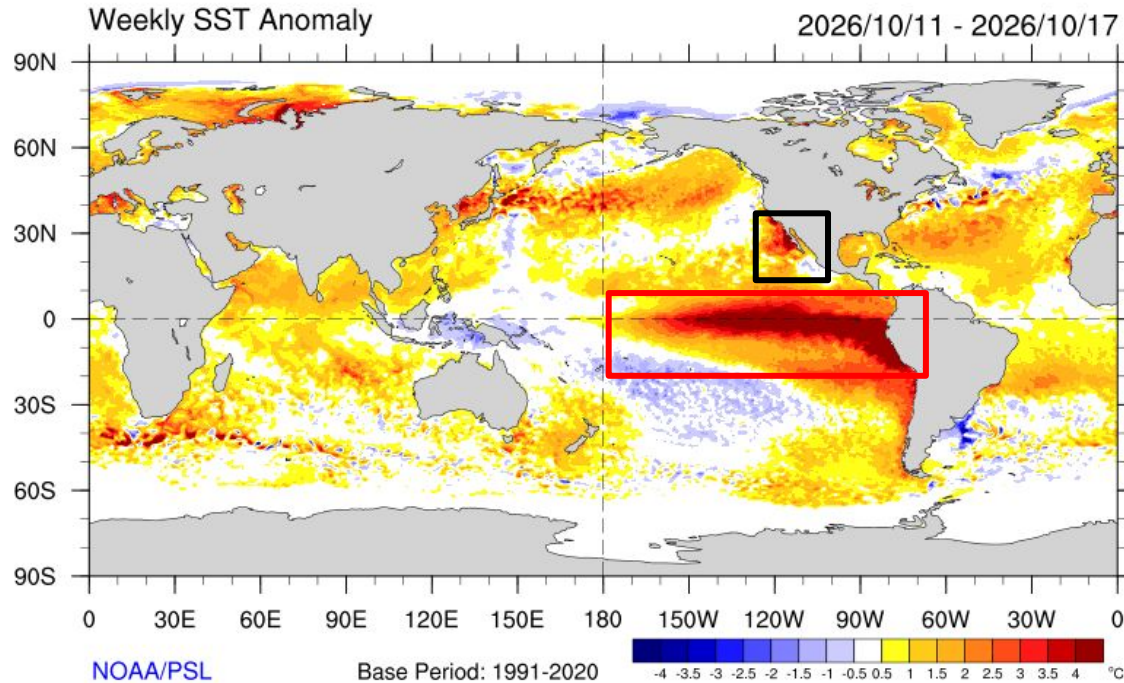
<https://tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov/high-tide-flooding/monthly-outlook.html>



How will the Atmosphere Respond in California?

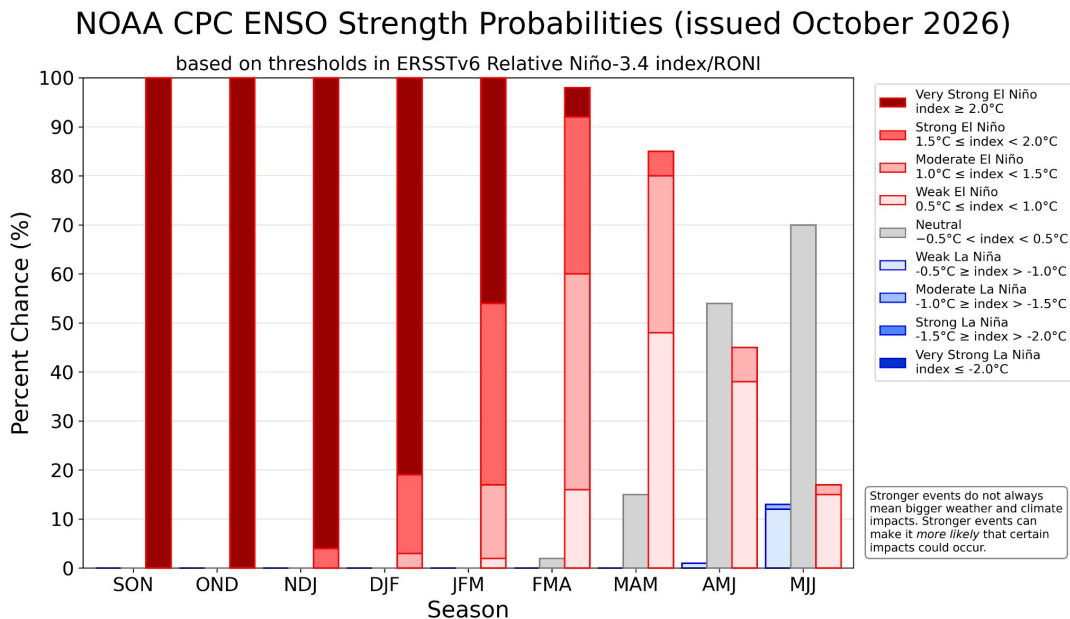
El Nino is an **Oceanic** Phenomenon.

The primary uncertainty for Southern California's storm potential lies in the atmospheric response. Although **the ocean is broadcasting a clear climate signal**, it remains to be seen how efficiently the atmosphere will convert that signal into local weather impacts.





Warmer Ocean Temps Come Without a Guarantee



While a very strong El Niño is favored through the winter, stronger events do not always mean larger impacts. Although a very strong El Niño is almost *guaranteed*, the impacts are **NOT!**



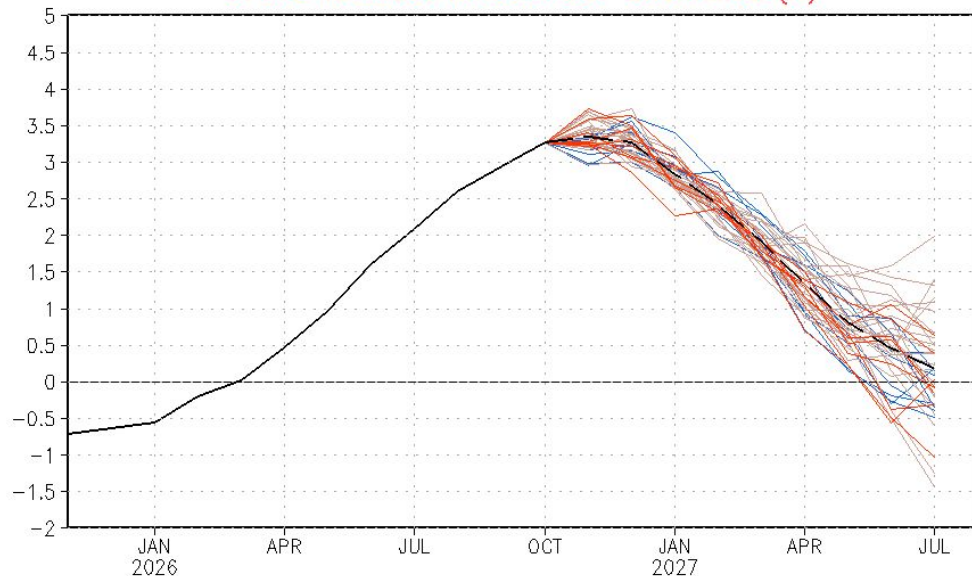
Here is the latest on Niño 3.4



NWS/NCEP/CPC

Last update: Tue Oct 20 2026
Initial conditions: 10Oct2026–19Oct2026

CFSv2 forecast Niño3.4 SST anomalies (K)



— Latest 8 forecast members
— Earliest 8 forecast members
— Other forecast members
— Forecast ensemble mean
— NCEP OIv2.1 daily analysis

(Climatology base period: 1991–2020)

El Niño typically peaks in the late fall months, but any impacts linger into the spring.

- Individual events will always be the main driver of impacts



Warmer Ocean Temps Come Without a Guarantee

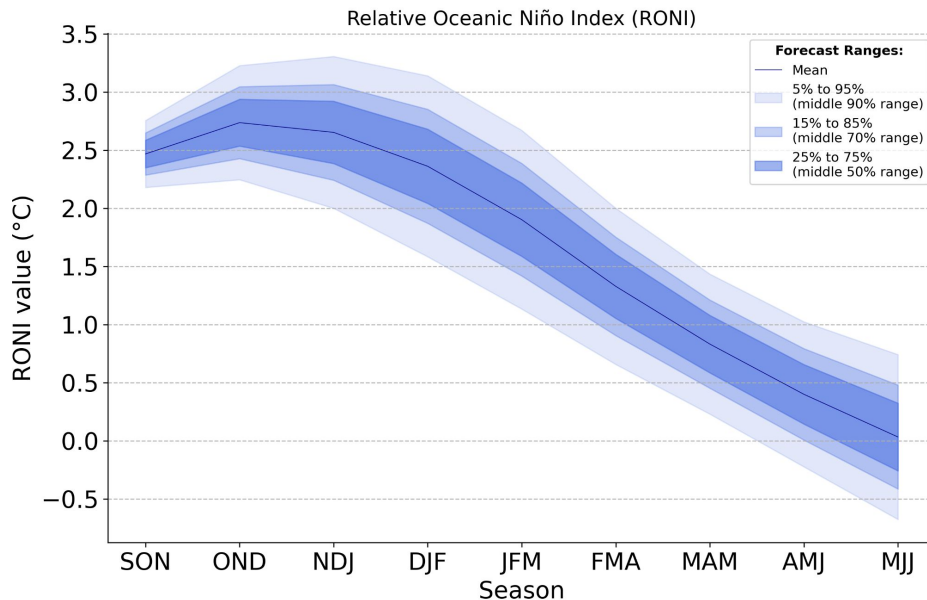
Record?

Historic?

Super?

Godzilla?

NOAA CPC Official ENSO Outlook (issued October 2026)



While there is a high chance for a record El Niño, **an active storm track and its associated impacts in Southern California are far from certain**



El Niño Impacts across Southern California

Climate Signals vs. Short-Range Storm Forecasting

Ocean Temperatures vs.

Atmospheric Coupling: While record ocean warmth is a key indicator of El Niño, *the atmosphere must actively interact—or "couple"—with that heat to effectively steer storm tracks into Southern California.* Although the ocean is already warmer than normal and is expected to remain so through the winter, it is currently uncertain whether the necessary atmospheric coupling will occur for the area



Climate Signals vs. Short-Range Storm Forecasting



Seasonal Backdrop vs. Individual Storms: El Niño shapes the overarching climate patterns over a season, but *it is not a storm itself*. While it sets the broader environmental stage, *it does not dictate the timing, track, or intensity of specific weather systems*

Climate Signals vs. Short-Range Storm Forecasting

Forecast Horizons for Burn Scars and Infrastructure:

- *Accurately* predicting Quantitative Precipitation Forecasts (QPF), peak hourly rain rates, and debris flow thresholds relies on *short-range, high-resolution modeling and real-time observational data*
- As a result, site-specific forecasts are delivered within a few days of a storm's onset, once *the system enters a reliable window of predictability*



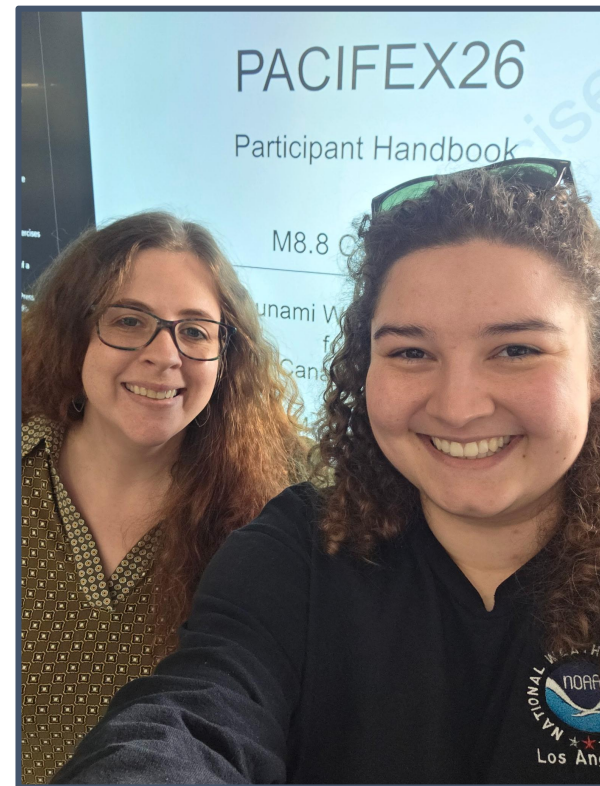
Climate Signals vs. Short-Range Storm Forecasting



Our Objective Role of the NWS: As part of our Impact-Based Decision Support Services (IDSS), our role is to provide you with *objective forecast data, clear ranges of uncertainty, and expected timing to help guide critical decisions*

Operational Reality vs. "What-If" Scenarios:

- Research-Based Analyses: These often explore *theoretical maximums*, compounding risks, and extreme tail-risk possibilities (such as statewide worst-case scenarios)
- NWS Operational Products: These focus on actionable, real-world probability distributions driven by reliable ensemble modeling. While we do message reasonable worst-case scenarios, we only do so when *sufficient scientific evidence and reliable probabilities exist*—typically when a specific storm is clearly on the horizon





NWS Briefing Framework & Operational Cadence

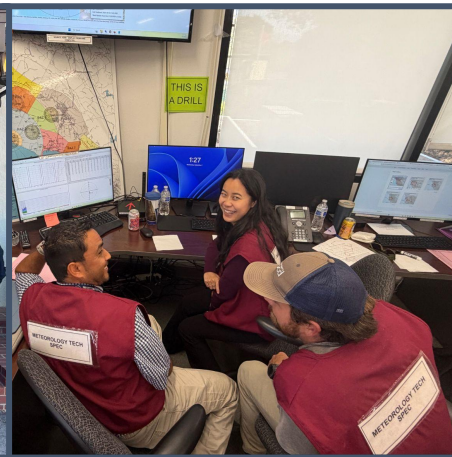
Twice-Weekly Briefing Rhythm: We will continue a **consistent** briefing schedule to provide ongoing meteorological updates throughout the season

- **Tuesday Operational Briefing (NWS Core Partners):** *Dedicated* technical session tailored for NWS Core Partners focused on scenario predictability, probabilistic guidance, and local planning thresholds
- **Friday Partner Briefing (NWS Core Partners & Media):** *Broad-audience* briefing to present 7-day outlooks, forecast confidence, and risk messaging, as well as key messages



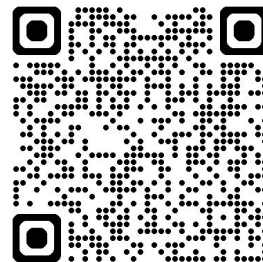


Form A Partnership: Let's Work Together



We are here for you! Connect with us.

Twice-weekly office hours on Slack to ask questions, including one immediately following this call: [wfo-los-angeles-ca-em](#)



NWS Connect

Thank You!

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