During mid-May 2016 the positive tropical Pacific SST anomaly was quickly weakening, now indicating only a weak El Niño. The atmospheric variables continue to support the El Niño pattern, but at much reduced strength. This includes only a mildly weakened Walker circulation and excess rainfall in the central tropical Pacific, failing to extend eastward as it did in previous months. Most ENSO prediction models indicate a return to neutral by the end of May, with likely development of La Niña (of unknown strength) by fall.

**Historically Speaking**

El Niño and La Niña events tend to develop during the period Apr-Jun and they:
- Tend to reach their maximum strength during Dec-Feb
- Typically persist for 9-12 months, though occasionally persisting for up to 2 years
- Typically recur every 2 to 7 years

1 Based on a consensus of CPC and IRI forecasters, in association with the official CPC/IRI ENSO Diagnostic Discussion.
2 Purely objective, based on regression, using equally weighted model predictions from the plume.