ENSO *QUICK LOOK* July 17 2002

A monthly summary of the status of El Niño, La Niña and the Southern Oscillation , or "ENSO"

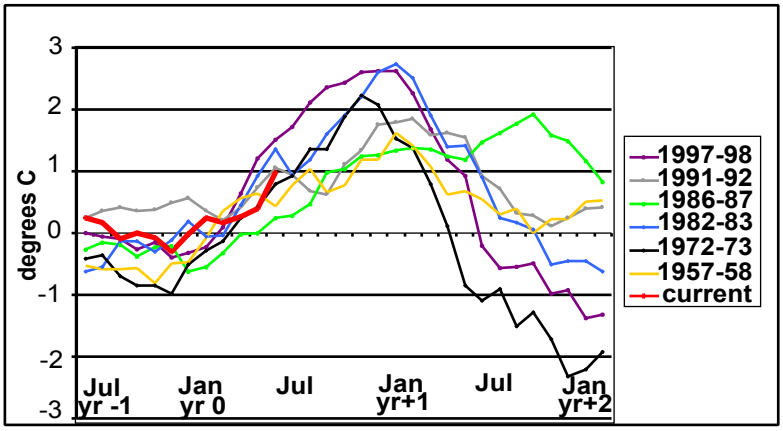
Ocean conditions in the tropical Pacific have exceeded the minimum level required to represent the onset phase of El Niño. These conditions are sufficient to begin to generate climate - related impacts in some regions. The IRI's assessment is that there is an estimated 90% probability that these conditions will persist for the next 6-9 months, indicating a high likelihood for a fully developed El Niño during 2002 continuing into early 2003. The most likely strength of the El Niño is currently estimated to be one-third to one-half of the strength of the 1997-98 El Niño with anticipated climate impacts generally weaker than those associated with the 1997-98 event.

Current ENSO Forecast Summary *

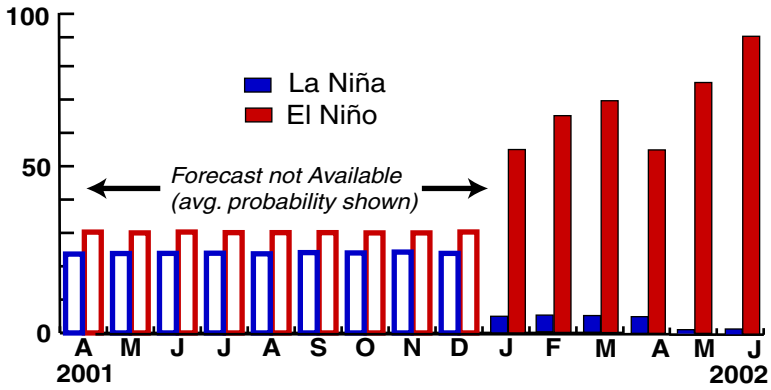
Forecast Period: September - November 2002

- **Probability of El Niño** 0 50 100
- **Probability of La Niña** 0 50 100 (low medium high)
- **Probable Magnitude of Event**: weak to moderate

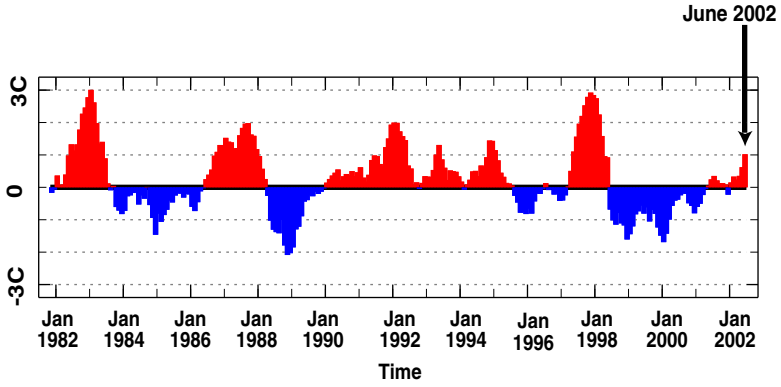
Current Conditions vs. Past El Niño**



ENSO Probabilities over the past year



Historical Sea Surface Temperature Index**



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*

* Probability of an El Niño refers to the likelihood of a sustained (that is, over several seasons) warming across a broad region of the eastern and central tropical Pacific, not just along coastal South America.

** Based on sea surface temperature departures from the long-term average over the "NINO 3.4" region (120-170W, 5S-5N).