

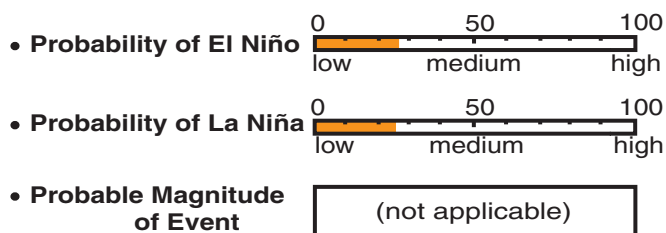
ENSO QUICK LOOK January 16, 2003

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

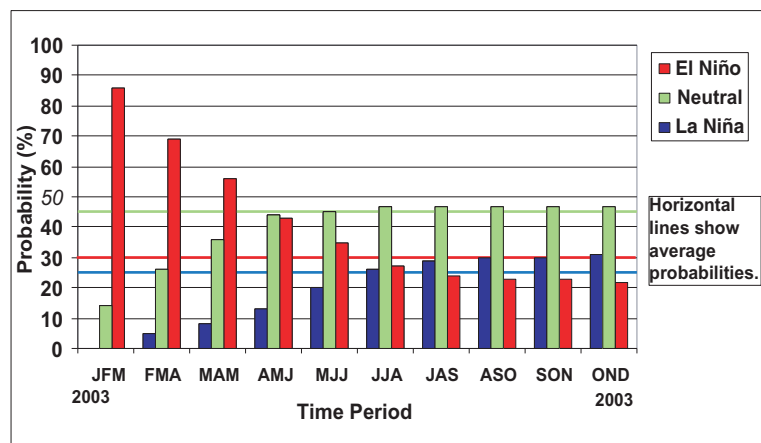
The current El Niño will very likely continue at least through February 2003, followed by significant weakening or dissipation during the March to June period. The outlook beyond June 2003 is more uncertain. Based on the behavior of past El Niño events and current model forecasts, it is most likely that conditions will be near-neutral during the second half of 2003, although the development of La Niña conditions is slightly more likely than in an average year. During the coming 1 to 3 months, climate effects in most regions are most likely to be weaker than those experienced during the strong 1997-98 El Niño, but could still be substantial in some regions (as some already have been). Regions commonly affected by El Niño at this time of year should remain alert to the possibility of such climate effects.

Current ENSO Forecast Summary *

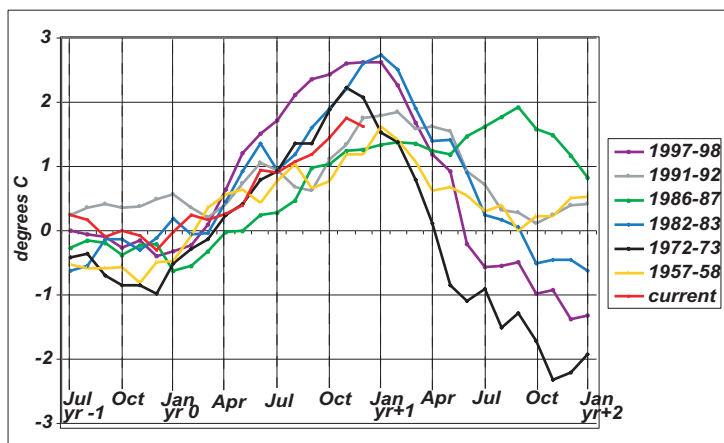
Forecast Period: June 2003 - August 2003



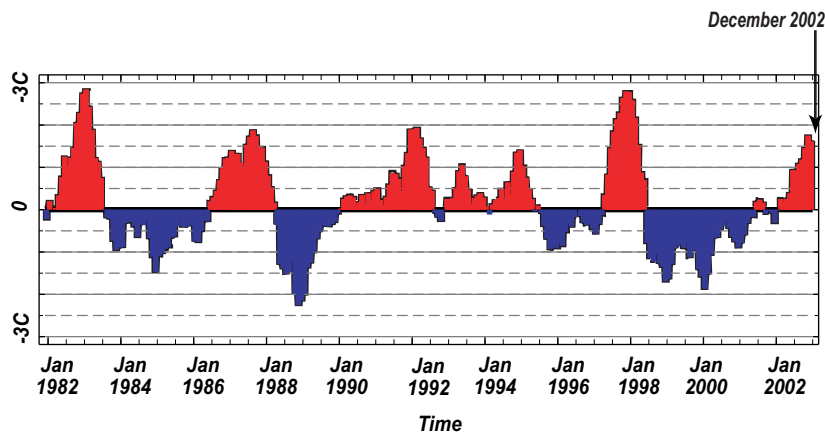
Probabilistic ENSO Forecast **



Current Conditions vs. Past El Niño**



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).