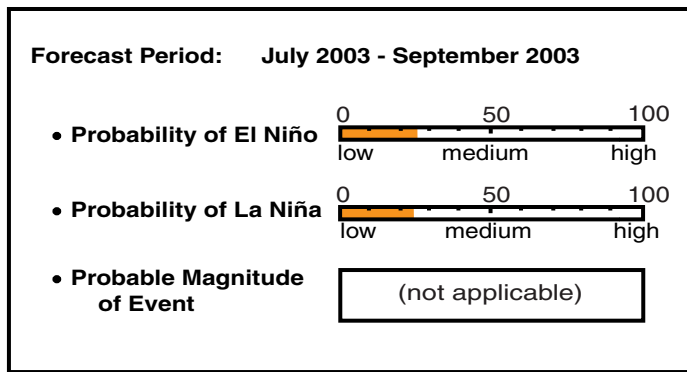


# ENSO QUICK LOOK March 17, 2003

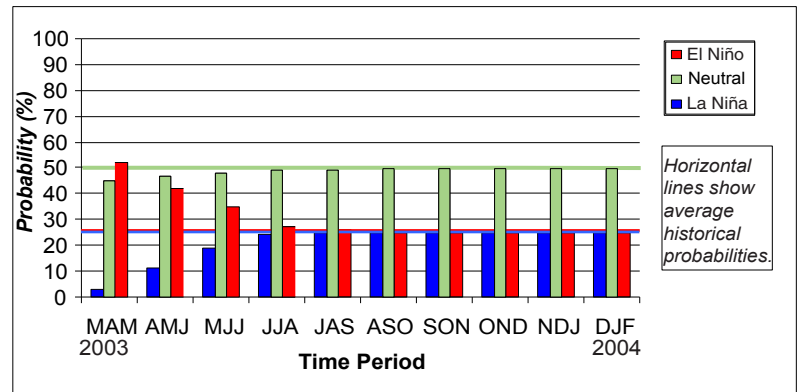
A monthly summary of the status of El Niño, La Niña and the Southern Oscillation , or "ENSO"

The current El Niño has weakened since late December 2002, and is expected to continue to weaken or dissipate during the mid-April 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. Through the end of April, climate effects in most regions are most likely to be weaker than those experienced during early 1998 when the strong 1998 El Niño was reaching its end, but they 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.

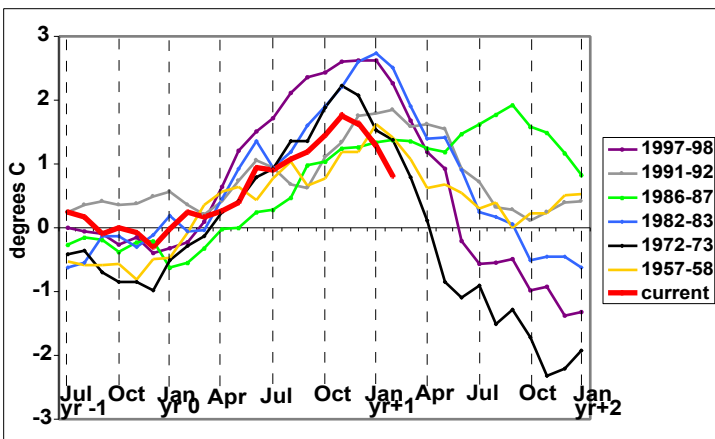
## Current ENSO Forecast Summary \*



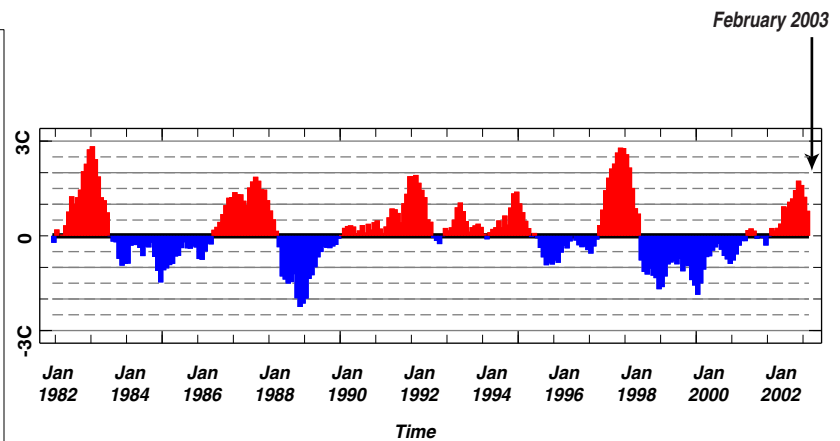
## IRI Probabilistic ENSO Forecast for NINO3.4 Region \*\*



## 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).