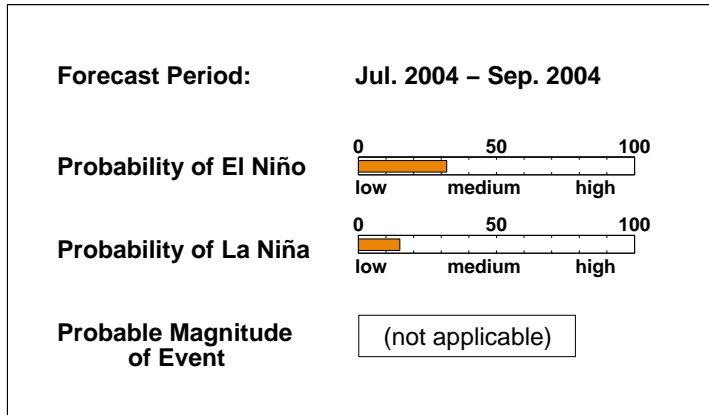


# ENSO QUICK LOOK March 18, 2004

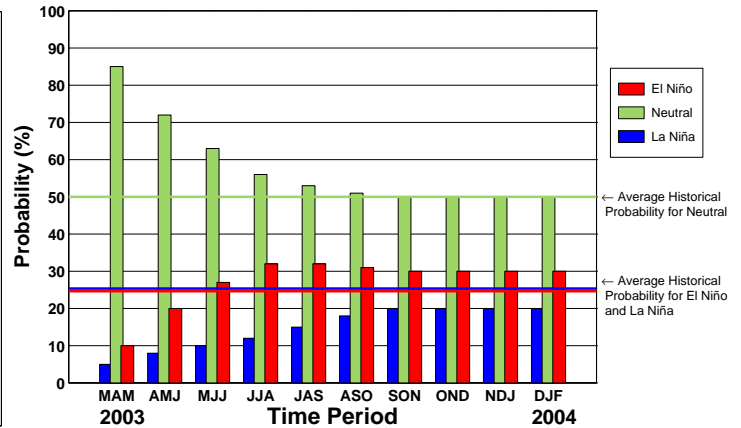
## A monthly summary of the status of El Niño, La Niña and the Southern Oscillation, or "ENSO"

Overall conditions in the tropical Pacific remain near-neutral. Based on the latest observations and forecasts, it is most likely that near-neutral conditions will continue through the first half of 2004.

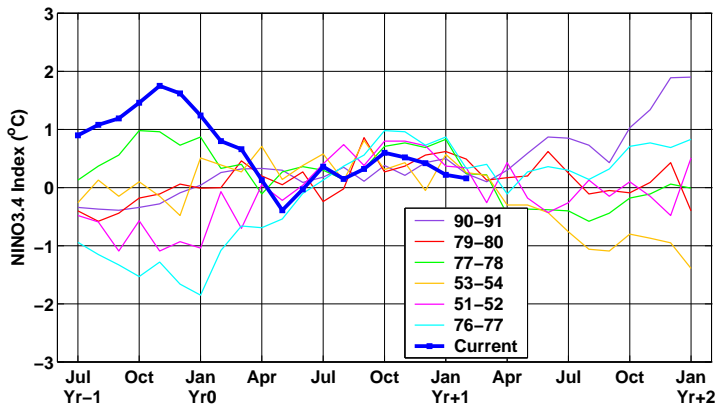
### Current ENSO Forecast Summary<sup>1</sup>



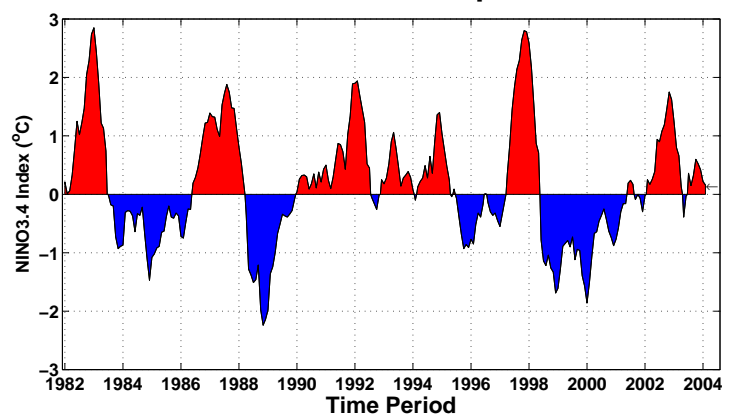
### IRI Probabilistic ENSO Forecast<sup>2</sup>



### Current Condition vs. Similar Conditions<sup>2</sup>



### Historical Sea Surface Temperature Index<sup>2</sup>



## 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*

<sup>1</sup>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.

<sup>2</sup>Based on sea surface temperature departures from the long-term average over the "NINO3.4" region (120-170W, 5S-5N).