Outline

Summary
Recent Evolution and Current Conditions
Oceanic Niño Index (ONI)
Pacific SST Outlook
U.S. Seasonal Precipitation and Temperature Outlooks
Summary
ENSO Alert System Status: El Niño Watch

ENSO-neutral conditions are present.*

Equatorial sea surface temperatures (SSTs) are above average across most of the Pacific Ocean.

El Niño is favored to form in the next couple of months and continue through the Northern Hemisphere winter 2018-19 (70-75% chance).*

* Note: These statements are updated once a month (2nd Thursday of each month) in association with the ENSO Diagnostics Discussion, which can be found by clicking here.
From September 2017 to late March 2018, below-average SSTs persisted across the central and eastern Pacific Ocean.

Since early June, near-to-above average SSTs have been present across most of the Pacific Ocean.

Recently, positive SST anomalies strengthened across the equatorial Pacific.
Niño Region SST Departures (°C) Recent Evolution

The latest weekly SST departures are:

- Niño 4: 1.1°C
- Niño 3.4: 1.1°C
- Niño 3: 1.0°C
- Niño 1+2: 0.3°C
During the last four weeks, equatorial SSTs were above average across the Pacific Ocean.
Global SST Departures (°C) During the Last Four Weeks

During the last four weeks, equatorial SSTs were above average across the Pacific Ocean and the central Atlantic Ocean. SSTs were below average near Indonesia and in the eastern Indian Ocean.
During the last four weeks, above-average SSTs have expanded across the Pacific Ocean.
Change in Weekly SST Departures over the Last Four Weeks

During the last four weeks, positive changes were observed across most of the equatorial Pacific Ocean.
Upper-Ocean Conditions in the Equatorial Pacific

The basin-wide equatorial upper ocean (0-300 m) heat content is greatest prior to and during the early stages of a Pacific warm (El Niño) episode (compare top 2 panels), and least prior to and during the early stages of a cold (La Niña) episode.

The slope of the oceanic thermocline is least (greatest) during warm (cold) episodes.

Recent values of the upper-ocean heat anomalies (above average) and thermocline slope index (near average) reflect ENSO-neutral conditions.

The monthly thermocline slope index represents the difference in anomalous depth of the 20°C isotherm between the western Pacific (160°E-150°W) and the eastern Pacific (90°-140°W).
Negative subsurface temperature anomalies lasted from August 2017 to February 2018. Since the end of February, temperature anomalies have increased and remained positive. During September and October, positive anomalies increased.
In the last two months, positive subsurface temperature anomalies have strengthened and expanded into the eastern Pacific Ocean. The recent evolution is associated with a downwelling equatorial oceanic Kelvin wave.
Positive OLR anomalies (suppressed convection and precipitation) were evident over Indonesia and near the Date Line.

Anomalous low-level (850-hPa) cross-equatorial winds were evident over the eastern Pacific Ocean, while westerly anomalies were apparent over the east-central Pacific.

Anomalous upper-level (200-hPa) easterly winds were observed over the east-central Pacific.
Intraseasonal variability in the atmosphere (wind and pressure), which is often related to the Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO), can significantly impact surface and subsurface conditions across the Pacific Ocean.

Related to this activity:

Significant weakening of the low-level easterly winds usually initiates an eastward-propagating oceanic Kelvin wave.
Weekly Heat Content Evolution in the Equatorial Pacific

From December 2017 to May 2018, successive Kelvin waves contributed to the eastward shift of positive and negative subsurface temperature anomalies.

During July-August 2018, positive subsurface temperature anomalies weakened in the eastern Pacific.

In early August and again in mid September 2018, positive subsurface anomalies increased, partly due to downwelling Kelvin waves.

Equatorial oceanic Kelvin waves have alternating warm and cold phases. The warm phase is indicated by dashed lines. Downwelling and warming occur in the leading portion of a Kelvin wave, and upwelling and cooling occur in the trailing portion.
At times, the Madden Julian Oscillation (MJO) contributed to the eastward propagation of low-level wind anomalies.

Since mid-July, westerly wind anomalies have become more prevalent over the equatorial Pacific Ocean.

Since mid-September, westerly wind anomalies have been present east of the Date Line.

Recently, westerly wind anomalies strengthened over the western Pacific.
Upper-level (200-hPa) Velocity Potential Anomalies

Through June 2018, anomalous upper-level convergence (brown shading) persisted over the central Pacific.

Since early July 2018, anomalous upper-level convergence has mostly persisted over the Indian Ocean, while anomalous upper-level divergence (green shading) has mostly persisted over the central and east-central Pacific.

Recently, an eastward propagating pattern of anomalous upper-level convergence has moved over the eastern Pacific.

Unfavorable for precipitation (brown shading)
Favorable for precipitation (green shading)

Note: Eastward propagation is not necessarily indicative of the Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO).
Outgoing Longwave Radiation (OLR) Anomalies

Through June 2018 and from mid-July to mid-August, positive OLR anomalies persisted over the central Pacific Ocean.

Recently, negative OLR anomalies have emerged over the western Pacific.

Drier-than-average Conditions (orange/red shading)
Wetter-than-average Conditions (blue shading)
Oceanic Niño Index (ONI)

The ONI is based on SST departures from average in the Niño 3.4 region, and is a principal measure for monitoring, assessing, and predicting ENSO.

Defined as the three-month running-mean SST departures in the Niño 3.4 region. Departures are based on a set of improved homogeneous historical SST analyses (Extended Reconstructed SST - ERSST.v5). The SST reconstruction methodology is described in Huang et al., 2017, J. Climate, vol. 30, 8179-8205.)

It is one index that helps to place current events into a historical perspective
NOAA Operational Definitions for El Niño and La Niña

El Niño: characterized by a positive ONI greater than or equal to +0.5°C.

La Niña: characterized by a negative ONI less than or equal to -0.5°C.

By historical standards, to be classified as a full-fledged El Niño or La Niña episode, these thresholds must be exceeded for a period of at least 5 consecutive overlapping 3-month seasons.

CPC considers El Niño or La Niña conditions to occur when the monthly Niño3.4 OISST departures meet or exceed +/- 0.5°C along with consistent atmospheric features. These anomalies must also be forecasted to persist for 3 consecutive months.
The most recent ONI value (July - September 2018) is +0.1°C.
Historical El Niño and La Niña Episodes Based on the ONI computed using ERSST.v5

Recent Pacific warm (red) and cold (blue) periods based on a threshold of +/- 0.5 °C for the Oceanic Nino Index (ONI) [3 month running mean of ERSST.v5 SST anomalies in the Nino 3.4 region (5N-5S, 120-170W)]. For historical purposes, periods of below and above normal SSTs are colored in blue and red when the threshold is met for a minimum of 5 consecutive overlapping seasons.

The ONI is one measure of the El Niño-Southern Oscillation, and other indices can confirm whether features consistent with a coupled ocean-atmosphere phenomenon accompanied these periods. The complete table going back to DJF 1950 can be found [here](#).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>DJF</th>
<th>JFM</th>
<th>FMA</th>
<th>MAM</th>
<th>AMJ</th>
<th>MJJ</th>
<th>JJA</th>
<th>JAS</th>
<th>ASO</th>
<th>SON</th>
<th>OND</th>
<th>NDJ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>-0.8</td>
<td>-0.7</td>
<td>-0.5</td>
<td>-0.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>-0.2</td>
<td>-0.3</td>
<td>-0.4</td>
<td>-0.5</td>
<td>-0.8</td>
<td>-1.1</td>
<td>-1.4</td>
<td>-1.5</td>
<td>-1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>-1.6</td>
<td>-1.4</td>
<td>-1.2</td>
<td>-0.9</td>
<td>-0.8</td>
<td>-0.5</td>
<td>-0.4</td>
<td>-0.3</td>
<td>-0.3</td>
<td>-0.4</td>
<td>-0.6</td>
<td>-0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>-0.8</td>
<td>-0.7</td>
<td>-0.5</td>
<td>-0.2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
<td>-0.6</td>
<td>-1.0</td>
<td>-1.4</td>
<td>-1.6</td>
<td>-1.7</td>
<td>-1.7</td>
<td>-1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>-1.4</td>
<td>-1.1</td>
<td>-0.8</td>
<td>-0.6</td>
<td>-0.5</td>
<td>-0.4</td>
<td>-0.5</td>
<td>-0.7</td>
<td>-0.9</td>
<td>-1.1</td>
<td>-1.1</td>
<td>-1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>-0.8</td>
<td>-0.6</td>
<td>-0.5</td>
<td>-0.4</td>
<td>-0.2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>-0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>-0.4</td>
<td>-0.3</td>
<td>-0.2</td>
<td>-0.2</td>
<td>-0.3</td>
<td>-0.3</td>
<td>-0.4</td>
<td>-0.4</td>
<td>-0.3</td>
<td>-0.2</td>
<td>-0.2</td>
<td>-0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>-0.4</td>
<td>-0.4</td>
<td>-0.2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>-0.3</td>
<td>-0.6</td>
<td>-0.7</td>
<td>-0.7</td>
<td>-0.7</td>
<td>-0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>-0.3</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
<td>-0.4</td>
<td>-0.7</td>
<td>-0.9</td>
<td>-1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>-0.9</td>
<td>-0.8</td>
<td>-0.6</td>
<td>-0.4</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
El Niño is favored to form in the next couple of months and continue through the Northern Hemisphere winter 2018-19 (70-75% chance).
The majority of models predict El Niño to develop during October-December 2018.
The CFS.v2 ensemble mean (black dashed line) predicts El Niño to form soon and to then continue through at least Northern Hemisphere winter 2018-19.
Atmospheric anomalies over the North Pacific and North America During the Last 60 Days

From late August to mid October 2018, anomalous ridging (and above-average temperatures) was evident over the eastern U.S., while anomalous troughing (and below-average temperatures) was present over the western U.S.

Since mid October, the pattern has shifted with anomalous ridging over the western U.S. and anomalous troughing over the eastern U.S.
Atmospheric anomalies over the North Pacific and North America During the Last 60 Days

From late August to mid October 2018, anomalous ridging (and above-average temperatures) was evident over the eastern U.S., while anomalous troughing (and below-average temperatures) was present over the western U.S.

Since mid October, the pattern has shifted with anomalous ridging over the western U.S. and anomalous troughing over the eastern U.S.
Atmospheric anomalies over the North Pacific and North America During the Last 60 Days

From late August to mid October 2018, anomalous ridging (and above-average temperatures) was evident over the eastern U.S., while anomalous troughing (and below-average temperatures) was present over the western U.S.

Since mid October, the pattern has shifted with anomalous ridging over the western U.S. and anomalous troughing over the eastern U.S.
U.S. Temperature and Precipitation Departures During the Last 30 Days

End Date: 27 October 2018
U.S. Temperature and Precipitation Departures During the Last 90 Days

End Date: 27 October 2018
The seasonal outlooks combine the effects of long-term trends, soil moisture, and, when appropriate, ENSO.
ENSO Alert System Status: El Niño Watch

ENSO-neutral conditions are present.*

Equatorial sea surface temperatures (SSTs) are above average across most of the Pacific Ocean.

El Niño is favored to form in the next couple of months and continue through the Northern Hemisphere winter 2018-19 (70-75% chance).*

* Note: These statements are updated once a month (2nd Thursday of each month) in association with the ENSO Diagnostics Discussion, which can be found by clicking here.