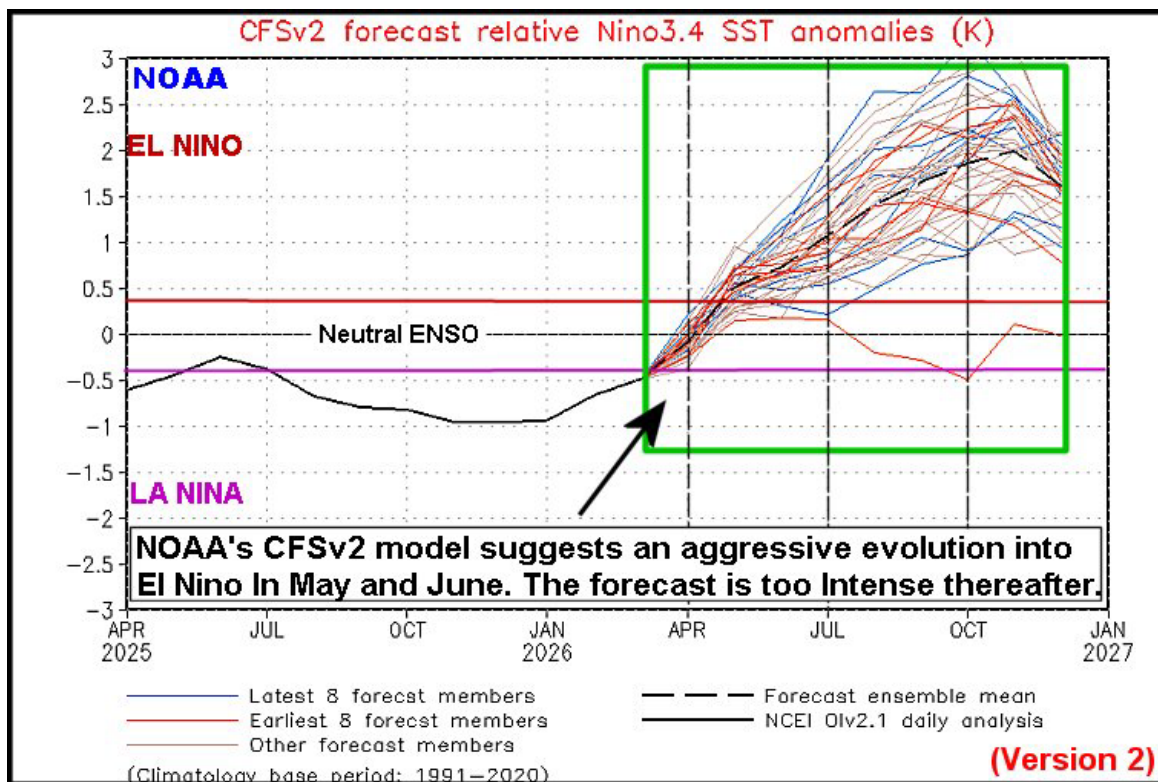


ENSO Forecasts Too Aggressive With El Nino Development

By Drew Lerner

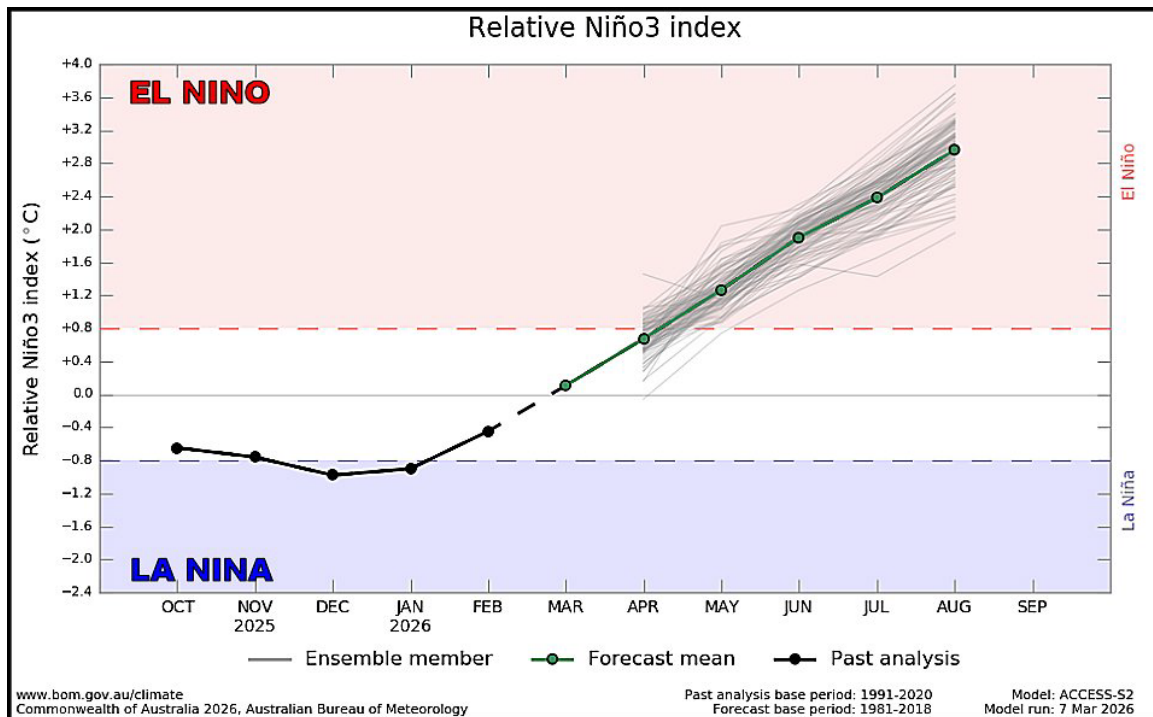
Kansas City, March 12 (World Weather Inc.) – Recent ENSO forecast model runs from both the Australian Bureau of Meteorology and the U.S. National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) are suggesting aggressive El Nino evolution over the next few months. There is certainly good support for moving through ENSO neutral to El Nino like conditions in the next few months; however, support for a strong El Nino event by late this summer or autumn seems a little out of line with logic. An eventual significant El Nino event cannot be ruled out, but *World Weather, Inc. believes the forecast models have grabbed onto a trend of enhanced upwelling in the eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean that is not likely sustainable – at least not beyond the next few weeks and that should lead to forecast model corrections over the intensity of predicted El Nino conditions later this year.*



The latest forecast model runs from NOAA's CFSv2 ENSO model have suggested aggressive development of El Nino over the next few months. This forecast is dramatically different from that of a week to ten days ago when the outlook suggested El Nino would evolve in July. Now the same model runs are predicting El Nino by May. Interestingly, the model forecasts have been bouncing around significantly since early January. The forecast was originally predicting El Nino in May or June then the model suggested a slower development rate with forecasts earlier this month suggesting El Nino would come in July. This week's outlook has now jumped the development of El Nino to May. Why all of the variance?

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Most ENSO forecast models are only good for a few months because man still does not have a good handle on why ocean water temperatures change. Most of the forecast for ocean water temperature anomalies are based on simple trend changes. Scientists understand some of the ocean currents and know that when certain water temperature anomalies are present, they are likely to move from one location to another in a manner consistent with historical averages. However, without a good understanding of how and why ocean temperatures change, model forecasts will continue to struggle out more than a few weeks at a time.



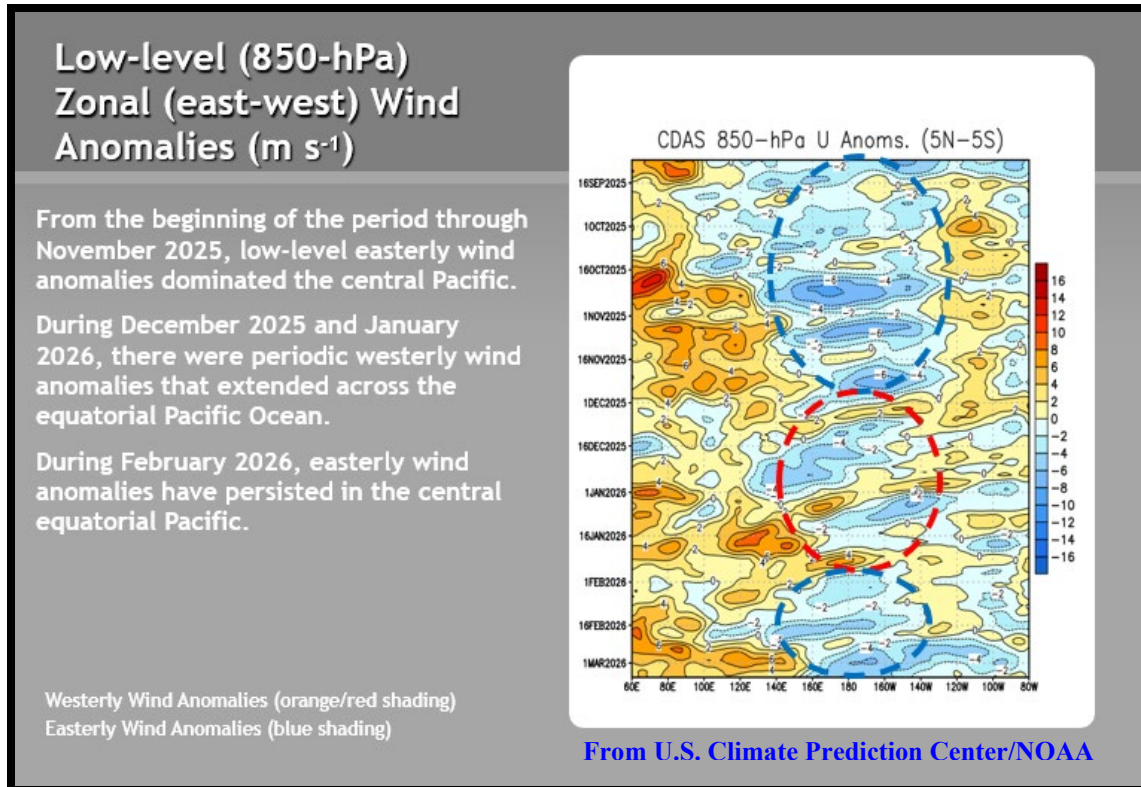
NOAA's model is not alone in this plight. The Australia Bureau of Meteorology has been predicting El Nino by May and June for a while, but only recently has the model decided the intensity of El Nino would be progressively stronger through the next several months. Why is this happening?

The answer is simple. Recent wind anomalies along the eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean have been strong out of the east. The easterly wind has been notably strong and broad-based impacting most of the ENSO 3,4 region in the Pacific where most forecast models predict changes in ENSO phases and intensity. **A strong easterly wind persisting over a few weeks will result in greater upwelling of water from subsurface ocean depths.**

The best way to understand how easterly winds would help in developing El Nino or La Nina lets pretend we are in a swimming pool. Put your arm on the surface of the water and move your arm from left to right or right to left. This movement displaces a volume of water in the direction of your arm's movement. Water upwells from below the surface of the pool as your arm pushes the water away in one direction or another. The faster you move your arm the greater the volume of water will be that you are pushing away from the original position. Upwelling is increased the faster you displace the water with your arm.

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Typically, there are periods of strong and weak wind speeds across the eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean. Sometimes the wind will switch directions entirely and in each of these cases it would be unlikely for the strong pace of ocean warming to occur without a break through the next few months. For that reason, there is very little potential for the warming of equatorial Pacific Ocean water to occur continuously without a break over the next several months. Because of this situation the models are over predicting the El Nino event.



World Weather, Inc. is confident that the oceans will warm and an El Nino event will develop this late spring and summer; however, we do not agree that the intensity of the event will be as strong as advertised as soon a predicted. There is certainly support for El Nino to evolve this year, but before everyone panics that this will be the worst El Nino since 1998, we should pause for a little while and think through this logically.

The best forecast is that El Nino will evolve this late spring and summer and as it does it will take a few weeks for anomalous weather conditions to evolve around the world. The first place where changes in weather will begin will be in Southeast Asia. Indonesia, Malaysia and the southern Philippines should experience lighter and mor sporadic rainfall during the latter days of the second quarter and more significantly in the third quarter of this calendar year. El Nino conditions will become better organized during the third and fourth quarters with the most anomalous weather expected in the October through February period of 2026-27.

India and the mainland areas of Southeast Asia along with central Africa and Central parts of South America would be the next areas to feel a lighter than usual precipitation anomaly late this year. **The longer the El Nino phenomenon prevails the greater drying**

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will be in the tropical areas of the world. El Nino does tend to remove moisture from the tropics and adds moisture to the mid-latitudes.

Drought that has been dominating a large part of North America in recent years should eventually get sufficient relief, but first there is an association with dryness in the spring in a part of the Great Plains and Midwest followed by a wetter summer in years that transition from La Nina in January to El Nino in the summer. The lower Mississippi River Basin and mid-south region of the United States usually end up with some better rainfall, too, in years in which El Nino comes quickly, but the longer it takes for El Nino to materialize often leads to more extensive dryness in those regions.

Overall, the bottom line to Thursday's update from NOAA regarding El Nino is that confidence is high that El Nino will evolve later this year and that it will eventually lead to drier biased conditions in the tropics beginning in Southeast Asia and eventually circumventing the globe through the tropics. The drying will take multiple months and will probably not peak until the end of 2026 and early 2027. There is some potential that El Nino will continue into a larger part of 2027, but that is a very speculative comment to make. In the meantime, the mid-latitudes around the world should experience more abundant and more frequent rainfall which could lead to some greater flood events in time. World Weather, Inc. still believes the predicted intensity of El Nino is overdone, although the event may eventually become significant, but not on the timing presented by recent NOAA or the Australia Bureau of Meteorology forecast models runs.

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