



Hawai'i Ho'ohēkili

Skywarn Weather Spotter Newsletter
National Weather Service, Honolulu, HI



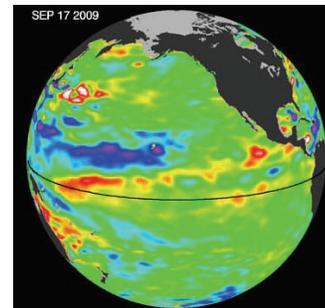
Wet Season Edition—2009/2010

Spotter Newsletter Volume 1, Issue 1

EL Nino in the Central Pacific

According to the NOAA Climate Prediction Center, El Nino conditions in the tropical Pacific are expected to last through the Northern Hemisphere winter of 2009-2010. For us here in the middle of the Pacific that means a greater chance of tropical cyclones during the hurricane season, below normal rainfall during the ongoing wet season, and increased high surf through the fall and winter.

We have already seen an increase in tropical cyclones earlier this season with six tropical cyclones occurring in August. The first actually formed on July 30 as a tropical depression just east of the Central Pacific Hurricane Center's (CPHC) area, and became Tropical Storm Lana late that day as it crossed into CPHC's area (west of 140W). Lana reached a maximum intensity of 65 mph before dissipating on August 3. Activity continued with Hurricane Felicia crossing into the Central Pacific on August 8 with maximum winds of 95 mph. Felicia gave a bit of a scare to the state of Hawaii before dissipating just east of the state. However, the leftover moisture from Felicia provided beneficial rainfall to many locations across the islands. Two other tropical systems passed into the Central Pacific in August, those being Hurricane Guillermo and Tropical Storm Hilda, neither put the islands at risk. One other system formed near the dateline at the end of August but dissipated quickly after only a day as a tropical depression. It is important to note El Nino conditions also increase the chance for late season tropical cyclones. The Central Pacific hurricane season runs through November 30, so we ask that all weather spotters keep their situational awareness high, keeping in tune with National Weather Service products.



Pools of warm water known as Kelvin waves can be seen traveling eastward along the equator (black line) in this Sept. 17, 2009, image from the NASA/French Space Agency Ocean Surface Topography Mission/ Jason-2 satellite.

The long-lead Hawaiian Islands outlook issued by the NOAA Climate Prediction Center does not indicate probabilities favoring above or below normal precipitation through the fall season. However, a direct or nearby passage of a tropical cyclone or its remnant, like ex-hurricane Felicia, may result in widespread significant rainfall improving drought conditions. In the long term, the presence of El Nino conditions means that probabilities favor below normal precipitation during the 2009-2010 winter season. The reduced rainfall will further strain drought stricken areas of the State.

What Should Skywarn Spotters report in Hawaii?



Kapolei, Oahu Tornado—February 11, 2009.

That question comes up quite a bit in discussion here at the National Weather Service. Mainland offices have different ideas of what to report from region to region, and here in Hawaii we have our own set of criteria. Some weather events should be called in no matter what...such as tornadoes, large hail, and winds greater than 50 mph. In Hawaii, we would also like to hear about flooding - such as ponding in roads, streams flowing over their banks, and heavy downpours lasting more than 15 minutes. Thunder and lightning are infrequent across the islands and should be reported at the initial stages of the storm. Funnel clouds, water spouts, large or small hail should also be called in. One last thing to report during a weather event is any damage to structures, roads, etc. that are a direct result of the weather.

Skywarn Spotter reports become part of the warning decision making process. Reports are combined with radar data and other information, and then used by National Weather Service forecasters to decide whether or not to issue a new warning, cancel an existing warning, continue a warning, and/or issue a warning for the next county.



We are on the web at
www.weather.gov/hawaii

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Aloha Hawaii Weather Spotters!

You are receiving this newsletter because you are on our list of trained spotters. We will be issuing the newsletter twice a year, one for the wet season and another for the dry season. If you would like to be removed from our spotter list, or have new contact information, please contact our Spotter Coordinator, Ian Morrison, at ian.morrison@noaa.gov. Weather Spotter Training Seminars will be offered across the state as scheduling allows. Announcements for the seminars will be placed on the front page of our website at www.weather.gov/hawaii

The meaning of the Hawaiian word Ho'ohēkili, used in the newsletter title, is "Threatening thunderstorm".

STORM SPOTTERS HAVE THEIR EYES ON THE SKY



Waiehu, Maui – January 2002

Skywarn facilitates NOAA's mission to protect lives and property in three ways:

- Assists in present and future warning decisions.
- Confirm hazardous weather detected by NOAA radar and satellites.
- Provides verification information after the storm has passed.

Countless lives have been saved because of the unique partnership between volunteer storm spotters, emergency management and NOAA's National Weather Service.