

## 2007 Eastern Pacific Hurricane Outlook - Beginning the Season

**May 15, 2007** The forecasts made at this time last year for the Eastern Pacific Basin were 97% accurate. Unfortunately, Atlantic Hurricane Forecasters didn't fair as well, missing the call on the lighter than average hurricane season by 67% – oooops! This year, forecast by the Mexican National Weather Service call for fewer than average hurricanes in the Eastern Pacific in 2007 and fewer major hurricanes as well.

Throughout the Eastern Pacific Hurricane Season (May 15 - October 31) we will take a regular look at those factors which lead to the formation of hurricanes in the Eastern Pacific. Our Hurricane Watch Reports have become the most widely read series on the Baja Insider. The Hurricane Watch articles are not a forecast – we leave that to the professionals and Mother Nature even fools them some of the time. Rather, these articles relay information on the formation of tropical cyclones and the natural engines that build, direct and even destroy these climatic marvels. When it comes right down to a tropical threat, to Baja we will post the latest information, graphics and warnings from the National Hurricane Center and the Mexican National Weather Service. If you wish to have these warnings emailed to you, sign up for our Insider Updates. The BajaInsider endeavors to provide a concise and accurate appraisal of the Hurricane Threat to Baja with original graphics and reporting of actual conditions throughout Baja when a storm strikes. We seek to educate and prepare our readers as a community service rather than create the Hurricane Hysteria that was generated by the greater media for Hurricane John in 2006

With our disclaimer aside, let's look at some of the factors influencing this years hurricane cycle and hear what the experts have to say.

Just to be clear, the Eastern Pacific Hurricane Season runs May 15th through October 31st. Sea Surface Temperatures usually reach the critical 26°C mark around the first of August. The earliest hurricane to ever make landfall in Baja was on August 15th and the latest to make landfall was October 17th. The most dangerous part of our hurricane season falls in September. In mid October a cooler High pressure system usually slides south into mainland Mexico and poof - our humidity dries up and our threat is all but past.

### A Quieter than Normal Year...

Forecast Cyclonic Activity in the Eastern Pacific for 2007 (based on data through January 2007)		
Classification	Eastern Pacific	
	Forecast 2007	Average 1966-2006
Tropical Cyclones	5	6.9
Hurricanes (Cat. 1 & 2)	5	4.2
Major Hurricanes (Cat.3,4,5)	2	4.1
Total	12	15.2

So, what does the 2007 Eastern Pacific Hurricane Season hold for Baja? Well, if anyone knew that for sure, they would make a lot of money working for insurance companies. Last year Dr Grey and the National Hurricane Center got caught 'crying wolf'. 2006 forecasts called for the Atlantic to have a heavy season with 192% of the normal crop of hurricanes. As it turned out, the Atlantic was quieter than normal, a 67% error. Some even thought it meant global warming wasn't real. Not hardly, it just meant that forecasting models still have a bit to understand when it comes to long range forecasting.

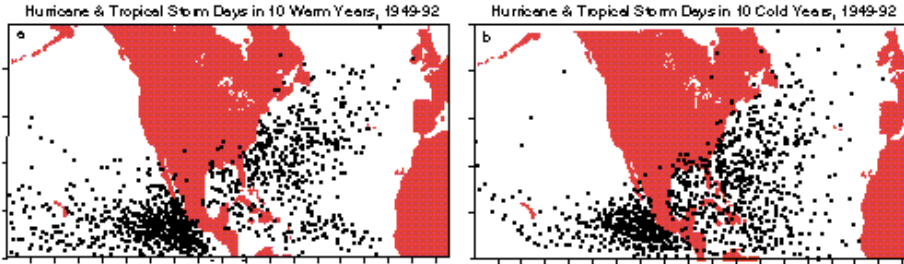
[Read about Historical Hurricanes in Baja compiled from the last 58 years of Hurricane Data from the NHC](#)

This year the Mexican National Weather Services has called for the hottest summer on the Baja peninsula in 90 years. The Sea of Cortez will probably hit record temperatures as well. This means that these warm waters will be even more attractive to the formation and direction of tropical cyclones (see "The Sea Sucks")

### El Nino & Baja California Sur Tropical Cyclones

- 48% likely to be impacted by a tropical cyclone in La Nina Years
- 54% likely to be impacted by a tropical cyclone in Non-event years
- 108% likely to be impacted by a tropical cyclone in El Nino years

\*Tropical Cyclones include Tropical storms and Hurricanes



The graphic on the left shows storm formations in El Nino and La Nina years. As you can see, Baja is better off in La Nina years. However, this data may be out the window, as California received record rainfall in a La Nina year, which would normally be dry for the state.

The good news is that due to a slight La Nina condition and the circulation patterns forming early this year in the Pacific, we are expected to get 1 fewer than average tropical cyclone formations and half the number of major hurricanes. (hurricanes greater than Category 3) This is good news, as Baja Sur has only been hit with one Major Hurricane in 1989 – Kiko which roared ashore on East Cape when the population of the area was much smaller than it is now. It is possible that sometime in the future another of these major storms will make landfall in Baja. For those who have experienced Cat 1 and 2 storm, don't be complacent, a major hurricane is a whole new game. But we'll look at that later in the season.

The Weather Service report draws analogous data from the years 1964, 1966, 1988 and 1995. In reviewing the stated similar years I found half of them to be La Nina years and the other to be El Nino years. I failed to see how the early season data could be similar to both.

These early season reports for the Eastern Pacific have a very good batting average. Last year the forecast proved 97% accurate while over the last 7 years the reports have held to an 87% accuracy rating.

Like last year, this year is also a very slight La Nina year. This means water south of the equator off the coast of South America, is slightly colder than normal. Usually, the Eastern pacific basin experiences fewer hurricanes in a La Nina year.

***In the chart below we identify tropical cyclones that have made landfall or passed significantly close enough to have dramatic impact on Baja conditions. The largest loss of life in Baja occurred with Hurricane Lisa, a Cat 3 Hurricane that passed up the Sea to landfall on the mainland. The only Cat 3 storm to make landfall in Baja was Kiko in 1989.***

The Eastern Pacific has water above the magic 26°C Sea Surface Temperature year round. However, it's somewhere around the middle of May that tropical waves begin to form in the deserts of Africa and make their way across the Atlantic to the Eastern Pacific. Thus begins our hurricane season. Now, there are parts of the western Caribbean that are constantly above 26°C as well. But, the ITCZ is too far south in May to deliver the tropical waves to that warm water region of the Caribbean. In 2006 we waited until May 27th for the first tropical cyclone to form while in 2005 a freak storm formed in the first two days of the season and came ashore in the usually hurricane free country of El Salvador on May 17th.

So, that's the good news for those of us that live or have property in Baja California Sur. But it's also wise to remember, it's not just the number and severity of the storms but their track as they move toward Baja Sur. it is unlikely that we will see any tropical cyclone activity until after mid August. But it only takes one to take a path over Baja to change all the bets. So stay tuned. Each week we will look at the potential for storms and keep you posted on those that might threaten our magnificent peninsula in our Eastern Pacific Hurricane Watch..

***Our Eastern Pacific Hurricane Watch is an editorial analysis of data from the National Hurricane Center, NASA and NOAA and is based on information provided by the same, but is an amateur endeavor. For actual storm information readers should refer to [notices and warning](#) posted by the National Hurricane Center.***

Winter	El Nina/La Nina	Storm Name and Strength	Initial or Significant Landfall	Prox.
1950-	La Niña	TS Noname	East Cape	Close

51				
1951-52		*	*	*
1952-53		*	*	*
1953-54		Hurricane Noname Cat 1	Baja Sur Pacific Coast	Close
1954-55		1 TS Noname	Baja Sur Sea of Cortez	Coastal
1955-56	Strong La Niña	*	*	*
1956-57	Weak La Niña	Hurricane Noname Cat 1 Cat 3+ Hits Mainland Mazatlan	Mag Bay/Loreto Hit	Hit
1957-58	El Niño	Hurricane Noname Cat 1 TS Noname Hurricane Noname Cat 2	Cabo San Lucas Cabo San Lucas Cabo San Lucas	Hit Hit Close
1958-59		Hurricane Noname Cat 1	Cabo San Lucas	Hit
1959-60		Hurricane Diana Cat 1	East Cape	Close
1960-61		*	*	*
1961-62		Hurricane Doreen Cat 1	East Cape	Close
1962-63		*	*	*
1963-64		*	*	*
1964-65	La Niña	Hurricane Emily Cat 1	Cabo San Lucas	Close
1965-66	El Niño	TS Kirsten	Constitucion	Hit
1966-67		TS/Hurricane Cat 1 Katrina TS Olivia Constitucion/ Hurricane Cat 1	Constitucion/Loreto/Baja Norte Mulelge	Hit Hit
1967-68		Hurricane Pauline Cat 1 TS Hyacinth	Constitucion East Cape	Hit Close
1968-69		TS Glenda TS Emily	Cabo San Lucas Cabo San Lucas	Close Close
1969-70		*	*	*
1970-71	La Niña	*	*	*
1971-72	Weak La Niña	*	*	*
1972-73	Strong El Niño	Hurricane Irah Cat 1	Todos Santos/La Paz	Hit
1973-74	Strong La Niña	*	*	*
1974-75	Weak La Niña	*	*	*
1975-76	Strong La Niña	Hurricane Lisa Cat 3 Kathleen Cat 1	East Cape/La Paz Punta Eugenia	Close Hit
1976-77		Hurricane Dorren Cat 1	Mag Bay	Hit
1977-78	El Niño	*	*	*
1978-79		*	*	*
1979-80		*	*	*
1980-81		TS Lidia TD Irwin	SJD SJD	Hit Hit
1981-		Hurricane Paul Cat 1	East Cape	Hit

82				
1982-83	Strong El Niño	*	*	*
1983-84		TD Polo	Todos Santos/ La Paz	Hit
1984-85		*	*	*
1985-86		Hurricane Newton Cat 1 Hurricane Paine Cat 1	East Cape East Cape	Close Close
1986-87		*	*	*
1987-88	El Niño	*	*	*
1988-89	Strong La Niña	Hurricane Kiko Cat 3	East Cape	Hit
1989-90		TS Rachel	Todos Santos/San Bartolo	Hit
1990-91		*	*	*
1991-92	Strong El Niño	*	*	*
1992-93	El Niño	TS Calvin TS Hillary	East Cape Mag Bay/Loreto	Hit Hit
1993-94		*	*	*
1994-95	El Niño	Hurricane Henriette Cat 1 Hurricane Ismael	Cabo San Lucas East Cape	Hit Close
1995-96		Hurricane Fausto Cat 1	Todos Santos/La Paz	Hit
1996-97		Hurricane Nora Cat 1	Punta Eugena	Hit
1997-98	Strong El Niño	TD Madaline TS Frank TS Isis	East Cape San Ignacio San Jose Del Cabo	Close Hit Close
1998-99	La Niña	TS Greg	Cabo San Lucas	Hit
1999-00		TD Miriam TS Ileana	East Cape Cabo San Lucas	Close Close
2000-01	La Niña	*	*	*
2001-02		TS Juliette	Mag Bay/Loreto	Hit
2002-03	El Niño	Hurricane Ignacio Cat 1 Hurricane Marty Cat 2	La Paz Cabo San Lucas/La Paz	Hit Hit
2003-04	Weak El Nino	TD Javier	Central Baja	Hit
2004-05		TD Otis	Todos Santos	Close
2005-06		Hurricane John Cat 2	East Cape/La Paz	Hit