

El Nino might return sooner than expected

By Henry Fountain
New York Times

HSA
4/16/17

Less than a year after one of the strongest El Ninos on record, forecasters see an increasing possibility that another may begin this year.

There is no word yet on how strong any new El Nino might be, but even a mild one could affect weather patterns around the world. Among the potential effects are wetter conditions across the southern United States, including Southern California; a drier Midwest; and drought in parts of Africa, Asia and South America.

El Nino can also influence global temperatures that are already rising because of greenhouse gas emissions. The strong El Nino of 2015-16 contributed to those years being the two warmest on record.

El Nino occurs when warm water in the equatorial Pacific shifts, creating an immense warm zone in the central and eastern Pacific. This adds heat and moisture to the air, releasing energy that affects the high-altitude winds known as jet streams that circle the planet.

During the 2015-16 event, surface water temperatures in the Pacific were as much as 4 degrees Fahrenheit above normal. The warmth gradually dissipated and the ocean became cooler than normal, a condition known as La Nina, which persisted through much of last year.

In their latest forecast, released Thursday, scientists from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and other organizations said conditions were neutral, with normal sea-surface temperatures. But there was about a 50 percent chance of an El Nino in the second half of the year, they said.

Mike Halpert, deputy director of NOAA's Climate Prediction Center in College Park, Md., said that since climate scientists have been studying the phenomenon, a swing from El Nino to La Nina and back to El Nino in such a short time — about three years — has happened only once, in the 1960s.

The strength of an El Nino is related to the magnitude of the changes in water temperatures. Halpert said it was too early to say how this new El Nino, if it occurs, would turn out. "But history would tell us we wouldn't see two strong events in three years," he said.

Agency overreaches in trying to

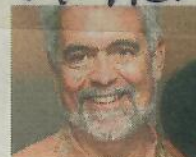
3/20/2017 HSA

By Paul Achitoff,
Rick Gaffney
and Marjorie Zeigler

The Western Pacific Fisheries Management Council's (Wespac's) leaders vociferously opposed expanding Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument, and now are asking the Trump administration to remove restrictions on commercial fishing there. Their actions are grossly inappropriate and possibly illegal.

Building on President Bill Clinton's executive order, President George W. Bush established the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument in 2006. President Barack Obama expanded protections in 2016 at the request of thousands of Native Hawaiians, scientists, conservationists, small-boat fishermen and U.S. Sen. Brian Schatz.

Hawaii's governor sup-



Marjorie Zeigler is executive director of the nonprofit Conservation Council for Hawaii; Paul Achitoff is the managing attorney of Earthjustice's Mid-Pacific office in Honolulu; Rick Gaffney has served on Wespac and other federal advisory panels.

ported the expansion, which was approved only after the Obama administration held multiple meetings in the islands with interested constituents — including the longline industry — and held two public meetings, on Oahu and Kauai, to take public comment. Additionally, grassroots supporters offered more than 135 community meetings across the state, on every island, to discuss the expansion. This dialogue resulted in the final size of the expanded monument being reduced to ensure access to fishing

grounds used by small-boat fishermen.

Papahānaumokuākea encompasses extensive coral reefs supporting 7,000 marine species, and important habitat for the threatened green sea turtle, endangered Hawaiian monk seal, 22 species of seabirds and countless creatures yet to be discovered. A UNESCO World Heritage site, it has been designated as a Particularly Sensitive Sea Area by the International Maritime Organization. It also is rich in historic artifacts, from whaling shipwrecks to

roll back marine monument

downed aircraft from World War II's Battle of Midway, the critical turning point in the war in the Pacific.

The protected area features biocultural resources sacred to Native Hawaiians, and important for traditional activities such as long-distance voyaging and wayfinding. It is where Hawaiians believe all life began, and to which spirits return after death. Obama's proclamation named the Office of Hawaiian Affairs as a fourth co-trustee of the monument.

The commercial longliners don't like the monument, claiming it restricts their fishing area. But there's no evidence of any economic loss. Hawaii's longliners have no trouble reaching their annual bigeye fishing quotas — last year, it took just seven months. And, to keep fishing, they simply buy other regions' quotas. In recent years the

longliners caught less than five percent of their catch in the expanded monument waters. To make up for this, they can — and will — fish where they are already finding 95 percent of their catch.

Despite this, Wespac leadership has complained directly to President Donald Trump. It wants to maximize longliners' private profits yet again, at the expense of a healthy ecosystem.

This is not the Council's role. Council members are trustees of the nation's fishery resources, and take an oath to "conserve and manage the living marine resources of the United States of America." They are supposed to gather scientific data and help develop and implement ecosystem-based fishery management plans, not shape policy, fight national monument designations, or lobby to expand Council turf. The Council's overzealous pursuit of long-

liner profits may have violated laws against using federal funds to lobby.

The Council has a bad habit of testing the limits of the lobbying laws' prohibitions. Now that an anti-environment administration has come to power, the Council is once more inappropriately trying to influence policy, seeking profit at the expense of unique and extraordinary natural and cultural resources. Wespac should remember what its job actually is. It should be working to resist efforts by the Trump administration to erode these important protections instead of encouraging their destruction. It should also be attending to the labor abuses reported in the longline fishery — from beatings to below-minimum-wage pay to inadequate health care — instead of continuing to attack our most valued marine resources.

Florida manatees will survive

4/16/2017 HSA

By Kevin Spear
Orlando Sentinel

ORLANDO, FLA. >> Florida manatees may continue to die from toxic algae, freezing weather, ecosystem collapse and boat collisions, but the species appears on track to survive through the coming century, according to federal experts.

The U.S. Geological Sur-

vey has released a highly technical study that relied on computer analysis of threats and protections for manatees, which recently were moved from the nation's endangered list to the less dire status of threatened.

"Today the Florida manatees' numbers are high. Adult manatees' longevity is good, and the state has avail-

able habitat to support a population that is continuing to grow," said ecologist Michael C. Runge, the report's lead writer.

Often controversial, the outlook for "sea cows" has been evaluated by state biologists, environmental advocates, fishing enthusiasts and electric utilities discharging warm water that protects the mammals

TO
PAGE
133

From p. 132

many threats, study predicts

during cold snaps. Katie Tripp, science director at the Save the Manatee Club in Maitland, said political, environmental and other factors are too dynamic for computer forecasting.

"That model doesn't know whether warm-water, power-plant discharges are going to go away in five years or 50 years," said Tripp, who added that the threat from

boaters, loss of habitat and other stresses also are unpredictable. "I'm tired of agencies using models to get out of doing the hard work that needs to be done."

There were about 1,000 Florida manatees when they were declared endangered nearly 40 years ago. With protections that included boating limits, the population has rebounded to more

than 6,000, according to a recent count.

Geological Survey scientists plugged a wide range of scenarios into their computer programs.

They determined there is a less than 1 percent chance the population would decline disastrously. Instead, according to the agency, manatee numbers are likely to double and then stabilize.



研究顯示，檀香山和威基基大部份地區正處於被地下水淹沒的風險中。小圖為顯示維基基一處工地，漲潮時地下水已接近地面。 夏威夷大學馬洛亞分校提供

呎之內。這個「狹窄且不飽和的空間」意味著地下水淹沒將於本世紀末前變成嚴重問題。事實上，現在只要一下雨，地下水便會滲入和充滿這個空間。

哈貝稱，「身為本州旅遊門戶，維基基目前的地下水離地面的空間已經越來越窄，導致很多地下工程施工時要先抽水才能展開。」

Rollback of marine monument is urged

3/22/17 HSA
Environmentalists oppose the effort by a federal fisheries management agency

By Sophie Cocke
scocke@staradvertiser.com

Leaders of a quasi-government agency tasked with helping manage Pacific fisheries are urging President Donald Trump to reverse restrictions on commercial fishing within the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument that were expanded by former President Barack Obama just months before he left office.

The efforts by the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council to roll back the marine protections in areas surrounding the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, as well as other protected waters, are angering members of environmental groups, who gathered outside a council meeting at the Ala Moana Hotel on Tuesday afternoon to voice their opposition.

"They have been pushing for years to fish, fish, fish, fish at the expense of endangered monk seals, at the expense of sea turtles, at the expense of albatross," said Paul Achitoff, an attorney with Honolulu's Earthjustice, an environmental law firm. "It goes on and on, and frankly Wespac has never seen a conservation measure that it hasn't ... opposed."

FISHING

Continued from A1

protect fish habitats. The agency advises the federal government on policies that affect fishing.

Management 'disrupted'

Last month, during a meeting of leaders from the eight management councils in Arlington, Va., Wespac's executive director, Kitty Simonds, and its chairman, Ed Ebisui, delivered a presentation in which they urged the committee to ask the Trump administration to remove fishing restrictions from monument areas.

"Make America Great Again, Return US fishermen to US waters," read one of the pages of the presentation that was provided by environmental groups to the Honolulu Star-Advertiser.

The presentation references several marine monument areas, including Papahānaumokuākea.

On Friday the leaders of all eight councils also sent a letter to Trump saying that the marine monument designations had "disrupted the ability of councils to manage fisheries throughout their range."

"Our experience with marine monument designations to date is that they are counterproductive to domestic fishery goals, as they have displaced and concentrated U.S. fishing effort into less productive fishing grounds and increased dependency on foreign fisheries that are not as sustainably managed as United States fisheries," according to the letter, a copy of which was provided by Wespac.

The letter goes on to argue that the removal of American fishing vessels from U.S. waters "eliminates their ability to act as watchdogs over U.S. fishing grounds threatened

Achitoff was joined by leaders of other local environmental groups, including the Hawaii Sierra Club, the Conservation Council for Hawaii and Hui Hoomalu i ka Aina.

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council, commonly known as Wespac, is one of eight fishery management councils throughout the country established by Congress in 1978 to prevent overfishing, minimize by-catch and

Please see FISHING, A9

by foreign fishing and other incursions."

While Wespac's mission is to help manage fisheries sustainably, the agency for years has clashed with environmental groups that accuse it of being too cozy with large fishing interests, valuing business interests over the environment.

"They seem to view their mission as increasing the short-term profits of the longliners at any and all expense, period," Achitoff said. "Anything that they feel may get in the way of that, they have opposed."

The environmental groups are asking Hawaii's congressional delegation to look into Wespac's activities, arguing that it amounts to lobbying, which the government-funded agency is not supposed to engage in.

Neither Simonds nor Ebisui responded to interview requests.

In August, Obama announced that he was expanding the Papahānaumokuākea Monument by

hundreds of thousands of square miles, creating the world's largest marine reserve and protecting coral reef and deep-sea marine habitats from activities such as commercial fishing and mineral mining.

Unilateral power

The designation quadrupled the size of the protected area surrounding the uninhabited Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, which had been designated as a national monument by President George W. Bush in 2006.

Presidents have unilateral power to designate U.S. lands and waters as national monuments under the Antiquities Act of 1906.

At the time, Obama's decision seemed to bring an end to months of debate in Hawaii over whether to increase the size of the monument. The longline industry, which opposed the expansion, attracted support from figures such as former U.S. Sen. Daniel Akaka and former Hawaii

Gov. George Ariyoshi, as well as more than two dozen state lawmakers.

Supporters of expanding the protected area also counted many among their ranks, including U.S. Sen. Brian Schatz and Gov. David Ige.

Trump's surprise victory in November and his vows to reverse Obama executive orders and reduce environmental regulations quickly elicited concern among environmental groups in Hawaii that he would try to roll back protections around the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands.

The marine monument is believed to help protect more than 7,000 marine species, including endangered whales and sea turtles, as well as black coral, which are believed to be the longest-living marine species in the world, capable of living more than 4,500 years, the Obama administration said when it announced the expansion of Papahānaumokuākea last year.