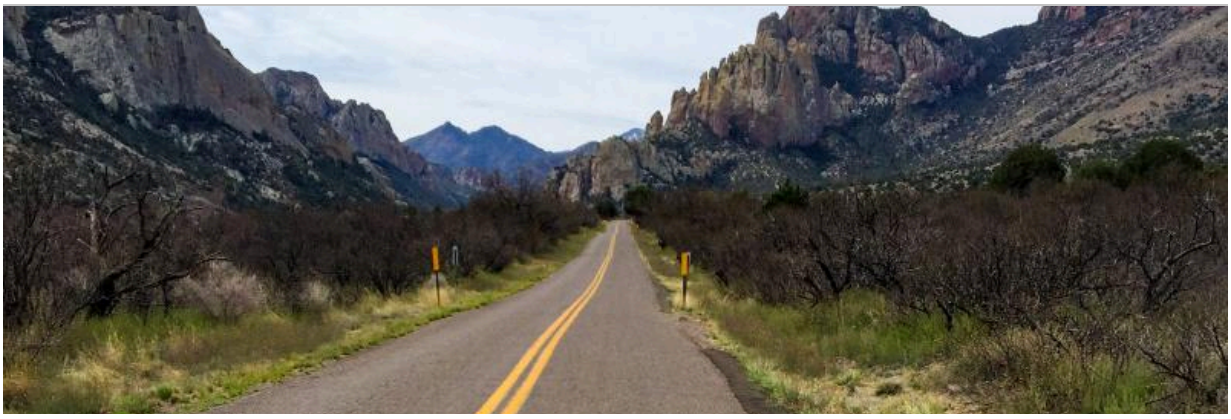

November 2025: Southwest Climate Outlook

Stacie Reece
December 1, 2025

https://climas.arizona.edu/

The Southwest Climate Outlook is published by the Climate Assessment for the Southwest (CLIMAS), with support from University of Arizona Cooperative Extension, and the New Mexico State Climate office.

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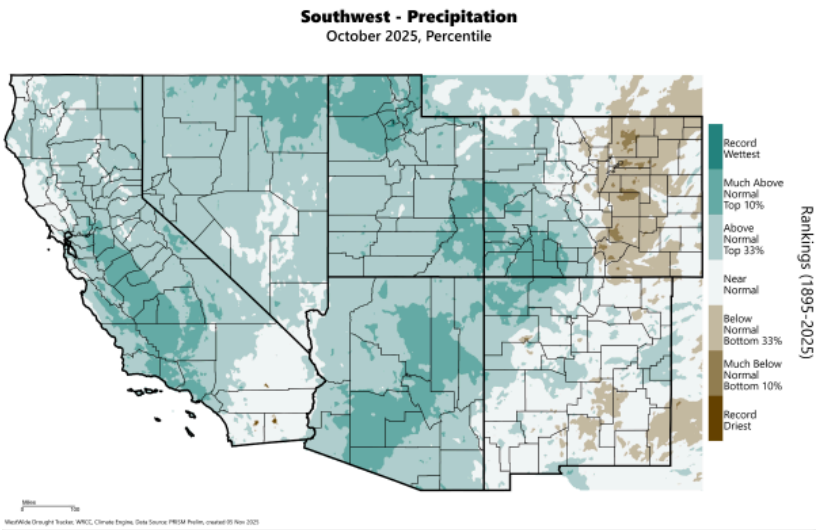
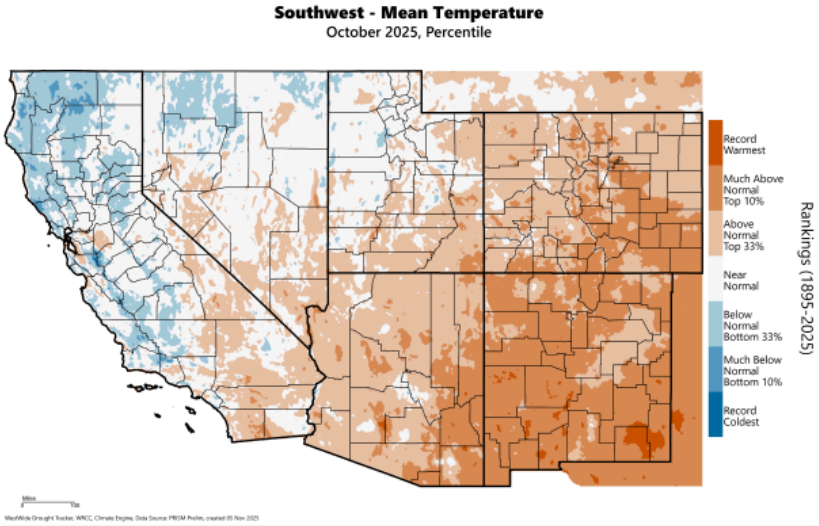
Precipitation and Temperature

October precipitation was above normal (ranking in the upper third of Octobers on record) or much-above normal (ranking in the upper 10% of the record) across Arizona and much of the Colorado Plateau in New Mexico. Precipitation in the remaining parts of New Mexico was generally near normal—ranking among the middle third of Octobers on record.



Source: WestWide Drought Tracker

October temperatures were generally above normal in Arizona and much-above normal in New Mexico, with some parts of southern New Mexico seeing the warmest October on record.



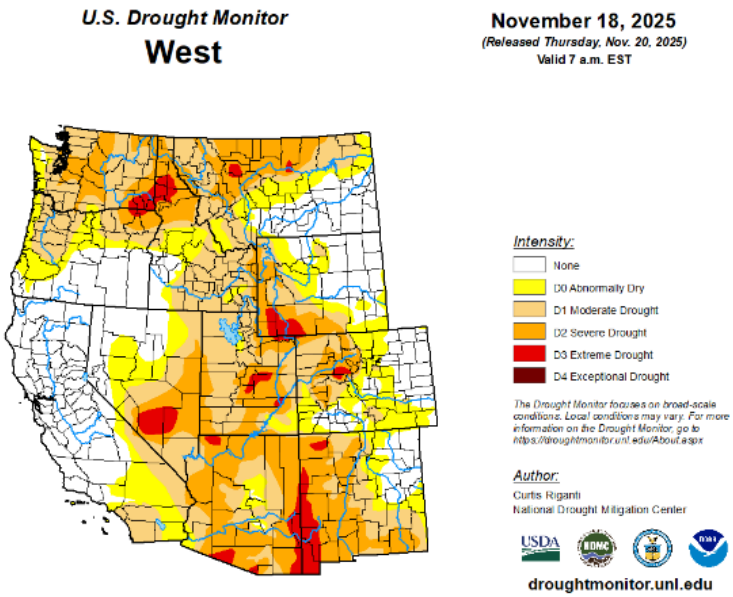
Source: WestWide Drought Tracker

Drought

Drought remains widespread in the Southwest, with drought conditions classified as Severe (D2) or of greater intensity affecting two-thirds of Arizona and around one half of New Mexico, by area. The only areas in the region that are not considered to be in drought or abnormally dry are northeast New Mexico and a few relatively small areas in central

Arizona— one area above the Mogollon Rim and another extending across parts of the Superstition and Pinal Mountains.

NIDIS Improved and Expanded State Pages on Drought.Gov



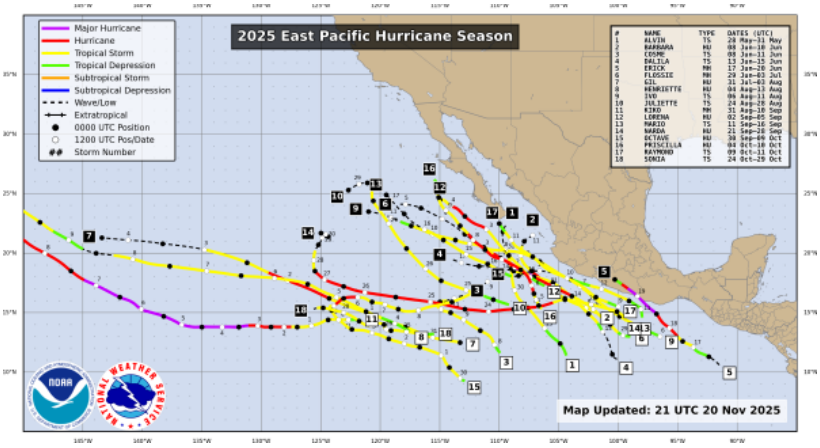
Source: U.S. Drought Monitor

New Mexico

Arizona

Hurricanes & Tropical Storms

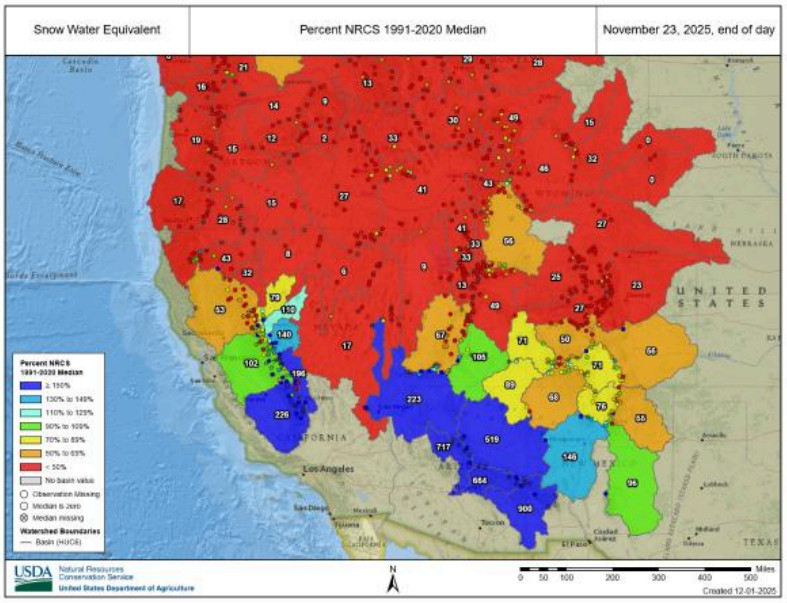
The end of November marks the end of the hurricane season for the eastern North Pacific. This year was more active than normal, with more named storms (18) than the long-term average (14), and more storms that reached hurricane strength (10) than average (8).



NOAA: National Hurricane Center & Central Pacific Hurricane Center

Snowpack

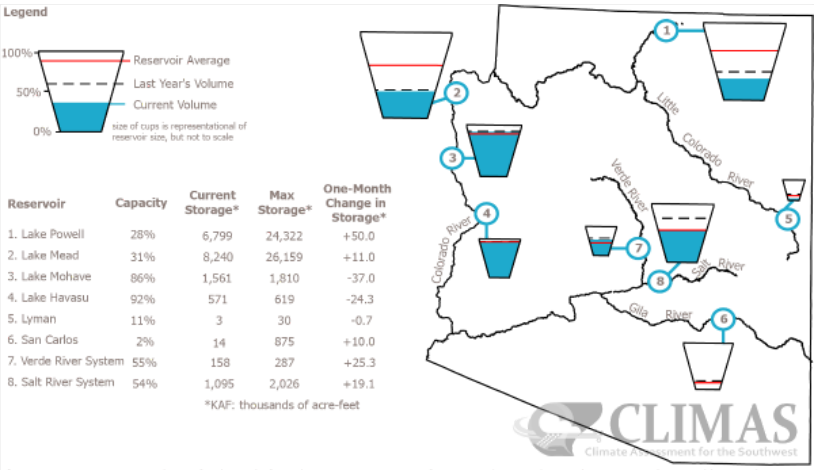
Snowpack at this beginning stage of the season is lagging normal in the basins of the Upper Colorado and upper Rio Grande—Snow water equivalent (SWE) ranges to as little as 25% of normal for this time of year in basins of the Upper Colorado. This is still far too early to make any conclusions about the season overall; the upper reaches of the Colorado often record the greatest monthly accumulation in March. SWE values are above normal across a southern tier of basins in Arizona and New Mexico—as much as 900 percent of normal for this time of year—and although in some cases these large numbers are the result of “normal” being a relatively small amount this early in the season, it’s a good start for this cool season’s soil moisture and snow conditions in those southern areas.



USDA: Natural Resources Conservation Service

Water Supply

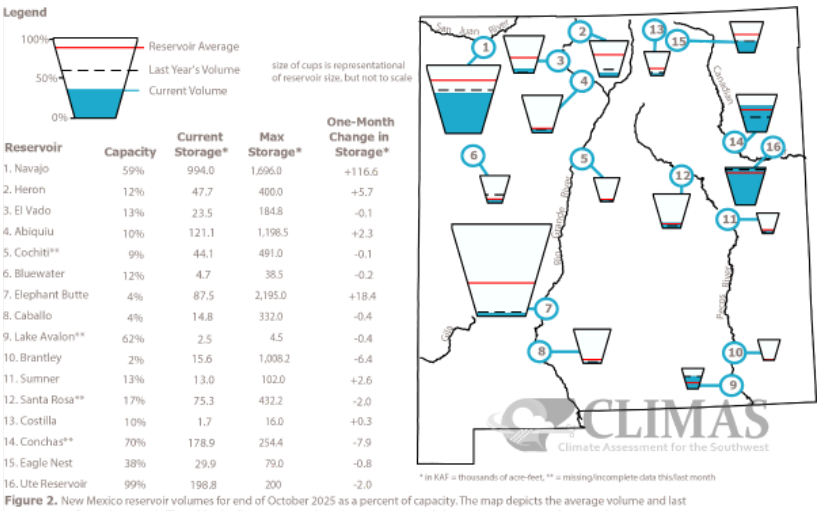
Reservoir storage in Arizona varies from near average for the Salt and Verde systems, to below average and down compared to last year for Lake Mead and Lake Powell, to near completely dry at San Carlos which is downstream of the region of extreme drought highlighted above in the U.S Drought Monitor map. New Mexico reservoir storage varies from above average for Canadian River reservoirs, to below average and down compared to last year for Navajo Lake and reservoirs of the Rio Grande.



Reservoir	Capacity	Current Storage*	Max Storage*	One-Month Change in Storage*
1. Lake Powell	28%	6,799	24,322	+50.0
2. Lake Mead	31%	8,240	26,159	+11.0
3. Lake Mohave	86%	1,561	1,810	-37.0
4. Lake Havasu	92%	571	619	-24.3
5. Lyman	11%	3	30	-0.7
6. San Carlos	2%	14	875	+10.0
7. Verde River System	55%	158	287	+25.3
8. Salt River System	54%	1,095	2,026	+19.1

*KAF: thousands of acre-feet

Figure 1. Arizona reservoir volumes for the end of October 2025 as a percent of capacity. The map depicts the average volume and last year's storage for each reservoir. The table also lists current and maximum storage, and change in storage since last month.



Reservoir	Capacity	Current Storage*	Max Storage*	One-Month Change in Storage*
1. Navajo	59%	994.0	1,696.0	+116.6
2. Heron	12%	47.7	400.0	+5.7
3. El Vado	13%	23.5	184.8	-0.1
4. Abiquiu	10%	121.1	1,198.5	+2.3
5. Cochiti**	9%	44.1	491.0	-0.1
6. Bluewater	12%	4.7	38.5	-0.2
7. Elephant Butte	4%	87.5	2,195.0	+18.4
8. Caballo	4%	14.8	332.0	-0.4
9. Lake Avalon**	62%	2.5	4.5	-0.4
10. Brantley	2%	15.6	1,008.2	-6.4
11. Sumner	13%	13.0	102.0	+2.6
12. Santa Rosa**	17%	75.3	432.2	-2.0
13. Costilla	10%	1.7	16.0	+0.3
14. Conchas**	70%	178.9	254.4	-7.9
15. Eagle Nest	38%	29.9	79.0	-0.8
16. Ute Reservoir	99%	198.8	200	-2.0

* in KAF = thousands of acre-feet, ** = missing/incomplete data this/last month

Figure 2. New Mexico reservoir volumes for end of October 2025 as a percent of capacity. The map depicts the average volume and last year's storage for each reservoir. The table also lists current and maximum storage, and change in storage since last month.

The map gives a representation of current storage for reservoirs in Arizona and New Mexico. Reservoir locations are numbered within the blue circles on the map, corresponding to the reservoirs listed in the table. The cup next to each reservoir shows the current storage (blue fill) as a percent of total capacity. Note that while the size of each cup varies with the size of the reservoir, these are representational and not to scale. Each cup also represents last year's storage (dotted line) and the 1991–2020 reservoir average (red line). The table details more exactly the current capacity (listed as a percent of maximum storage). Current and maximum storage are given in thousands of acre-feet for each reservoir. One acre-foot is the volume of water sufficient to cover an acre of land to a depth of 1 foot (approximately 325,851 gallons). On average, 1 acre-foot of water is enough to meet the demands of four people for a year. The last column of the table lists an increase or decrease in storage since last month. A line indicates no change. These data are based on reservoir reports updated monthly by the Natural Resources Conservation Service - National Water and Climate Center (USDA)

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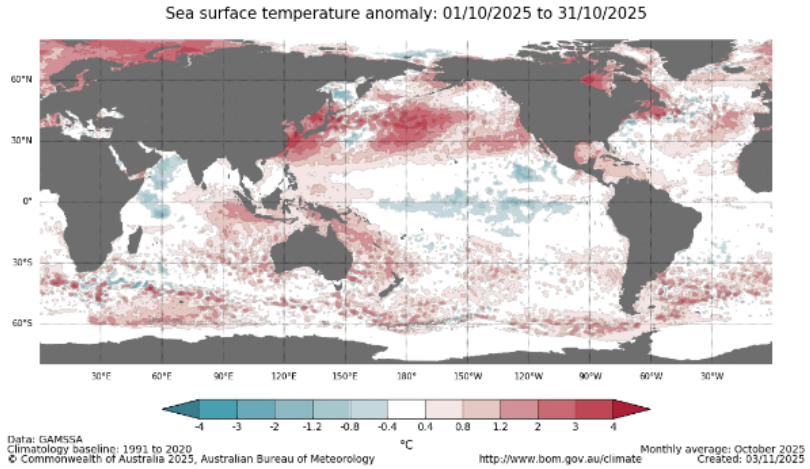
BOR: New Mexico Dashboard

ENSO Tracker

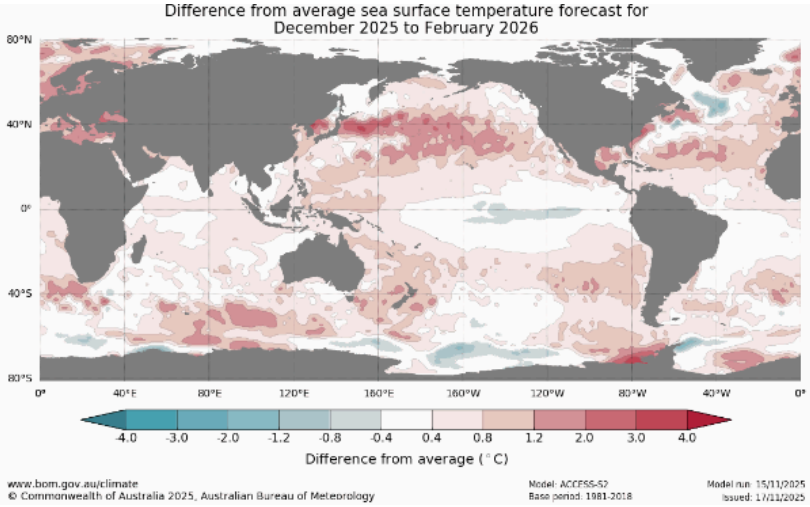
Sea surface temperatures (SSTs) in the equatorial Pacific have followed a pattern consistent with La Niña conditions, as shown in this map of October average SSTs—the central-to-

eastern equatorial Pacific is cooler than average, while the western margin is warmer than average. The warmer than average waters near 30° N and further north do not play a role in the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) ocean-atmosphere feedback mechanism.



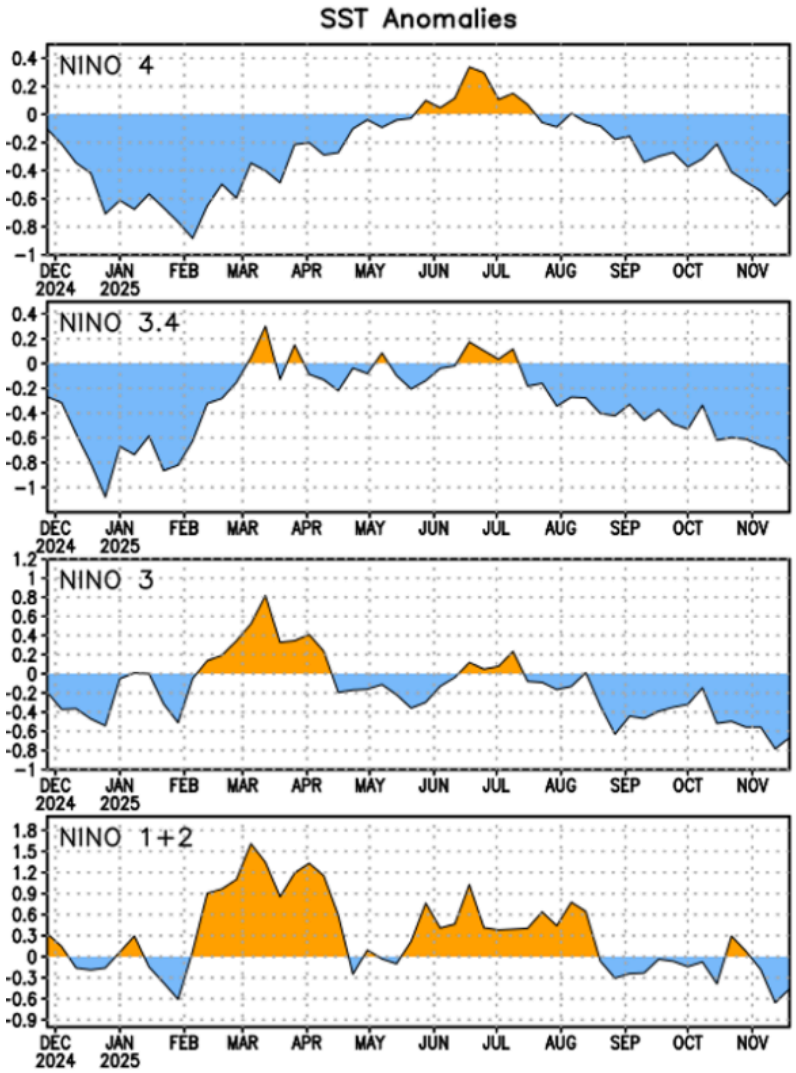
Source: Australian Bureau of Meteorology

A December–February seasonal SST forecast from the Australian ACCESS model shows the La Niña pattern persisting through the coming months.



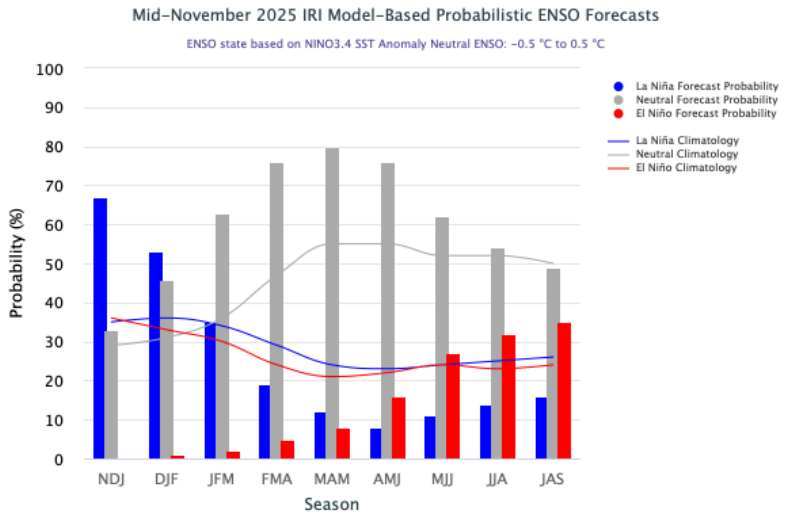
Source: Australian Bureau of Meteorology

Weekly SST anomalies (SST difference from average) in the Nino 3.4 SST monitoring region (used to diagnose ENSO status) have been past the La Niña threshold of –0.5 °C since mid-October. That is an earlier start than last year's La Niña, which didn't cross that threshold until December.



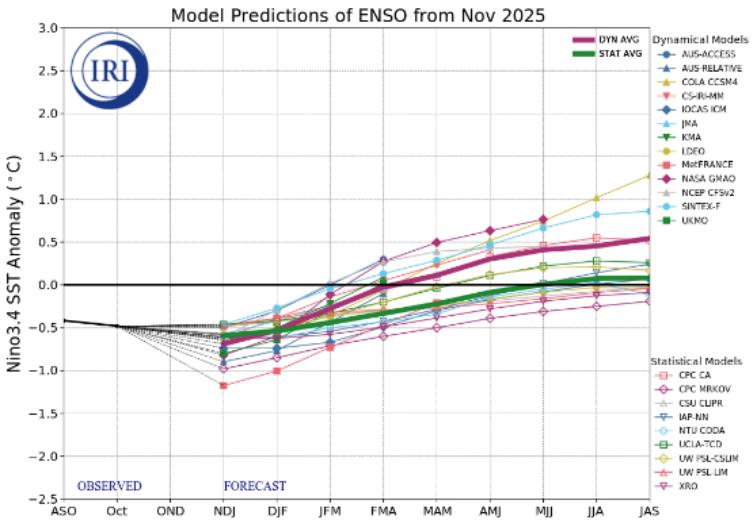
Source: Climate Prediction Center (NOAA)

The probabilistic summary of ENSO model forecasts shows some uncertainty about just how long La Niña conditions will persist. There is good agreement (>65% chance) La Niña will stick around through the November–January season, but for the December–February forecast window, models are split close to 50-50 between La Niña and ENSO-neutral conditions. There is good agreement that La Niña will have waned to ENSO-neutral conditions by the February–April forecast window.



Source: The International Research Institute for Climate and Society, Columbia University Climate School

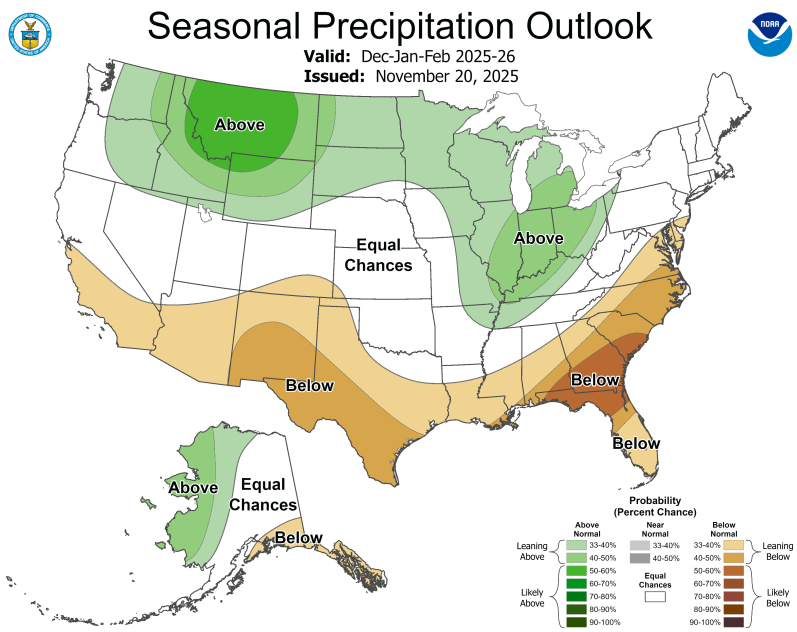
The plume-plot of individual model forecasts shows all forecasts trending away from La Niña conditions following the November-January forecast averaging window ("NDJ" on the plot x-axis). Long-term (right-hand half of the plot), some models progress toward an El Niño state, but predictions for that far in the future should be regarded as extremely uncertain.



Source: The International Research Institute for Climate and Society, Columbia University Climate School

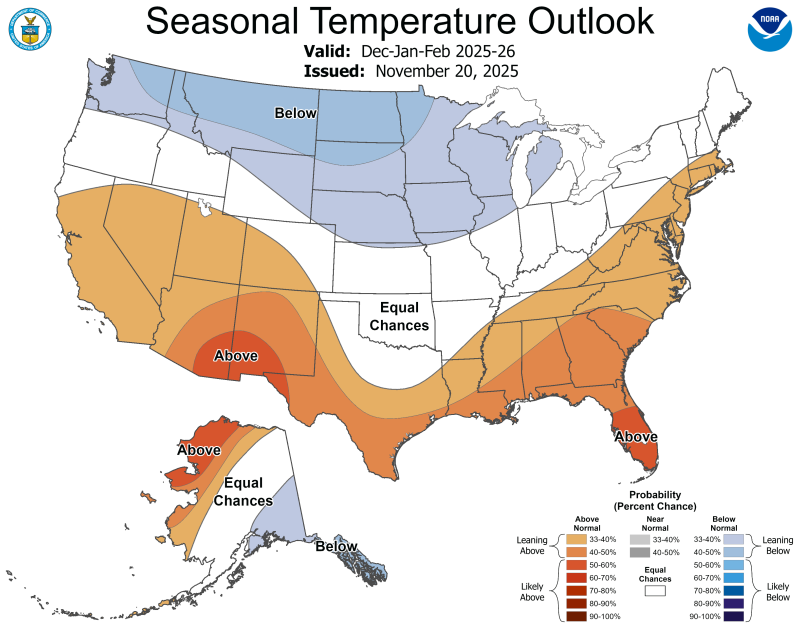
Seasonal Forecasts

The December–February seasonal precipitation forecast leans toward below normal precipitation for an area that includes New Mexico and most of Arizona, giving central and southern New Mexico a 40–50% chance of below normal total precipitation over those three months, and giving Arizona and northern New Mexico a lower confidence 33–40% chance of below normal precipitation.



Source: Climate Prediction Center (NOAA)

The December–February seasonal temperature forecast calls above normal temperatures *likely* (50–60% chance) for southeastern Arizona and southwestern New Mexico. The forecast also *leans* toward above normal temperatures for an area that includes the remaining parts of Arizona and New Mexico, with a lower confidence probability range of 33–50% chance of a warmer than normal December–February.



Source: Climate Prediction Center (NOAA)

Southwest Climate Podcast

November 2025 SW Climate Podcast - Pumpkin Spice Weather

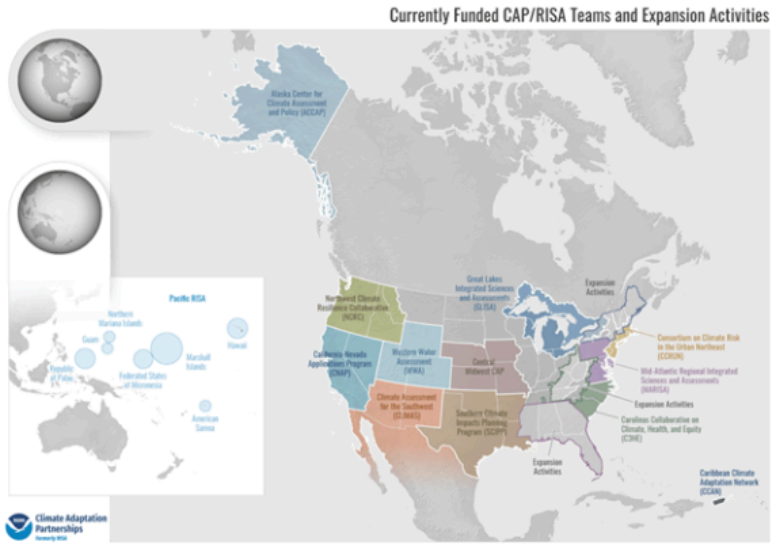
Recorded 11/07/2025, Aired 11/10/2025

Hosts Zack Guido and Mike Crimmins are enjoying the recent fall weather in this month's Southwest Climate Podcast episode. The hosts recap October which had some pretty interesting storm activity. There is a summary of the hurricane season - including the category 5 Melissa that had devastating impacts in the Caribbean. They cover the fall to winter transition patterns. Then the podcast ends with a discussion on the weak developing La Niña which may or may not relieve the drought pressure with some winter precipitation.

Listen Here

About CLIMAS

The Climate Assessment for the Southwest (CLIMAS) program was established in 1998 as part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Climate Adaptation Partnerships (CAP) Program (formerly known as Regional Integrated Sciences and Assessments, or RISA). CLIMAS—housed at the University of Arizona's Institute of the Environment—is a collaboration between the University of Arizona and New Mexico State University. The CLIMAS team is made up of experts from a variety of social, physical, and natural sciences who work with partners across the Southwest to develop sustainable answers to regional climate challenges.



Learn more about the NOAA CAP program here

Disclaimer

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