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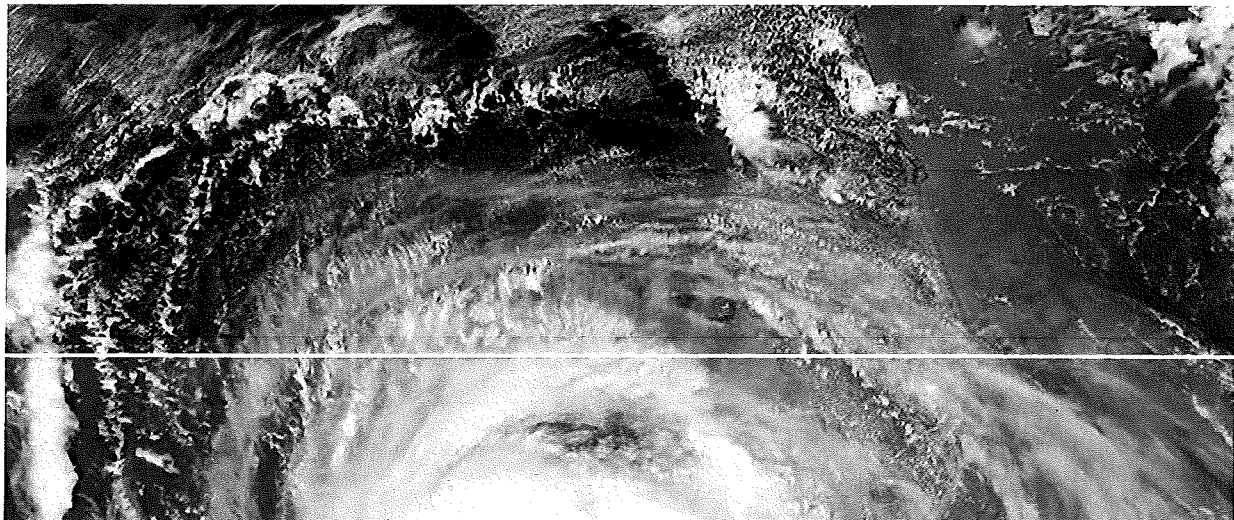
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# Hurricane Season 2018: How Long It Lasts and What to Expect

By Tia Ghose, Associate Editor | April 6, 2018 09:47am ET



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alphabetical storm names that repeats on a six-year cycle. The organization aims for clear and simple names. Names are in English, Spanish, Dutch and French, to account for the many languages spoken by people potentially affected by hurricanes.

"Experience shows that the use of short, distinctive given names in written as well as spoken communications is quicker and less subject to error than the older, more cumbersome, latitude-longitude identification methods. These advantages are especially important in exchanging detailed storm information between hundreds of widely scattered stations, coastal bases and ships at sea," the organization says on its website.

If a storm was so devastating that using the name again would be insensitive, the group meets and agrees to strike the name from the list.

For instance, people don't have to worry about facing the wrath of a Hurricane Katrina, Ike, Hattie or Opal again, because those names have been retired, according to the NHC.

For the 2018 hurricane season, the following hurricane names could come into play in the North Atlantic, Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico, according to the WMO:

Alberto  
Beryl  
Chris  
Debby  
Ernesto  
Florence  
Gordon  
Helene  
Isaac  
Joyce  
Kirk  
Leslie  
Michael  
Nadine  
Oscar  
Patty  
Rafael  
Sara  
Tony  
Valerie  
William

## How to prepare

Staying safe during the hurricane season starts with a simple step: Have a plan. People can plan for hurricanes using a simple guide at [Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov). Plans need to be worked out

"There are two dominant climate patterns that really control the wind and pressure patterns across the Atlantic," said Gerry Bell, the lead seasonal hurricane forecaster for NOAA's Climate Prediction Center in Washington, D.C.

The first is the El Niño/La Niña cycle. During an El Niño, in which ocean water around the northwestern coast of South America becomes warmer than usual, Atlantic hurricanes are suppressed, while La Niña creates more favorable conditions for hurricanes, Bell said.

The second climate pattern is the Atlantic Multidecadal Oscillation (AMO), which is, as the name implies, a trend that lasts anywhere from 25 to 40 years and is associated with warmer waters in the Atlantic and stronger African monsoons, Bell said.

"When this pattern is in its warm phase, or a warmer tropical Atlantic Ocean, we tend to see stronger hurricane patterns for decades at a time," Bell told Live Science.

A warm-phase AMO conducive to hurricanes prevailed between 1950 and 1970 and since 1995, Bell said.

## 2018 hurricane outlook

Officially, the Atlantic hurricane season starts on June 1 and will run until Nov. 30. In the Eastern Pacific Ocean, hurricane season begins May 15 and ends Nov. 30, according to the National Weather Service. However, most of these storms hit during peak hurricane season between August and October, on both coasts, according to the National Weather Service's Climate Prediction Center.

Hurricane scientists at Colorado State University are predicting a slightly above-average Atlantic hurricane season in 2018, they announced on April 5. The researchers, who are part of CSU's Tropical Meteorology Project team, forecast 14 named storms, and of those about seven will become full-blown hurricanes and three will reach major hurricane strength, meaning a Category 3, 4 or 5 on the Saffir-Simpson scale (sustained winds of at least 111 mph, or 179 km/h).

The low likelihood of a significant El Niño, which puts the brakes on hurricanes, was the primary factor behind the slightly above-average forecast, the researchers said. The CSU team will update their hurricane season forecast on May 31, July 2 and Aug. 2, they said.

The Climate Prediction Center releases its hurricane season forecast in late May every year. (So check back here for updates.)

To make their predictions, scientists analyze a host of factors, from wind speed to sea surface temperatures. Because the El Niño/La Niña cycle typically materializes in summer or early fall, forecasts done too early have limited meaning, Bell said. [A History of Destruction: 8 Great Hurricanes]

The Climate Prediction Center classifies hurricane seasons as above-normal (between 12 and 28 tropical storms and between seven and 15 hurricanes); near-normal (Between 10