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## NATION

# Winter weather is coming: It will be warm, dry in South and East because of La Niña, NOAA says



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### Key Points

Warmer-than-average temperatures are favored for much of the southern tier of the U.S., as well as the Eastern Seaboard.

La Niña, a natural cooling of sea water in the tropical Pacific Ocean, is continuing for the third consecutive year.

Precipitation should be plentiful in parts of the northern tier of the nation.

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Like it or not, winter is coming.

And this winter is expected to be dominated by the La Niña climate pattern yet again, according to federal forecasters, who issued their winter forecast for the U.S. early Thursday.

That means generally warmer-than-average temperatures are expected for much of the southern tier of the U.S. as well as the Eastern Seaboard. And drought is forecast across the South.

La Niña, a natural cooling of sea water in the tropical Pacific Ocean, is in place for a third consecutive year, forecasters said. The climate pattern affects the position of the jet stream and thus the weather across all of North America.

NOAA said this year's La Niña, which began in September 2020, probably will persist through the winter.

**TRIPLE-DIP LA NINA:** 'Triple dip' La Niña is on the way. Here's what it means for weather in the US

It's the opposite of the more well-known El Niño, which occurs when water in the Pacific Ocean is warmer than average.

## **Relief from drought not expected in South this winter**

Along with the warmth in the South will come dry conditions, which isn't good news for the drought plaguing the Southwest and southern Plains:

“Drought conditions are now present across approximately 59% of the country, but parts of the Western U.S. and southern Great Plains will continue to be the hardest hit this winter,” said Jon Gottschalck of NOAA’s Climate Prediction Center. “With the La Niña climate pattern still in place, drought conditions may also expand to the Gulf Coast.”

The drought is raising fears of wildfires in the south-central U.S. this winter, forecasters said. It also has caused the Mississippi River to approach record low levels in some areas from Missouri south through Louisiana.

## **Will it be rainy and snowy anywhere this winter?**

Precipitation should be plentiful in parts of the northern tier of the nation: In NOAA’s 2022-23 winter outlook, which extends from December 2022 through February 2023, more snow and rain than average is expected across portions of the northern U.S., primarily in the Pacific Northwest, Northern Rockies, Great Lakes and Ohio Valley.

Below-normal temperatures also are favored from the Pacific Northwest eastward to the western Great Lakes and the Alaska Panhandle, NOAA said.

## **Just how much will it snow?**

According to NOAA, it's too soon to say.

The agency's seasonal outlooks provide the likelihood that temperatures and total precipitation amounts will be above-, near- or below-average, and they predict how drought conditions are will change in the months ahead.

"The outlook does not project seasonal snowfall accumulations as snow forecasts are generally not predictable more than a week in advance," the NOAA said in a statement.

*Contributing: The Associated Press*

