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NOAA Expects Below Normal Central Pacific Hurricane Season
"Prepare! Watch! Act!" is this year's message

NOAA's Central Pacific Hurricane Center today announced that projected climate conditions point to a below normal hurricane season in the Central Pacific basin this year. The outlook was issued at a news conference called to urge Hawaii residents to be fully prepared for the onset of the hurricane season, which begins June 1.

"It is important to pay attention to forecasts and take each tropical system seriously," said Jim Weyman, director of NOAA's Central Pacific Hurricane Center. "Last year we had a scare when Hurricane Felicia approached, but fortunately it dissipated before hitting the islands."

Weyman said this year's message is: *Prepare, Watch, and Act!* "Now is the time to dust off those family emergency plans, continue to monitor conditions throughout the hurricane season, and take appropriate action when a hurricane threatens," he added.

The seasonal hurricane outlook is produced in collaboration with NOAA's Climate Prediction Center. For 2010, the outlook calls for a 70% chance of a below normal season, a 25% chance of a near normal season, and only a 5% chance of an above normal season.

Climate patterns similar to those expected this year have historically produced below normal activity in the central Pacific. Allowing for uncertainties, NOAA's Central Pacific Hurricane Center expects two to three tropical cyclones in the central Pacific during the 2010 season.

An average season has four or five tropical cyclones, which includes tropical depressions, tropical storms and hurricanes.

This outlook is based on two climate factors. The first is the ongoing low-activity era in the central Pacific, which partly reflects fewer eastern Pacific hurricanes moving into the region. The second factor is the expectation of either ENSO-neutral or La Niña conditions in the equatorial Pacific, neither of which favors tropical cyclone activity in the central Pacific. These factors have historically produced below normal seasons.

The outlook is a general guide to the overall seasonal hurricane activity and does not predict whether, where, when, or how many any of these systems will affect Hawaii. Once a tropical cyclone forms in the central Pacific or moves into the area, however, the hurricane center swings into action.

"Our hurricane specialists are ready to track any tropical cyclone, from a depression to a hurricane in the Central Pacific basin, and then provide accurate forecasts," Weyman said.

NOAA's Central Pacific Hurricane Center calls in additional staff meteorologists when a system forms. They continuously monitor the weather conditions, employing a dense network of satellites, land- and ocean-based sensors and aircraft reconnaissance missions operated by NOAA and its partners. This array of data supplies the information for complex computer modeling and human expertise that serves as the basis for the hurricane center's track and intensity forecasts that extend out five days.

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NOAA's Central Pacific Hurricane Center: <http://www.prh.noaa.gov/cphc/>