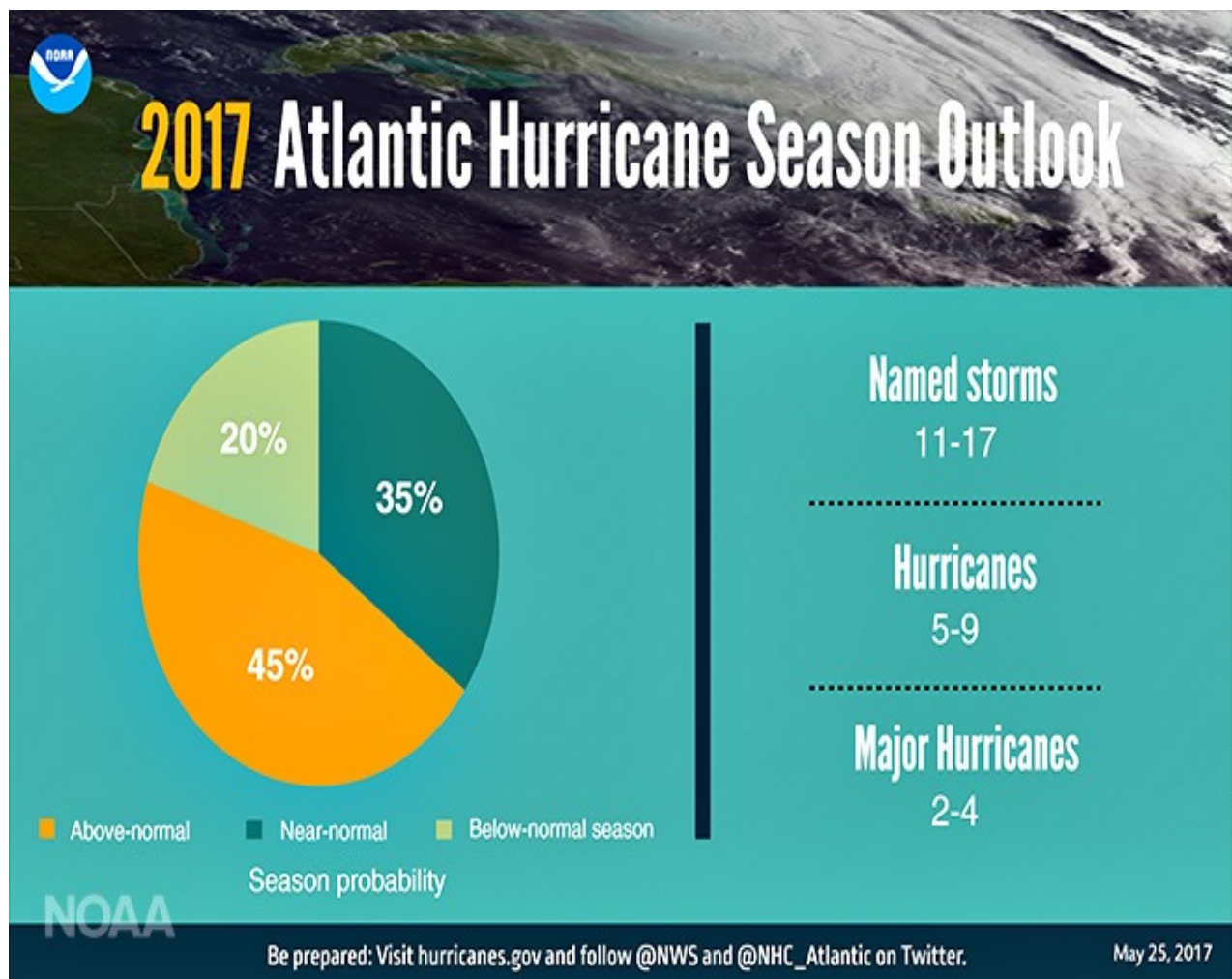


The Virgin Islands Consortium

NOAA Predicts Busy Hurricane Season With Up To 17 Named Storms

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Ernice Gilbert **May 26, 2017**



This year's hurricane season is expected to be a busy one, with more than usual storms being named, according to government forecasters at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

NOAA says the season, which begins on June 1 and runs until November 30, is likely to produce between 11-17 named storms, with forecasters predicting a 70 percent likelihood of storms with winds of 39 m.p.h. As many as 9 have the potential of becoming hurricanes, out of which four could become major hurricanes with winds of 111 m.p.h. or higher.

These numbers include Tropical Storm Arlene, a rare pre-season storm that formed over the eastern Atlantic in April, according to NOAA.

NOAA Climate Prediction Center - 2017 Atlantic hurricane season most likely to be above normal. [#hurricanestrong](https://t.co/i1usLENTsF) <https://t.co/i1usLENTsF>
[pic.twitter.com/d3ZxJiaWtw](https://t.co/i1usLENTsF)

— Natl Hurricane Ctr (@NWSNHC) [May 25, 2017](#)

The chance for above normal activity is 45 percent, according to NOAA. There's a 35 percent chance for near normal activity, and only a 20 percent chance for this year's hurricane season to be below normal.

“The outlook reflects our expectation of a weak or non-existent [El Nino](#), near or above-average sea-surface temperatures across the tropical Atlantic Ocean and Caribbean Sea, and average or weaker-than-average vertical wind shear in that same region,” said Gerry Bell, Ph.D., lead seasonal hurricane forecaster with NOAA's [Climate Prediction Center](#).

Strong El Ninos and wind shear typically suppress development of Atlantic hurricanes, so the prediction for weak conditions points to more hurricane activity this year. Also, warmer sea surface temperatures tend to fuel hurricanes as they move across the ocean. However, the climate models are showing considerable uncertainty, which is reflected in the comparable probabilities for an above-normal and near-normal season, says NOAA.

2017 Atlantic Tropical Cyclone Names*

Arlene	Harvey	Ophelia
Bret	Irma	Philippe
Cindy	Jose	Rina
Don	Katia	Sean
Emily	Lee	Tammy
Franklin	Maria	Vince
Gert	Nate	Whitney

*Names provided by the World Meteorological Organization

Be prepared: Visit hurricanes.gov and follow @NWS and @NHC_Atlantic on Twitter.

May 25, 2017

“NOAA’s broad range of expertise and resources support the nation with strong science and service before, during and after each storm to protect lives and property and enhance the national economy as we continue building a [Weather-Ready Nation](#),” said Ben Friedman, acting NOAA administrator. “From our expert modelers to our dedicated forecasters and brave crews of our hurricane hunters, we’ll be here to warn the nation every step of the way this hurricane season.”

The [2016 season](#) was the most active since 2012, with 15 named storms, including 7 hurricanes and 4 major hurricanes.

NOAA will update this outlook in early August, just prior to the peak of the season.

NOAA also issued seasonal hurricane outlooks for the eastern Pacific and central Pacific hurricane basins. An 80 percent chance of a near- or above-normal season is predicted for each region. The eastern Pacific outlook also calls for a 70 percent probability of 14 to 20 named storms, of which 6 to 11 are expected to become hurricanes, including 3 to 7 major hurricanes. The central Pacific outlook calls for a 70 percent probability of 5 to 8 tropical cyclones, which includes tropical depressions, tropical storms and hurricanes.

Feature Image: Collage of images from Dominica, which was devastated by Tropical Storm Erika in August 2015.