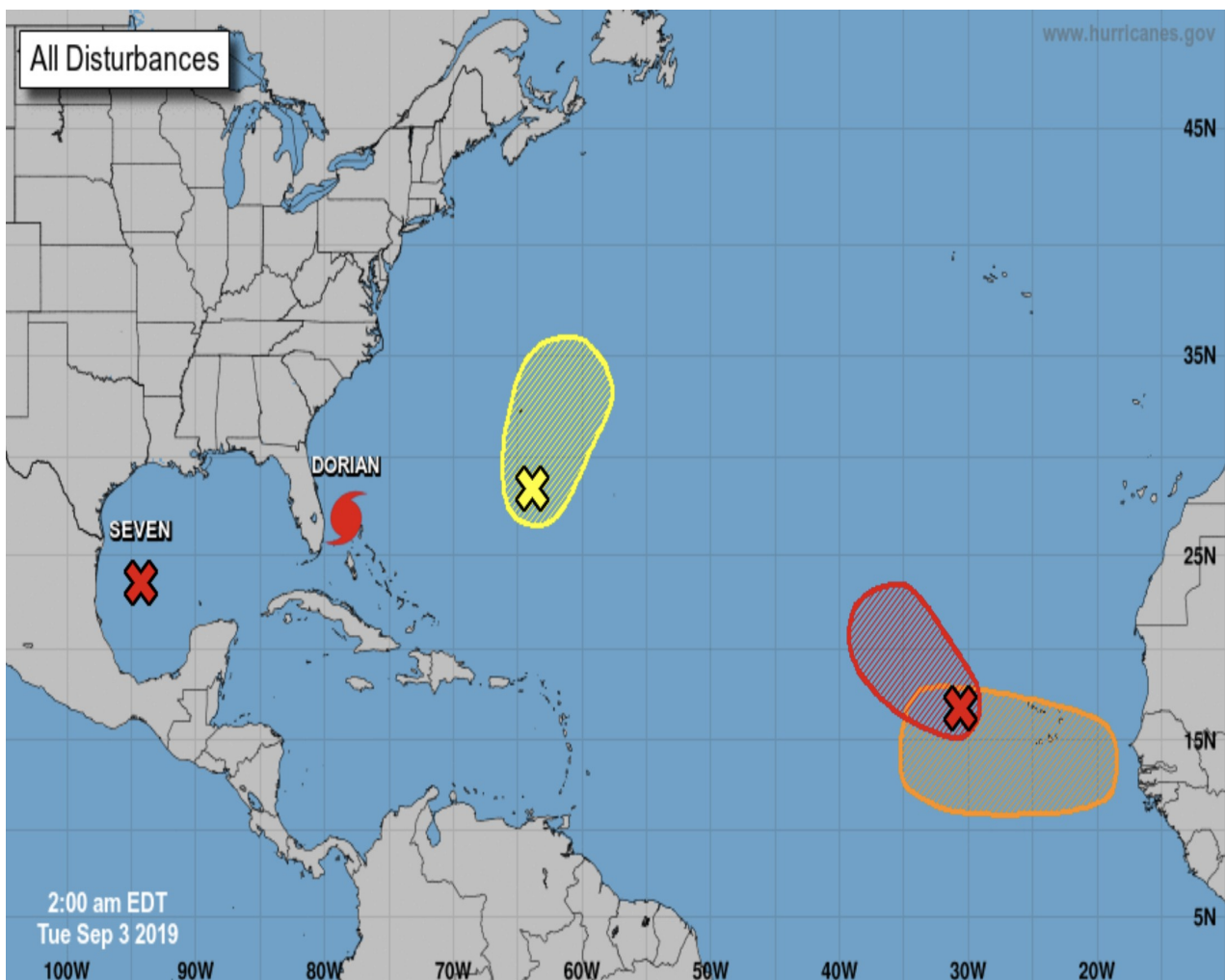


The Virgin Islands Consortium

National Hurricane Center Says New System Headed Toward Caribbean Has 60 Percent Chance Of Development In Coming Days

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The National Hurricane Center said in its 5:00 a.m. advisory on Tuesday that a tropical wave is forecast to emerge over the far eastern tropical Atlantic between Africa and the Cabo Verde Islands in a few days.

The system, whose track has it headed toward the Caribbean islands, is forecast to develop into a tropical depression late this week or over the weekend, as environmental conditions are projected to be conducive, the National Hurricane Center said.

The storm is moving west to west-northwestward, which would take it to the Caribbean islands.

Formation chance for the next 48 hours is low. However, there's a 60 percent chance that the storm will develop in five days, N.H.C. said.

The storms are developing rapidly because the hurricane season is at its peak.

On August 8, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration [increased its forecast](#) for this hurricane season being above normal. Seasonal forecasters with NOAA's Climate Prediction Center increased the likelihood of an above-normal Atlantic hurricane season to 45 percent (up from 30 percent from the outlook issued in May). The likelihood of near-normal activity is now at 35 percent, and the chance of below-normal activity has dropped to 20 percent, NOAA said.

The number of predicted storms is also greater with NOAA expecting 10-17 named storms (winds of 39 mph or greater), of which 5-9 will become hurricanes (winds of 74 mph or greater), including 2-4 major hurricanes (winds of 111 mph or greater). This updated outlook is for the entire six-month hurricane season, which ends Nov. 30.

NOAA also announced that the El Nino in the Pacific Ocean ended in August and neutral conditions have returned. "El Nino typically suppresses Atlantic hurricane activity but now that it's gone, we could see a busier season ahead," said Gerry Bell, Ph.D., lead seasonal hurricane forecaster at NOAA's Climate Prediction Center. "This evolution, combined with the more conducive conditions associated with the ongoing high-activity era for Atlantic hurricanes that began in 1995, increases the likelihood of above-normal activity this year."

On average, the Atlantic hurricane season produces 12 named storms, of which six become hurricanes, including three major hurricanes. NOAA's hurricane season outlook is for overall seasonal activity and is not a landfall forecast. Landfalls are largely determined by short-term weather patterns, which are only predictable within about a week of a storm potentially reaching a coastline.