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2023 Atlantic Hurricane Season Forecast Upgraded to Above Average by CSU Researchers

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Colorado State University researchers are predicting an above-average Atlantic hurricane season for 2023. The updated forecast comes in response to record high sea surface temperatures spanning most of the tropical and subtropical Atlantic, CSU said.

However, the CSU team acknowledged higher than usual uncertainty in their forecast due to conflicting weather signals. The warmer Atlantic waters, combined with an anticipated robust El Niño, create a challenging forecasting scenario, according to CSU. While El Niño events typically increase vertical wind shear that can dismantle forming storms, the unprecedented warmth in the Atlantic may counter some of these effects.

The revised forecast now anticipates 18 named storms, up from 15 predicted in June, along with nine hurricanes and four major hurricanes. Major hurricanes refer to those with a Saffir/Simpson category of 3-5 and sustained winds of 111 miles per hour or more. Notably, this prediction includes a subtropical storm that occurred in January and Tropical Storms Arlene, Bret, and Cindy from June.

For context, long-term seasonal averages typically yield 14 named storms, seven hurricanes, and three major hurricanes. The researchers also warned that the likelihood of a major hurricane making landfall in the United States this year is higher than the long-term average.

The forecast utilizes statistical models which consider 25-40 years of historical hurricane seasons and evaluate conditions including Atlantic sea surface temperatures, sea level pressures, vertical wind shear levels, the presence of El Niño, among other factors.

The next forecast update from CSU will be released on August 3.

This year marks the 40th year of the CSU hurricane research team's Atlantic basin seasonal hurricane forecasts.

The CSU forecast is intended to offer an estimate of the upcoming season's activity and is not an exact prediction. The researchers advise coastal residents to always take proper precautions in preparation for hurricane season.