TRANSCRIPT

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Rebecca (Operator):

Welcome and thank you for [inaudible 00:00:03].

At this time, I would like to inform all participants that today's call is being recorded. If you have any objections, you may disconnect at this time. All participants will remain on a listen-only mode throughout the duration of today's call until the question and answers session. I would now like to turn the call over to John Bateman, you may begin.

John Bateman:

Thanks so much, Rebecca.

Good morning and thank you for joining this monthly climate update call, part of this suite of climate services that NOAA provides to government, business, academia, the media, and the public to support informed decision-making.

I'm John Bateman, with NOAA Communications, and I'll be facilitating the call today. If you have additional questions after the conclusion of today's call, my colleague John Leslie and I can both be reached by email at, and I will spell it, N-E-S-D-I-S dot P-A at N-O-A-A dot gov. That's nesges.pa, as in public affairs, @noaa.gov.

Today's update will feature three short presentations followed by an operator-assisted question and answer session, and a copy of the presentation our speakers will follow can be downloaded from the link in the media advisory. With that, I'll introduce our speakers.

Our first presenter is Karin Gleason, monitoring section chief from NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Information, who will provide a summary of the May 2024 US Global Climate Report, as well as the latest Drought Monitor update.

Our second presenter is Matthew Elliott, warning coordination meteorologist with NOAA's Storm Prediction Center who will review the destructive severe thunderstorms and tornadoes that struck many parts of the US in April and May.

And our third presenter is Johnna Infanti, a meteorologist with NOAA's Climate Prediction Center who will review the latest El Niño, La Niña updates and provide the US temperature, precipitation, and drought outlooks for July, August, and September.

Our first speaker will be Karin Gleason from NOAA NCEI. Karin?

Karin Gleason:

Thank you, John. And good morning, and thanks to all for joining our call today.

Let's begin at slide number two. And we are here, we are looking at global temperature data for May of 2024. We see that the global surface temperature anomaly was 1.18 degrees Celsius or 2.12 degrees Fahrenheit above the 20th century average, making this the warmest May on record by 0.18 degrees Celsius above May 2020. This is the 12th consecutive month of record warm global temperatures. And for the record, the current record warm global temperature streak of 13 months occurred from May of 2015 to May of 2016, so we're one month away from tying that record. Global land-only temperatures for May also ranked warmest on record at 1.63 degrees Celsius or 2.93 degrees Fahrenheit above average. Ocean-only temperatures ranked warmest on record for May at 0.98 degrees Celsius or 1.76 degrees Fahrenheit above average. And for global oceans, this is the 14th consecutive month of record warm temperatures, and the current record warm global ocean temperature streak is 18 months, and that occurred from March of 2015 to August of 2016.

Looking at the temperature departure map on the left, and the corresponding percentiles in the map on the right, we see that temperatures were warmer to much warmer than average across much of the Arctic, the Eastern US, and large parts of Canada, Western Europe, the eastern half of Russia, Southeast Asia, and much of Australia. Record warm temperatures covered large parts of the African continent, Northern China, and Mongolia, areas neighboring the North Sea, and many parts of a region stretching from southern Brazil, northward through most of Mexico.

Cooler than average temperatures, covered areas that included western parts of Russia and Kazakhstan, much of the Western United States and Alaska, and a large parts of Greenland. May temperatures were also cooler than average across portions of Argentina and Chile where a succession of polar air masses brought the strongest cold wave in more than 70 years to parts of Chile.

Across our global oceans, we see record warm sea surface temperatures covered much of the tropical Atlantic and large parts of the Indian Ocean and the Western Equatorial Pacific, as well as portions of the Southwest Pacific and Southern Ocean. Record warm temperatures also occurred in the North Sea and neighboring seas in the North Atlantic.

Positive anomalies also covered large parts of the North Pacific. Record warm temperatures which can be seen in the dark red areas in the percentiles map on the right covered approximately 16.1% of the world's surface this month, which is the highest percentage for May and 11.2% higher than the previous May record in 2016. Near average to cooler than average temperatures covered much of the southeast Pacific, the Southwest Atlantic Ocean, areas of the Southwest Indian Ocean, and parts of the Southern Ocean. And only 0.2% of the world's surface had a record cold May. Looking at continental temperature ranks, Africa was warmest for May, Europe, 3rd warmest, North America, 5th warmest, Oceania was 6th warmest, Asia, 9th warmest, and South America was 11th warmest.

Shifting our attention now to slide number three, we see the March through May temperature departure and percentile maps. This three-month seasonal period is defined as the Northern

Hemisphere's meteorological spring and the Southern Hemisphere's meteorological fall. The March to May global surface temperature was the warmest such period in the 175-year record at 1.29 degrees Celsius above the 20th century average. Looking at the maps, we see that over land temperatures for the season were record warm across most of the Central and Northern South America, Central America, and Mexico, parts of Africa, and a large portion of Europe, China, and Southeast Asia.

Elsewhere, we saw seasonal temperatures much above average across parts of eastern half of Asia, the Eastern US, and Eastern and Northern Canada, as well as much of the Arctic. Areas with seasonal temperatures cooler than average included the western half of the contiguous US, areas of Southeast Greenland, Southern Argentina and Chile, Western areas of Russia, and Northern Kazakhstan, Afghanistan, and parts of neighboring countries, and parts of Australia and the eastern half of Antarctica.

Sea surface temperatures for the March to May period were record warm across much of the tropical Atlantic, eastern tropical Pacific, areas of the Southern Atlantic, and parts of the Indian Ocean and Southwestern Pacific. Areas with seasonal sea surface temperatures cooler than average included the Southeastern Pacific Ocean and parts of the Southern Ocean.

Looking at continental temperatures, we see that South America, Europe and Africa each ranked warmest on record for this period. North America was 3rd warmest, Asia, 4th warmest, and Oceania was 13th warmest.

Shifting our attention now to slide number four, we see the January through May global temperature and anomaly and percentiles map for this five-month period. We see that the global surface temperature ranked warmest in the 175-year record at 1.32 degrees Celsius or 2.38 degrees Fahrenheit above the long-term average, and a widespread, much warmer than average in record warm conditions were present across much of Northern and Central South America, Central America, Southern Mexico, large portions of Africa, Central and Western Europe, and parts of China, as well as Southeast Asia. Widespread areas of warmer to much warmer than average temperatures were present in the Eastern United States and Canada, across much of the Arctic, large parts of Asia, Australia, and Western Antarctica.

Sea surface temperatures for the January to May were above average to record warm across much of the tropical and Northeastern Atlantic Ocean, parts of the Southern Atlantic, much of the Northern, Western, and Equatorial Pacific Ocean, as well as large parts of the Indian Ocean. Sea surface temperatures for this five-month period were near to below average over the Northwestern Atlantic Ocean, the Southwestern Atlantic, the Southeastern Pacific, parts of the Southern Ocean, as well as the Southwestern Indian Ocean.

Looking at the time series plot of the year-to-date temperature anomalies for the 10 warmest years on record, we see that the January to May 2024 year-to-date anomaly value as depicted by the black bar near the top of the graph is the warmest January through May period among the warmest 10 years on record with 2016 coming in second place through May and 2020 rounding out the top three at this point in the calendar year. And according to NCEI's annual temperature ranking outlook statistical analysis as depicted by the bar plot on the bottom of this slide, there is a 50% chance that 2024 will end as the warmest year on record, and 100% chance of a top five warm year.

All right, moving on now to slide number five, zoom in a little closer to home and we see May temperatures across the contiguous US, and they averaged 62.3 degrees Fahrenheit or 2.1 degrees Fahrenheit above the long-term mean, which translates to a ranking of 13th warmest on record. Looking at the temperature ranks map on the left, we see that in general, temperatures were above to much

above average across the eastern half of the United States as well as much of the southern and central plains southwest in California. Florida ranked warmest on record for May.

Precipitation for the month averaged 3.56 inches, which is 65 hundredths of an inch above the long-term mean, which also ranked 13th wettest. Looking at the precipitation map on the right, we can see that precipitation was above average across much of the northern tier, the Great Lakes, the Deep South, the southeast, and portions of the plains in northeast. Below average precipitation was present across portions of the southwest and west. Arizona ranked 12th driest for the month while Kentucky, Tennessee, and Rhode Island each ranked sixth wettest.

Looking now at slide number six, we see the temperature and precipitation ranks for the March to May spring season across the contiguous US. Temperatures averaged 53.7 degrees Fahrenheit, which is 2.8 degrees Fahrenheit above average, which tied with 2016 for a ranking of sixth warmest. Looking at the temperature ranks map on the left, we see that much of the lower 48 was above average during this period with portions of the Northwest, Northern Tier, and Intermountain West experiencing near average temperatures. Arkansas, Kentucky, Ohio, West Virginia, and Virginia each ranked second warmest for the spring season. Precipitation for this three-month period averaged to 9.25 inches, which is 1.32 inches above the long-term mean, which falls in the upper third of the historical distribution, which equates to a ranking of above average. Wetter-than-average conditions were present from approximately Montana to the Great Lakes, and into the Northeast, and from the Deep South to the East Coast. Precipitation was below average across parts of the Northwest and Southwest. Four states across the upper Midwest and Northeast ranked among their top five wettest spring seasons on record.

Looking now at slide number seven, we see temperature and precipitation ranks for the January through May year-to-date period across the contiguous US. Temperatures averaged 46.8 degrees Fahrenheit, which was 3.4 degrees Fahrenheit above average, which is the fifth warmest such year-to-date period on record. Looking at the temperature ranking map on the left, we see that the entire lower 48 was above average during this period with Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine each ranking second-warmest on record with most states from the Deep South to the Northeast ranking among their five warmest such year-to-date periods on record. Precipitation for this year-to-date averaged 14.57 inches, which was 2.19 inches above average. Also in the upper third of the historical distribution, which equates to an above average year-to-date period. Wetter than average conditions were present across much of the west and from the plains to the East Coast.

Several Northeast states ranked among their wettest five such year-to-date periods on record. And now looking at slide number eight, we see the latest confirmed billion-dollar weather and climate disasters, and there have been 11 events identified so far through May, including two winter storm events, four tornado outbreaks, and five severe weather events. The total cost for these events exceeds $25 billion and have resulted in at least 84 fatalities.

And now on slide number nine, we see the latest US drought monitor map, which was released just this morning, and we see that approximately 12% of the contiguous US is currently in drought. And this is down nearly 5% when compared with the out coverage in late April. Drought conditions were nearly eliminated across portions of the upper Midwest, Midwest, and Atlantic coast of Florida, and lessened in intensity across portions of the Northern Rockies. Drought conditions emerged across parts of the mid-Atlantic states, and outside of the contiguous US drought coverage contracted considerably across the Hawaiian islands. And with that, I'll turn the presentation over to Matthew.

Matthew Elliott:

Thanks so much, Karin. And we're moving on to slide 10 now. And thanks, Karin, and thanks, everyone, for being here today.

I'm Matthew Elliott, I'm the warning coordination meteorologist at the NOAA Storm Prediction Center, our SPC, and we're located in Norman, Oklahoma. And today I'm going to talk about the severe weather that occurred across the United States in April and May of this year.

Now while March dominated the 2022 and 2023 spring severe weather seasons with the top two Marches on record for tornadoes the past two years, the 2024 spring severe weather season was most active in April and May, which is really more typical based on what is seen on past years' climatology. The plot shown here on slide 10 are the preliminary local storm reports of tornadoes which are in red, severe wind in blue, and severe hail in green for April and May of 2024.

Now these reports are considered eyewitness reports, and so please keep in mind that there can be multiple eyewitness reports of the same tornado along its path, and that generally after these events, the true tornado counts are not known until the National Weather Service ground surveys are completed in the days following the event. So just something to keep in mind for future events as well.

Now while April was only slightly above the 10-year average, May saw the second most preliminary storm reports on a record. And the combined April through May total was the most since the historic 2011 severe weather season. And you're going to hear that a lot in this talk. The 2011 severe weather season was historic, and what we saw in 2024 is ranked second to the 2011 severe weather season, so quite an impressive past few months.

Now much of this activity was clustered in portions of the Southern and Central Plains, eastward across the middle of Mississippi, Ohio, and Tennessee valleys, with many areas receiving multiple rounds of severe weather over separate days.

So we move on to the next slide on looking to slide 11, and of course, one of the questions we've been fielding a lot over the past few weeks is just how busy has 2024 been so far, and how does 2024 compare to previous years?

And so this plot shows the daily confirmed tornado counts across the United States with years from 1999 to 2024 plotted here. 2024 is shown in red, as well as the mean, which is the solid black line, and then the 90th percentile, which is the dash line. Now these are confirmed tornadoes that have been surveyed by a local national weather service forecast office. And as you can see, 2024 actually started out near our below normal through much of April. And it wasn't until late April, in fact April 26th, where a very favorable severe weather pattern began to develop over the United States. And the tornado count went from below average to well above average in less than a week as you can see there from that late April into that early May timeframe. And then things remain extremely active through the end of May with tornado counts continuing near the 90th percentile.

Now while things have quieted down a bit over the last few weeks in June in terms of tornado counts, this is what we would expect based on climatology. The tornado count is still remaining near the 90th percentile through June 13th. And as of June 13th, 2024 ranks 4th in terms of the number of confirmed tornadoes with at least 984 so far. And then the years that you see on there are years that many of us remember in terms of the historic years for severe weather across the United States.

Flipping over to the next slide on slide number 12, when looking at the historical data from 1950 to present, April 2024 is ranked second with 325 tornadoes and only trails, again, this historic 2011 season. And May 2024 ranked fourth with 476 tornadoes. And you can see the graphic on the right, this shows the geographic distribution in the rating, which are color-coded there, of the 801 confirmed tornadoes from both April and May. Some of the states with the greatest tornado counts include Iowa, Oklahoma, Missouri, Texas, Nebraska, Illinois, and Ohio.

Now, not all the tornadoes were weak. In fact, there were more than 107 tornadoes that were rated EF-2 or stronger, and 29 of those were EF-3 or stronger. We had three EF-4 tornadoes, EF-4 in Marietta

Oklahoma on 27 April, and EF-4 in Barnsall, Oklahoma on May 6th, and EF-4 tornado in Greenfield, Iowa on May 21st. And thus far, there have been 39 direct tornado-related fatalities across the United States. 18 have been in mobile homes, nine in homes, three in vehicles, one outside, one in a permit structure, and seven in unknown location at this time.

Flipping on to slide number 13, in the end, the 801 confirmed tornadoes that have been found in April and May of 2024 is the second most April through May tornadoes on record as you can see in this graphic here. And it only trails again that historic 2011 season. And it really just speaks to how busy we've all been across the weather enterprise over the last few months. And like Karin just said, we've had nine severe weather-related billion-dollar disasters so far. Nine of the eleven are severe weather-related, so it has been very active so far.

Of course, now turning on to slide number 14, everyone wants to know is, what does the historically active spring severe weather season say about the rest of the year? And truthfully, it doesn't say much. There is this little correlation between the active spring and the rest of the year. So instead, what we can do is we can look at the climatology to see what past years might suggest. So shown here on slide 14 again are the plots of the severe weather climatology on the 20th day of each month for meteorological spring on the top row, March through May, and then meteorological summer, June through August, on the bottom row. And so the June plot on the bottom left is the background severe weather climatology for today, June 20th, as you would see based off the past years.

And I've seen these plots, the climatology does suggest that overall severe weather should generally become comparatively less likely through the remainder of the summer. That's just generally how things go. The peak season is generally in March, April, May, and into June. And then as we get through the remainder of the summer, things begin to comparatively begin to come less likely as we shift toward more of damaging wind threat from large-scale collective systems in large hail and away from these large-scale tornado outbreaks that we were seeing in April and May.

Now these plots and others including plots for other days and months, and plots for tornadoes, wind, and hail, climatology's broken down individually are available on our website using that QR code there that you see.

Now, having said all of that, one thing of note is that the forecasted active tropical season by the NOAA Climate Prediction Center may allow for a relatively busier tropical cyclone tornado season if favorable tropical cyclone tornado environments can develop with any landfalling systems. We actually saw this yesterday with Tropical Storm Alberto as it came ashore with at least one reported tornado across the Western Gulf coast in Texas, so it's certainly something we'll be watching very closely.

That's all I have. Next slide.

Johnna Infanti:

Thank you, Matthew. And good morning, everyone. This is Johnna Infanti, meteorologist from the National Service Climate Prediction Center.

I'd like to bring your attention to slide 15 of the presentation, which shows the current sea surface temperature observations and forecast for the El Niño Southern Oscillation, or ENSO. The figure on the left shows the average sea surface temperature anomalies over the last month.

Blue shading in this figure represents areas where sea surface temperatures, or SSTs, are below normal, and the orange to red areas correspond to areas where sea surface temperatures are above normal. The horizontal black line in the center of the plot represents the equator and the vertical black line represents the international date line. The red shading near the center of the map indicates that sea surface temperatures were above average across the West Central Pacific Ocean and around the

maritime continent in the last four weeks. We also see orange red shading over the Atlantic, indicating that the Atlantic Ocean sea surface temperatures were above normal. The blue shading near the equator in the East Central and Eastern Pacific Ocean indicates that near to below normal sea surface temperatures were evident in the last four weeks. Sea surface temperature departures in what is called the Niño 3.4 Region of the tropical Pacific are roughly zero degrees Celsius, meaning that ENSO neutral conditions are currently present.

Looking to the future, La Niña is favored to develop during the July, August, September season. The chart on the right shows the ENSO forecast issued June 2024 through January, February, March 2025. This chart indicates the probability of La Niña shown with the blue bars, neutral conditions shown with the gray bars or El Niño shown with red bars for sea surface temperatures in the Niño 3.4 Region for each season.

La Niña is favored to develop during July, August, September with about a 65% chance, and persist into the Northern Hemisphere winter '24, '25, and with about an 85% chance during November, December, January.

Shifting now to slide 16, which shows our monthly outlooks for the month of July. These outlooks represent the probability of the mean temperature or total precipitation for the month will be below, near, or above normal. The red and orange shading on the map to the left indicates areas where above normal temperatures are the most likely outcome while any blue shading indicates areas where below normal temperatures are most likely. For precipitation, green shading indicates areas where above normal precipitation is most likely, and brown shading indicates areas where below normal precipitation is most likely.

Looking at the map on the left, the red and orange areas covering much of the US indicate that above normal temperatures are broadly favored for the month of July. The mid-Atlantic is expected to begin July under strong mid-level ridging and with below normal soil moisture anomalies which should lead to above normal temperatures in the region which increased probabilities there. Above normal temperatures are also likely over the Rockies associated with bridging later in July.

In the Pacific Northwest, equal chances of above, near, and below normal temperatures are forecast due to expected trapping to begin the month of July. And over coastal California, equal chances are also favored due to below normal coastal SSTs, leading to the possibility of an enhanced sea breeze.

For Alaska, the temperature outlook is for elevated odds of below normal temperatures over the southwest mainland and the Aleutians where coastal SSTs are below normal and height anomalies indicate the presence of northwesterly flow. Above normal temperatures are favored along the eastern portions of the north slope, supported by long-term trends in that region.

Now turning to precipitation and the map on the right, below normal precipitation is favored over much of the northern two-thirds of the US, owing to expected bridging and due to model agreement in some of our forecasts, and below normal probabilities extend eastward and are centered over the Ohio Valley and Intermountain West in agreement with the temperature outlook, the expected placement of bridging, and dry soil conditions in the east.

Over the desert southwest, most dynamical guidance is forecasting a weaker southwest monsoon, leading to enhanced the low normal probabilities there. Above normal precipitation is favored along the Gulf coast states as forecast by most dynamical models and supported by the expected above normal tropical cyclone activity forecast this year.

Finally, above normal precipitation is favored over most of Alaska with the exception of the southern coast where offshore flow may dominate.

And now looking ahead to the three-month period from July through September 2024, I'd like to bring your attention to slide 17. These outlooks represent the probabilities of the mean temperature or total precipitation for this season will be below, near, or above normal. During this period, the potential for early impacts from La Niña due to the forecasted transition from ENSO-neutral to La Niña state are considered as are statistical and dynamical models, coastal sea surface temperature anomalies, and soil moisture. The July, August, September 2024, temperature outlook favors above normal temperatures show [inaudible 00:28:45] red and orange shading for Northeastern Alaska and much of the lower 48 with the exception of the West Coast where equal chances of above, near, and below normal temperatures are indicated. Below normal temperatures are forecast with the blue shading over Southwestern Alaska.

The highest probabilities of above normal temperatures reaching 70% to 80% are over parts of the four corners region where there were strong model agreement, the decadal temperature trend is above normal, and there are favored odds of below normal precipitation for the season. Above normal temperature probabilities are also enhanced along the extreme Gulf Coast, reaching 60% to 70%, going to strongly positive SFC anomalies in the Gulf of Mexico and around Florida, and enhanced probability is reaching 50% to 60% are favored along the eastern seaboard into New England and parts of the Eastern Great Lakes due to model agreement, warm coastal SSTs, and above normal decadal temperature trends over New England. Equal chances of above, near, and below normal temperatures are favored over the West Coast given, cooler SST anomalies, again, leading to an enhanced sea breeze, and the potential for early impacts of La Niña over the Pacific Northwest as the July, August, September season progresses.

Sea surface temperatures are anomalously cold along the southern and western coast of Alaska, leading to its slight tilt towards below normal temperatures over the southwestern part of the state, which is also coincident with early expected La Niña teleconnections and probabilities transition toward above normal toward the northeastern part of Alaska, given dynamical model forecast.

The July, August, September 2024 precipitation outlook in the figure on the right favors below normal precipitation over parts of the Western and Central US, though chances of above, near, and below normal precipitation are indicated over the climatologically drier regions of the Southern West Coast and parts of Western Nevada, and over the Pacific Northwest, where model forecasts were weak or inconsistent.

50% to 60% chances of below normal precipitation are favored over Eastern Arizona, Western New Mexico, and parts of the four corners region where dynamical model agreement was strongest and in agreement with early impacts of La Niña for some of those regions. It had probabilities for above normal precipitation are depicted over the southeast and along the eastern seaboard into New England with the highest probabilities reaching 50% to 60% over the coastal Gulf states, Florida and coastal South Carolina, owing to a forecast in above normal hurricane season and given early impacts of La Niña. Probabilities remain enhanced, reaching 40% to 50% along the East Coast into coastal New England given the chance for continued storminess continuing along the coast.

And finally, turning to the drought outlook on slide 18... The brown areas on the map indicate where drought is currently ongoing and expected to continue, yellow shading on the map indicates areas in which drought development is likely, tan shading indicates areas where drought is predicted to remain but improve, and finally, green shading indicates areas where drought removal is likely. The seasonal drought outlook for July, August, September 2024 favors persistence in drought development likely across northern portions of the west due to predicted below normal precipitation and above normal temperatures across much of the area, as well as it being a climatologically dry time of year drought. Drought persistence and development are also forecast for the Southwest, Central, and Southern Plains

due to forecast below normal precipitation and above normal temperatures across much of the region, and parts of the Southwest also enter their climatologically wet or monsoon season.

However, uncertainty remains greatest across portions of this region due to the sporadic nature of thunderstorm activity during the monsoon season. Areas not seeing precipitation will likely experience degrading or extending drought conditions. Drought development is likely across parts of the Ohio Valley due to lack of wet signals and the precipitation outlook, coupled with above normal temperatures over the region, and drought removal is likely for the Florida Peninsula with forecasts above normal precipitation outlooks.

Drought removal is also likely for the existing moderate drought along the coastal Atlantic regions due to favorable precipitation outlooks across the areas for the July, August, September season.

Alaska is likely to remain drought-free due to the favorable precipitation outlooks for July, and July, August, September. And for Hawaii, drought persistence of forecast with drought development likely along the leeward sides of the islands, given predicted below normal precipitation, the anticipated dryness, and it being a climatologically dry time of year, as well as the potential for a transition toward La Niña conditions.

Conversely, anticipated wet conditions, very wet precipitation outlooks for July, and July, August, September, and the potential for tropical activity are likely to keep Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands drought-free through the end of September.

And that is it from the Climate Prediction Center, and back to you, John.

John Bateman:

Thanks so much, Johnna.

We will now take specific questions from the call participants. Please be sure to identify who you'd like to answer the question, if possible.

And Rebecca, could you please remind the call participants how they can ask a question, and then please queue up the first question?

Rebecca (Operator):

Absolutely.

So we'll now begin our question and answer session. If you would like to ask a question, press star one from your phone, [inaudible 00:33:57] and record your first and last name clearly once you're prompted. If you would like [inaudible 00:34:03] question, press star two. Just a moment while we wait for questions to queue.

Our first question comes from Seth Borenstein, your line is now open.

Seth Borenstein:

Yes, thank you for doing this. It's Seth Borenstein at the Associated Press. I believe this would be for Johnna, going back to slide 15 and sea surface temperatures.

We've been told in the past, especially when it comes to the non-ENSO part of sea surface temperatures, especially the Atlantic, which have been unusual for the past year and four months or so, that the key above normal season would be about March, April, May-ish, or March, April-ish, and that by May, June, especially in the Atlantic, sort of this weird thing that's been happening for the last year and a half, pre-El Niño, will either die down or we realize we have something else going on. I know that's

very vague-sounding, but what is happening with the Atlantic? Are we seeing any easing of the high anomalies, of SST anomalies, especially in the North Atlantic, but just the general Atlantic? And if not, what's going on?

Johnna Infanti:

I can partially answer that question, but actually, Karin might be able to talk a little bit more about some of the SSTs more recently in the Atlantic.

So if you take a look at some of our forecasts, we don't typically forecast for SSTs specifically in the Atlantic, but let me just take a look here. I believe that it's forecast to remain above normal at least for the next couple seasons.

Karin, do you potentially have anything to add about the Atlantic SSTs at all?

Karin Gleason:

Yes, Johnna.

Hi, this is Karin Gleason with NCEI. To take us back closer to the beginning of the presentation, if we look at slides two, three, and four, we're looking at March through May and January through May anomalies as well as percentile values, and I'd like to zero in and kind of focus on the percentile maps, which are the maps that are on the right-hand side of those three slides. If we look at May, and we look at the record warm areas which are denoted by that darkest shade of red, we see that it's concentrated off the northeast coast of South America and just right along the Central Atlantic near the equator. If you go to slide number three and kind of toggle back and forth between May, and then March to May, which is the three-month season, we see an expansion if we go back and look at March through May.

So in general, that's telling me a little bit that at least for the month of May, as compared to April and March, that that area a record warm temperatures has likely decreased in its footprint.

And then if you scroll to slide number four again, you can kind of go back and forth between slides two, three, and four. In this case, it's not on the right, it's on the left because it's the year-to-date map. We see that for the first five months of 2024, that area of record warm temperatures is extensive. It's not just... It's from the western parts of the Central Atlantic, throughout all of the Central Atlantic and into the Northeast Atlantic.

So I think just from a qualitative standpoint, it's somewhat clear that that footprint of record warm temperatures has condensed inside, the footprint has shrunk, but even in May, it's still a large of record warm temperatures. And so this is one area that I know we're looking at at NCI to see if that continues to shrink, if it maintains, and I don't really know the tendencies, I am not an expert in sea surface temperatures, but just from an observational standpoint, it does appear that we're seeing, like I said, a smaller footprint in more recent months compared to the seasonal or the year-to-date maps that we have showing the record warm areas of the Atlantic. So I hope that's helpful.

Seth Borenstein:

Yes, it is. Thank you very much.

Rebecca (Operator):

Our next question comes from James Rigney, your line is now open.

James Rigney:

Hi, this is James Rigney from the Seacoast Echo. My question regards the CPC monthly outlook for July, and specifically regarding the likely wetter than normal conditions expected for the Central Gulf Coast in Florida. And I see that's expected both for July and July through September. You mentioned that at least one driver was the expected, very active tropical season. And I would expect that to be true for the July, August, September, but in terms of the month of July, where you're expecting wetter than normal conditions, is that because CPC expects July for there to be above normal tropical disturbances in the Gulf? Or is it... You also mentioned an early impact of La Niña. So could you unpack that above normal expectation for precipitation on the Gulf Coast and in Florida specifically for July?

Johnna Infanti:

Sure, yes. So in general, we have predicted an above average tropical cyclone season, as you know. So that does impact the July, August, September season, which is leading to some of the increased precipitation for the season as a whole.

In terms of the monthly outlook, so that is a little bit earlier than the hurricane season would typically be slated to start, by definition, but we could expect some earlier storminess to be in play during some towards the end of July, as well as throughout the month, which can increase some of the precipitation totals along the region. And in this particular outlook, what we're showing is the chance for above normal precipitation, not necessarily anything about extreme precipitation, just that precipitation will be in the upper tercile compared to, or the upper part of normal compared to a 1991 to 2020 climatology. And so we could have a little bit some early storminess that's related to the more active hurricane season.

What we could also potentially see is, as the La Niña is sort of transitioning, and we're moving into that La Niña season, we might see some increased precipitation as well just due to the way that La Niña impacts the climate signals over the United States. Did that answer your question? It's kind of both. It's really the [inaudible 00:42:23].

James Rigney:

Okay.

So do you know... Is there a correlation, is the above normal precipitation that we would see in the Southeast in when La Niña begins in the late summer, early fall, and I don't know how often, that's the onset for La Niña. Is that mostly because of increased tropical activity or is there some other larger synoptic or larger pattern apart from disturbances in the tropics that would contribute to above normal precip in the southeast?

Johnna Infanti:

So a typical La Niña influence is that we can see more hurricanes over the southeast. This is kind of an interesting time period because we are transitioning from ENSO-neutral into La Niña, so I'd say the main driver is for the forecast, at least in that region, does have to do with the fact that we're transitioning into La Niña, but one of the other things is that we also have these really anomalously warm sea surface temperatures surrounding Florida and in the Gulf of Mexico, which can also add to that increased hurricane forecast at least for the region, but La Niña is one of the key players.

In terms of the hurricane forecast, if you do have further questions, I might not be the best person to ask, but I can get you in touch with Matt Rosencrans from CPC, who would be able to answer a lot more questions about the hurricane outlook. So if you do follow-ups there, I am more than happy to get you in touch with him.

James Rigney:

Okay, thank you.

Johnna Infanti:

Yep.

Rebecca (Operator):

Question comes from Lucy Albert, your line is now open.

Lucy Albert:

Hi, thanks for taking my question for Johnna, I believe, about slide 16 and 17. These orange or red maps covering almost all of the US, just how unusual are they? And can you give a sense maybe of scale or like a comparison with previous summer forecasts? For example, does it mean a particularly hot summer in the US? Could you just qualify it, also given the current heat wave in the US? Thank you.

Johnna Infanti:

Yeah, so our outlooks are probabilistic. And what they show is they indicate if either the monthly average or the three-month average temperatures or precipitation, depending on what map you're looking at, will be in what we refer to as the upper third of the climatological distribution. So what that means is that these maps are showing the probability that the temperature or precipitation will be near, below, or above average for the season in question. So they don't really show the actual forecasted value here because average can change, depending on what region of the US you're looking at. So for example, the average temperature in, say the East Coast would be like 80 to 85, depending on the southern part of the East Coast, like over the Carolinas, whereas if you're looking in the Pacific Northwest, that average temperature from 1991 to 2020 would be a different value. So it's hard to quantify for the entire US because that value can change as dependent on region.

Essentially what you would see here is that, in the forecast for these regions that we have higher probabilities, what we're showing is that we have greater confidence that the temperatures will be higher than that normal. So depending on the region, if your normal is, say 85, something like that, for the season, we have confidence that the temperature will be higher than that.

One thing to note though is that the outlooks don't show whether the season or the month will have any extremes or records broken, they're just showing that the temperatures could be in that upper part of the climatological distribution or above normal. So we're not really saying anything about records or extremes in these particular outlooks. So to put that more into context with some of the other summers, what we're predicting is generally that much of the US, except in a few places, are forecast to be above normal, but we are not showing anything necessarily about the extremes of this particular season or month that we're predicting. Did that answer your question?

Lucy Albert:

Yeah, thank you.

Johnna Infanti:

Yep, no problem.

Rebecca (Operator):

No more questions in queue at this time.

John Bateman:

All right. Thanks so much, Rebecca.

If there are no further questions, then I will wrap this call up. First, I want to thank all of our speakers for their time, and to everyone else for participating in this conference call. I will end by reminding everyone to mark their calendars for a few upcoming events. The release of the June 2024 US Climate Report and Billion Dollar Disaster summary is scheduled for July 9th. The release of the June 2024 Global Climate Report is scheduled for July 12th, and our monthly media climate call will be held next month on July 18th.

Lastly, an audio file. This call will be posted on the NOAA.gov media advisory site later today. If you have any other informational needs, please feel free to email me, John Bateman. My contact information is available at the top of the media advisory. Thank you.

Rebecca (Operator):

Thank you for your participation in today's conference. All parties may disconnect it this time. Leaders, please stand by.