

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

# ImpactWeather's 2012 Atlantic Hurricane Pre-Season Outlook

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**Houston, April 30, 2012** – A significant change to the weather pattern this year is evident when compared to last, which will likely have huge effects on the tropical season forecast. First, over the Pacific Ocean the current La Niña pattern has quickly faded away and will likely be followed by a weak El Niño by the middle to latter part of summer. Remember that El Niño's tend to create higher wind shear and decreased favorability for tropical cyclone development over the Atlantic Basin. La Niña's have the reverse effect by producing less wind shear and typically more favorable conditions for tropical development. The last two hurricane seasons were considered La Niña years, with both seasons registering 19 named storms. Secondly, we're noticing considerably cooler water over the Tropical Atlantic and Caribbean Sea compared to this time last year, thanks in large part to stronger trade winds over the Tropical Atlantic, which has resulted in more upwelling of cooler water off the west coast of Africa. This cooler than normal water has spread across a vast part of the Tropical Atlantic westward into the Caribbean Sea resulting in near to slightly below normal water temperature, which is a complete reversal compared to the last two years at this time when water temperatures were well above normal.

The combination of a potential developing El Niño later this summer and significantly cooler water over the Atlantic Tropical Basin compared to the last two seasons will likely result in a significant reduction in the number of tropical cyclones for the upcoming hurricane season. Even though the number of named tropical cyclones will likely be reduced this season does not imply the Gulf Coast or Atlantic Seaboard will be spared from a tropical cyclone strike. Note that some of our more notable storms affecting the U.S. occurred during El Niño seasons, including Hurricane Andrew (1992 Florida/Louisiana) and Hurricane Alicia (1983 Texas).

**Our Forecast:** Based on the current and projected weather information we are forecasting a significant reduction in the number of named storms this season due to a less favorable environment. Current and projected climate trends over the Lower 48 this season will also be key in identifying where we think the greatest likelihood of a landfall strike will occur over the Atlantic & Gulf Coasts (see below). Here's our preliminary forecast for this season followed by ImpactWeather's seasonal HSI (hurricane severity index) outlook.

#Named Storms	# of Total Hurricanes	# of Major Hurricanes (Category 3 and above)
10	5	2

**Hurricane Severity Index:** After the devastating 2005 hurricane season, ImpactWeather developed a new hurricane scale that takes into account both the intensity and the wind field size of a tropical storm or hurricane. We call this new scale the Hurricane Severity Index (HSI). The HSI is a 50-point scale, allowing for up to 25 points for a tropical cyclones maximum sustained wind and up to 25 points for the size of the wind field. Based on the environment for development in 2012, we have made some estimates of the peak HSI for this season's tropical cyclones.

Peak HSI < 10	Peak HSI 10-20	Peak HSI 21-25	Peak HSI 26-30	Peak HSI 31-35	Peak HSI 36-40	Peak HSI > 40
5	3	1	1	0	0	0

For further information on our Hurricane Severity Index, please see <http://felix.impactweather.com/hsi/hsi.pdf>.

cont'd.

Since we're forecasting a lower number of named tropical cyclones this hurricane season, the risk for a landfall strike anywhere along the coast from the Caribbean Sea through the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Seaboard will be lower than normal. Even with the lower risk compared to normal for this hurricane season, we have identified a few areas of potential concern for the upcoming hurricane season based on projected weather patterns over the Atlantic Basin and the U.S. We'll also stress that confidence this far out remains very low considering we're still trying to decipher the overall flow pattern for the season. Based on this information we're currently calling for an elevated area of concern for the upcoming season over the north-central Gulf Coast from southeast Texas to the Florida Panhandle and across south Florida.



Meteorologists: Chris Hebert / Fred Schmude

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The latest insights into this year's forecast will be presented at the **23rd Annual Hurricane Seminar for Business and Industry** along with case studies from business and industry. Details at [hurricanseminar.com](http://hurricanseminar.com).

