



National Weather Service Boise, Idaho

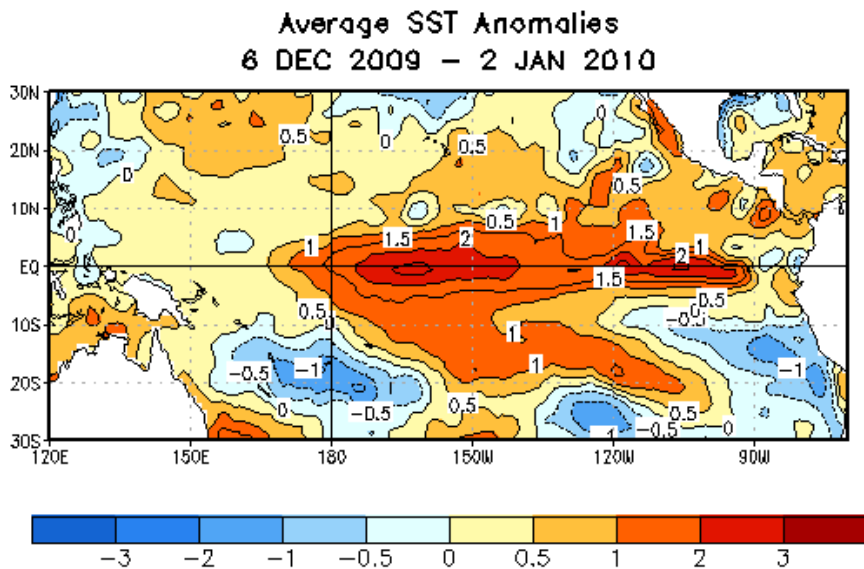
Sage Winds

January, 2010

<http://weather.gov/boise/>

El Niño Update

El Niño is expected to continue at least into the Northern Hemisphere spring 2010. The December weather pattern across North America was very much uncharacteristic of El Niño. However the January weather



pattern shifted significantly. Where December saw cold temperatures and much snow across the northern tier of states, January saw the weather pattern shift southward. California, Arizona and points east saw significant rain and snow as a series of strong storms moved east.

The above chart shows sea surface temperature departure from normal for December 2009. Mexico is in the upper right, South America is on the right, and Australia in the lower left. The significantly above normal temperatures along the equator east of the date line is the classic signature of El Niño.

The latest computer models indicate that these temperatures will remain above normal into the late spring of 2010.

The most recent El Niño update from the NOAA Climate Prediction Center can always be found at...

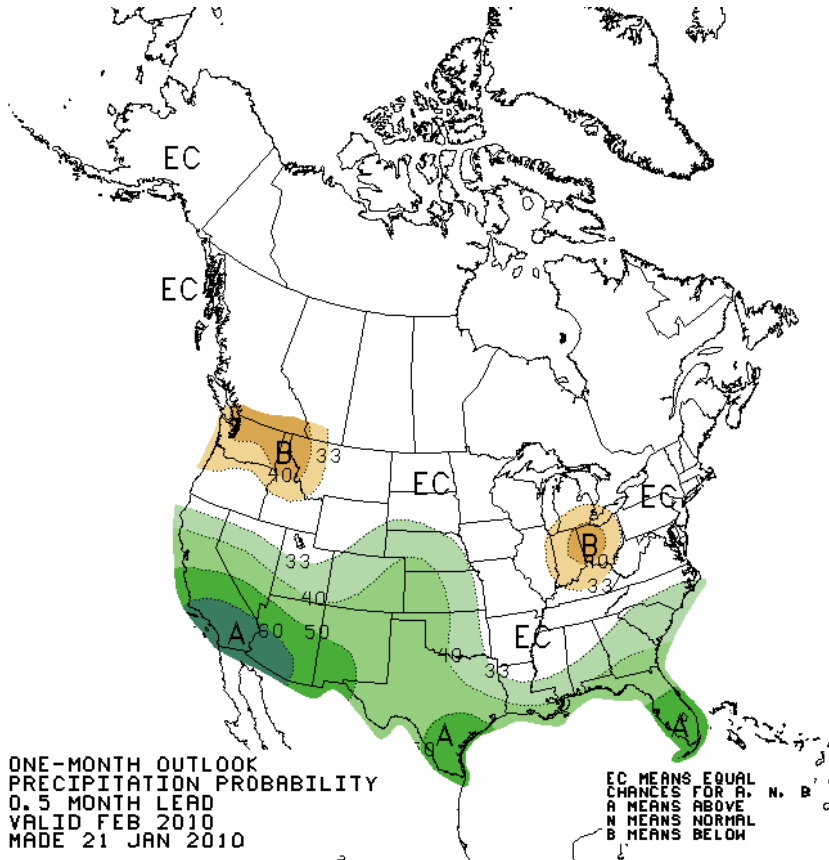
http://www.cpc.noaa.gov/products/analysis_monitoring/enso_advisory/ensodisc.html

February Weather Outlook

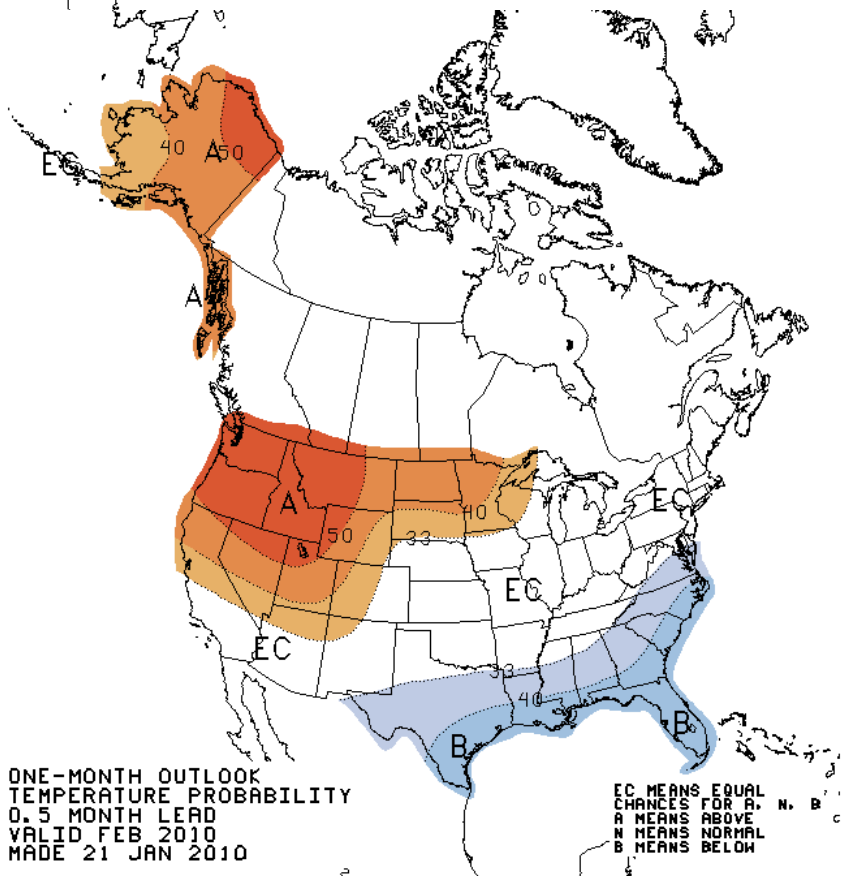
The chart on the left shows the February Precipitation forecast issued by the NOAA Climate Prediction Center (CPC).

<http://www.cpc.noaa.gov/index.php>

This chart shows a forecast with strong confidence that precipitation will be above normal across southern California eastward into southern Florida. Precipitation across the normal tier of the United States is expected to be near normal or in the case of the Pacific Northwest and the Ohio Valley, below normal.



The chart on the right shows the CPC February Temperature forecast. There is significant confidence that temperatures in the Pacific Northwest (including Idaho) will be above normal. There is also significant confidence in below normal temperatures in the southeast stretching from southern Texas northeast to the North Carolina coast.



Severe Winter Weather Hits UK

Recent UK weather made global headlines, as bouts of heavy snow and anomalously cold conditions helped ring in the New Year. Prevailing winds, typically from the south and west, shifted in mid-December; allowing arctic air to filter into the area. This pattern shift has been attributed to a fluctuation in the Arctic Oscillation (now strongly negative) and an associated blocking pattern over the North Atlantic. (http://www.cpc.noaa.gov/products/precip/CWlink/daily_ao_index/ao.shtml)

In late December, north winds picked up moisture over the North Sea; which eventually brought below normal temperatures and several rounds of heavy snow. With a fresh snowpack already in place and arctic air streaming in from the north and east, early January temperatures plummeted even further. Several stations reported temperatures near or below 0° F, which is quite the departure from January “normals” for the region. (Average regional high temperatures for January : 41-43°F. Average regional low temperatures for January: 31-32°F.) The sub-zero temperatures and heavy snowfall wreaked havoc throughout the area. Impacts included widespread school closures, transportation delays, power outages, gas shortages, injury, and even loss of life.

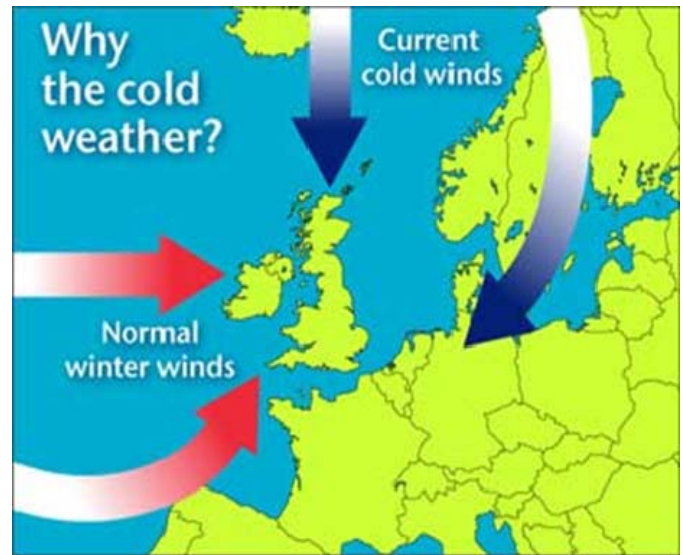


Figure 1. Map of northern Europe contrasting the current prevailing winds (north & east) with the warmer, milder west and southwest winds typically seen during the winter season. (Image courtesy of <http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/>)

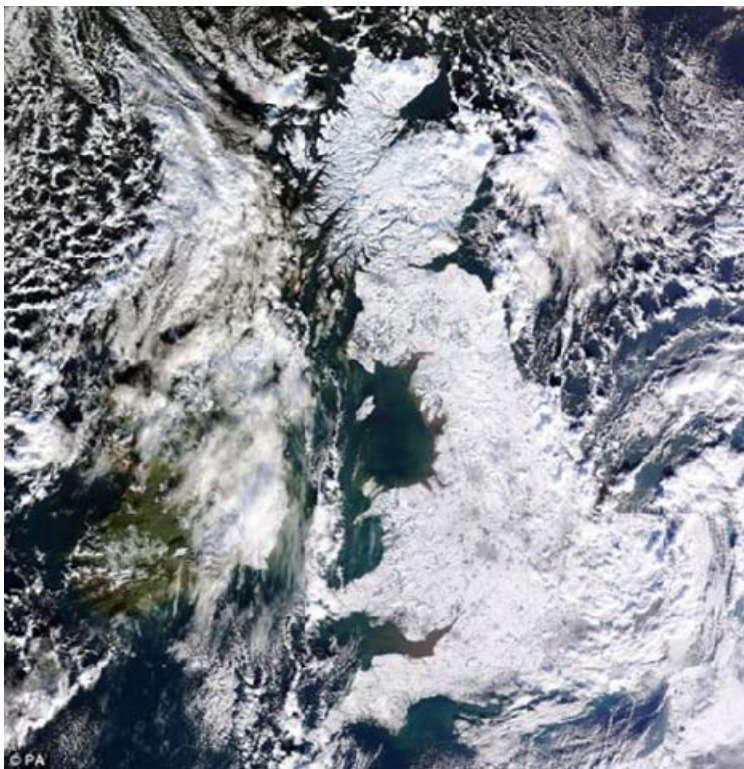


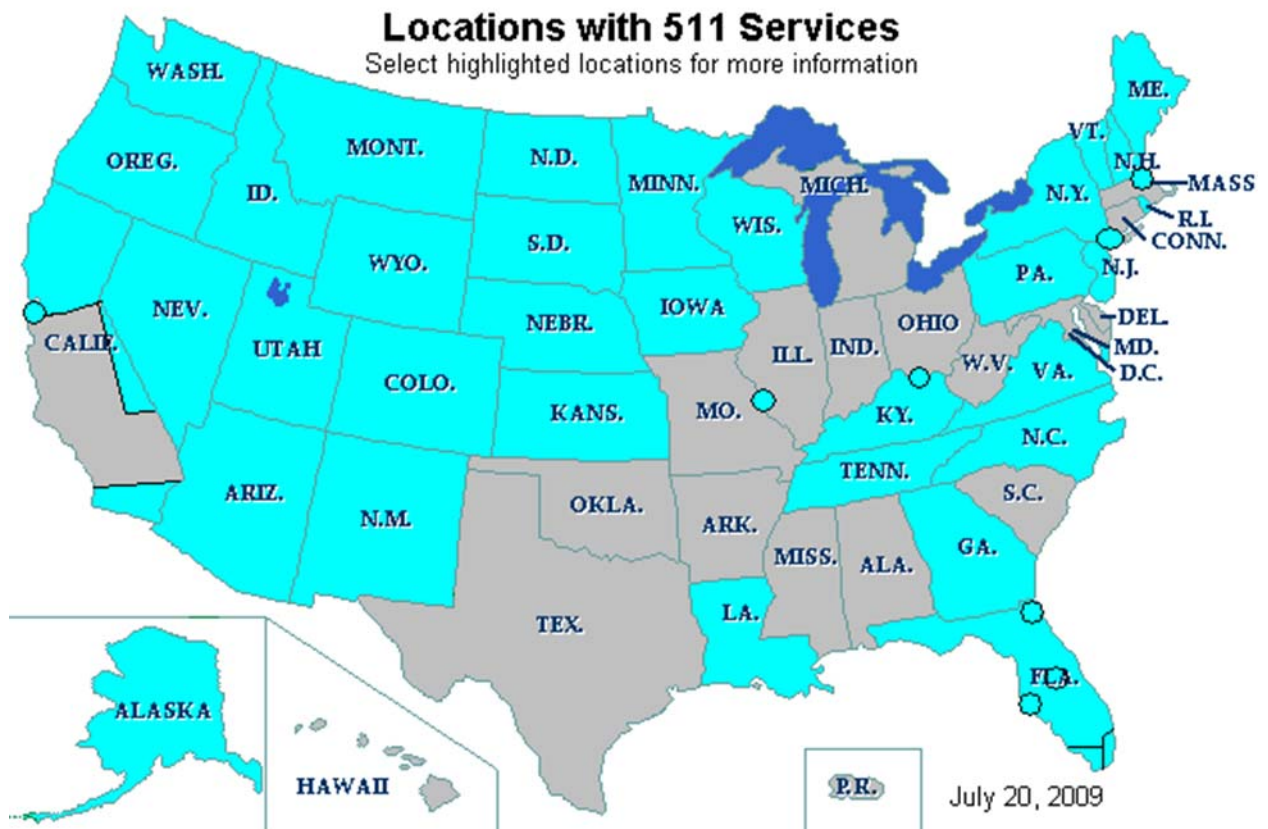
Figure 2. Visible satellite imagery showing widespread snow cover across the British Isles on January 7, 2010. (Image courtesy of NASA – MODIS.)

(All weather and climate information courtesy of the UK Met Office: <http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/>. To learn more about the Arctic Oscillation (AO) and its current state, visit NOAA’s Climate Prediction Center (CPC) website at <http://www.cpc.noaa.gov/>.)

Winter Travel Tips

- Plan your travel, selecting both primary and alternate routes.
- Let someone know your travel routes and itinerary so that, if you don't arrive on time, officials will know where to search for you.
- Check latest weather information on your radio. *(or by visiting www.weather.gov)*
- Try not to travel alone - two or three people are preferable.
- Travel in convoy (with another vehicle) if possible.
- Drive carefully and defensively. Watch for ice patches on bridges and overpasses.
- Take note of your odometer and coordinate it with exit numbers, mileposts, or crossroads so if you are in a crash or slide off the road you'll better be able to identify where you are and summon law enforcement officers, rescue workers, or tow truck operators more quickly to your location.
- If a storm begins to be too much for you to handle, seek refuge immediately.
- If your car should become disabled, stay with the vehicle, running your engine and heater for short intervals. Be sure to "crack" a window in the vehicle to avoid carbon monoxide build-up.

An excellent resource that we use here in the office is the Idaho Transportation Department website (<http://511.idaho.gov/>). Many states have a "511" phone service for road conditions, which is especially helpful here in the Intermountain West where many roads can easily become impassible. Here is a graphic of states where this service is available.



Weather in the News

- Vancouver, Canada 2010 Winter Olympics, will there be enough snow?
http://nbcsports.msnbc.com/id/34964456/ns/sports-olympic_sports/
[http://www.usatoday.com/weather/news/2010-01-28-olympics-snow_N.htm?csp=34&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed:+usatoday-WeatherTopStories+\(Weather+-+Top+Stories\)](http://www.usatoday.com/weather/news/2010-01-28-olympics-snow_N.htm?csp=34&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed:+usatoday-WeatherTopStories+(Weather+-+Top+Stories))
- Images from the recent California/Arizona winter storms—
http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/34963690/ns/news-picture_stories/displaymode/1247/beginSlide/1/beginChapter/1/beginTab/1/
- Highest recorded wind gust is no longer a Mount Washington, New Hampshire record—
<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/35084480/ns/weather/>
- Do you enjoy watching waves? They may be getting bigger.—
http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/35079332/ns/us_news-environment/
- NOAA Satellite helps to rescue people—
http://www.noaaneews.noaa.gov/stories2010/20100115_sarsat.html

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