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Is Florida in cone of danger?

Two favorable conditions are emerging that may steer away the hurricanes

BY **KEN KAYE** | Staff writer

The heart of the hurricane season's about a month away, a time when Florida usually feels like it's in the cross hairs.

But this year two atmospheric signs could work in the state's favor.

One is a cool pool of water in the northeast Atlantic that could potentially suppress storms. The other is an expanding warm pool of water in the tropical Atlantic that could possibly steer systems north of Florida.

Don't let your guard down yet, however. Other conditions that also help determine the number, strength and direction of storms are still gelling, said Stanley Goldenberg, a research meteorologist with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

For now, most forecast teams call for an active year. NOAA, for instance, predicts up to 20 named storms, including 11 hurricanes, while the average season sees 12 storms, six hurricanes.

Already, two tropical storms have emerged. On Saturday, the National Hurricane Center was monitoring a tropical wave in the eastern Atlantic.

And if the season ends up being "hyperactive," the odds of a hurricane striking the U.S. coastline increase "significantly," Goldenberg said. Forecasters will know more by early August when "the climate factors are there. You take a huge piece of uncertainty out of the puzzle."

Delray eyeing major facelift

Upscale complex could be city's southern gateway

BY **MARIA HERRERA**
Staff writer

Delray Beach's southern entrance could soon become a grand gateway, reflecting the wishes of a sophisticated group of residents who dream of converting an impersonal patch on South Federal Highway into the city's next shopping and dining destination.

The developers of Delray Place, an upscale shopping center proposed for the southeast corner of Linton Boulevard and Federal Highway, believe they have what residents want. They plan to provide the digs for the shops and the restaurants.

Throw in the rumor of another Trader Joe's in the area, and the corner shops may become the corner shoppes.

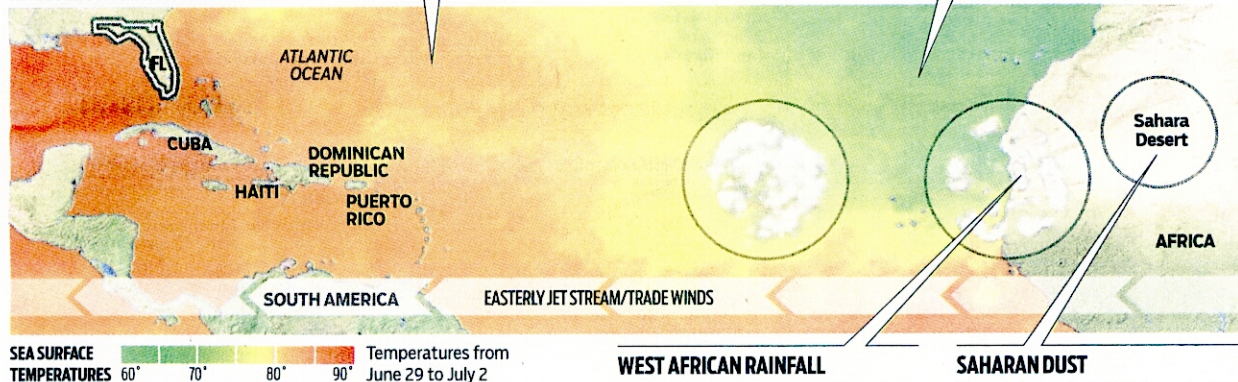
"We're starting to see upscale restaurants and this will be a way for

See **DELRAY, 7A**

Details of the atmospheric factors at play, 7A

Seasonal factors influencing 2013 hurricane formations

Current and evolving conditions across the Atlantic Ocean



SOURCES: National Hurricane Center; NOAA

KEN KAYE/RESEARCH CINDY JONES-HULFACHOR/STAFF GRAPHIC

2 big storm season signs could work in our favor

By KEN KAYE
Staff writer

Most forecast teams call for an extremely active storm season in 2013. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, for example, predicts up to 20 named storms, including 11 hurricanes, while the average season sees 12 storms, six hurricanes.

Many atmospheric factors have a hand in determining the number, strength and direction of storms during hurricane season. Among them:

Cool pool

If a cool pool of water northwest of Africa filters into the main tropical development region, it could potentially hamper storm formation, said Colorado State University climatologist Phil Klotzbach. Cooler waters also remain near the equator and in the western Atlantic.

"I'd say we're still on pace for an active season. But we're going to be watching those cool anomalies closely," he said. "We might have to lower our forecast [18 storms, nine hurricanes] in early August."

Cooler waters could lower the overall temperature of the tropical Atlantic and deprive systems of their primary fuel source: heat.

Warm pool

Each year, a warm pool of water typically forms in the tropical development region of the Atlantic. However, this year, it's expanding beyond its normal boundaries, said Chunzai Wang, a NOAA oceanographer.

That reduces the odds of some hurricanes hitting the southeast United States and increases the chances of it heading toward the Northeast, he said. "It will pull hurricanes more northward, over open water or

toward New York," he said.

Primarily, the pool influences the path of hurricanes that form in the eastern Atlantic. The warm water acts to weaken pressures above it, allowing the storms to turn north, said Robert Atlas, director of NOAA's Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory in Miami.

The warm pool has little influence on storms that form in the western Atlantic, the Caribbean, or the Gulf of Mexico, he said. But it potentially could create more hurricanes if it heats up beyond normal temperatures, giving tropical disturbances fuel to grow.

Bermuda High

Generally centered over the western Atlantic, the Bermuda High is one of the primary atmospheric features that determines where storms head during the heart of the season.

If it's strong, particularly on its western side, storms are more likely to aim toward Florida. If that side is weak, storms turn north. Klotzbach said it's hard to gauge now how strong the Bermuda High will be in August through October, when the most powerful hurricanes form near Africa.

"Just because the sea level pressures are high in one month doesn't say much about the following month," he said.

El Niño

The atmospheric pattern known to suppress storm formation is not expected to arise soon.

El Niño, which forms when the eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean is abnormally warm, acts to create strong wind shear. Without El Niño, wind shear this year likely will be weak, which could allow more storms to form.

"The large majority of the

Already, two tropical storms have emerged; one of which, Andrea, hit the northwest corner of the state.

El Niño models predict neutral conditions will last through the fall of 2013," said Jeff Masters, chief meteorologist of Weather Underground, the online weather site.

Neutral conditions can be conducive for hurricane development, as evidenced by 2005, the busiest year on record when 28 storms, including 15 hurricanes, emerged.

West African rainfall

Gerry Bell, NOAA's lead hurricane forecaster, expects the "west African monsoon," to be strong this season. That could result in more hurricanes forming, as the rainfall bolsters tropical waves coming off the coast of Africa, nurturing their development into tropical storms.

Saharan dust

For now, Saharan dust over the Atlantic is expected to be low, meaning storms would have a better chance of developing. When dust is abundant in the atmosphere, it can infiltrate a storm and disrupt its circulation.

Without much dust, more hurricanes Category 2 or higher could develop, said Dan Kottlowski, senior meteorologist at AccuWeather.com.

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