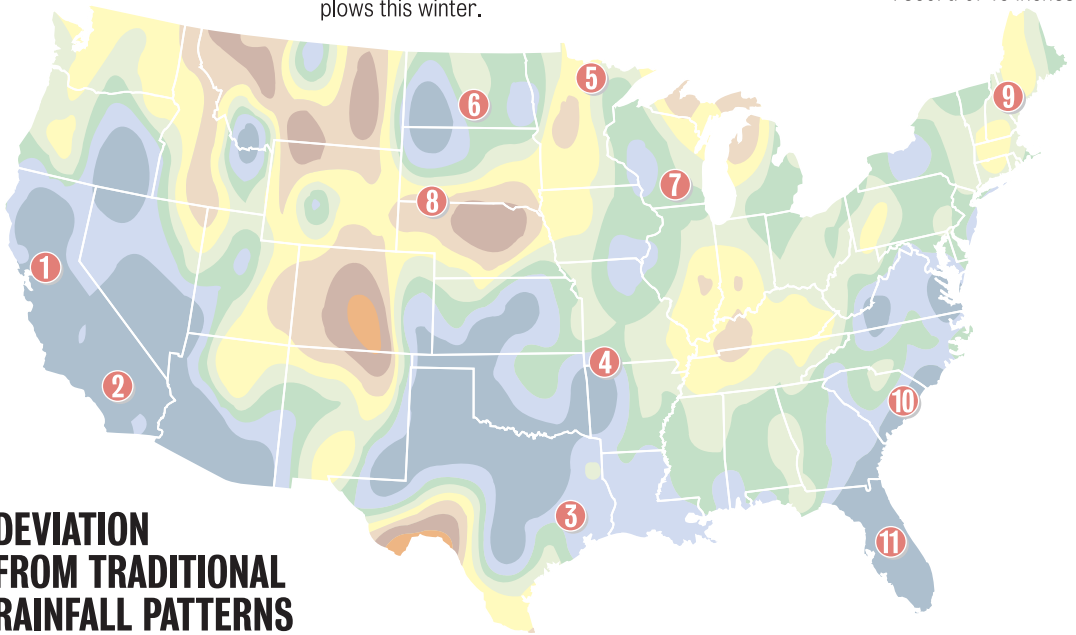


EL NIÑO'S LEGACY

EFFECTS AROUND THE UNITED STATES

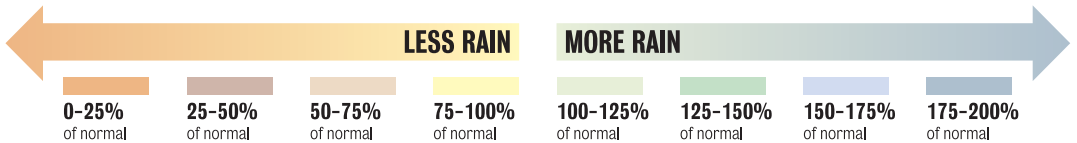
El Niño spurred an unusually mild winter in the North and West and helped make for a quiet hurricane season. But rain and mudslides pounded California, severe storms rolled through the South and an ice storm devastated the Northeast power grid.

- 1 NORTHERN AND CENTRAL CALIFORNIA:** Since Jan. 1, most areas have received the amount of rain they normally get in 12 months.
- 2 SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA:**
 - ▶ One December storm dropped 8 inches of rain and set off mudslides
 - ▶ Ten people killed in winter storms and floods.
- 3 TEXAS:**
 - ▶ Rain ties up traffic at Houston bottleneck
 - ▶ Railroads in region fell behind schedule.
- 4 OZARKS:** Region got four times its usual rainfall in January.
- 5 MINNESOTA:** International Falls, a town famous for bitter winters, averaged 10° to 13° above normal.
- 6 NORTH DAKOTA:** Bismarck, which got 101 inches of snow last year, did not need its snow plows this winter.
- 7 WISCONSIN:** They water-skiied in Madison on New Year's Day.
- 8 NORTHERN PLAINS:** Natural gas consumption fell 15%.
- 9 NEW ENGLAND:** Nor'easter storms that usually bring snow were warmer, arrived as destructive ice storms; one cut off power to 4 million people.
- 10 FLORIDA TO VIRGINIA:** Mid-February storm destroyed beach homes, flooded towns, knocked out power – four people dead.
- 11 FLORIDA:**
 - ▶ February tornadoes killed 37 people in center of state
 - ▶ Tampa got 30 inches of rain between December and mid-February, topping its previous record of 15 inches.



DEVIATION FROM TRADITIONAL RAINFALL PATTERNS

Percentage of normal precipitation levels recorded for December 1997 through February 1998



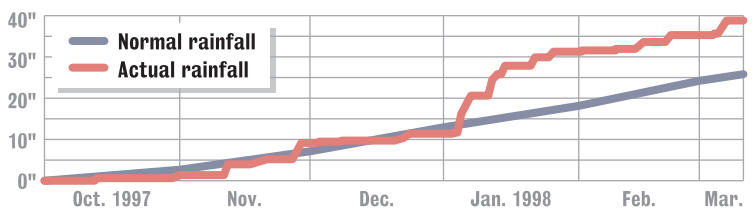
EI NIÑO YEARS BRING MORE RAIN TO LOUISIANA

In an average El Niño year, the months of January, February and March usually see a 3 percent to 30 percent increase in precipitation across the state.

Region	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Average rainfall	13.22"	14.78"	15.52"	14.19"	15.37"	15.83"	13.58"	13.58"	14.18"
El Niño rainfall	13.61"	15.16"	15.95"	15.44"	16.99"	19.01"	15.81"	17.18"	18.50"
Percent change	3%	3%	3%	9%	11%	20%	16%	27%	30%

NEW ORLEANS AREA DELUGED THIS YEAR

Accumulated rainfall



Sources: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Climate Analysis Center, Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research, KRT

STAFF GRAPHIC BY EMMETT MAYER III