

What's News In Insurance

Gray Lowers Hurricane Forecast to 4 Intense Storms

Noted hurricane researcher William Gray from Colorado State University has lowered his 2007 forecast slightly, citing cooler water in the Pacific and more atmospheric dust from Africa in predicting 15 named storms and eight hurricanes off the East and Gulf coasts of the U.S.

Gray has been forecasting hurricanes for more than two decades, and his predictions are watched closely by emergency responders and others in coastal areas.

Despite the reduction, Gray said, the indicators tracked by his team at Colorado State University call for 60 percent more storm activity than the long-term average.

The June 1—Nov. 30 Atlantic hurricane season averages 9.6 named storms, 5.9 hurricanes and 2.3 intense hurricanes per year. “Nobody knows for sure, but if the future is like the past, there are these precursor signals out there in the atmosphere on a global scale” that indicate an active season, he said.

Gray’s new forecast calls for three named storms and two hurricanes, one intense, in August; five named storms and four hurricanes, two intense, in September; and five named storms and two hurricanes, one intense, in October and November combined. Gray’s forecast of 15 named storms includes two that have already occurred this season.

The latest forecast put the chances of an intense hurricane hitting the U.S. coastline at 68 percent for the rest of this season.

Chances of an intense hurricane hitting the East Coast, including the Florida Peninsula, this season are 43 percent, Gray said. For the Gulf Coast from the Florida Panhandle to Brownsville, Texas, the probability is 44 percent.

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