

Reported Drought-Related Effects of El Niño for January 1998.

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The National Drought Mitigation Center is compiling a list of drought-related effects of the 1997-98 El Niño, as reported to us in news stories from around the world. Our first report “Reported Effects of the 1997-98 El Niño,” released in November 1997, examined the effects of several climatic phenomena related to the current El Niño such as drought, floods, and hurricanes. Because of the great variety of impacts related to El Niño and the number of other researchers dealing with this topic, we have decided to focus more on the drought-related effects of El Niño in subsequent updates (although other related climatic hazards such as flooding may be discussed when they coincide with drought issues).

This report summarizes drought-related El Niño effects reported in stories from 1 January to 31 January 1998. It is important to remember that anomalous weather events happen continually. Because of the interdependence of global circulation patterns, it is often difficult to determine whether El Niño is a direct or indirect cause of certain events, or whether it is a factor at all. It is possible that media attention over the current El Niño has resulted in more effects being attributed to the phenomenon than can be scientifically justified. In addition, reported estimates of damages and other statistics will often vary as new data become available and depending on the methodology used to calculate values.

For more information, please visit the El Niño section of the National Drought Mitigation Center’s web site:

<http://enso.unl.edu/ndmc/enigma/elnino.html>

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Where?	Current Impacts	Potential Impacts
<p>United States of America</p> <p>California</p> <p>Wisconsin</p> <p>North Carolina</p> <p>North Dakota</p> <p>New York</p> <p>Texas</p> <p>Utah</p> <p>Washington</p>	<p>Economic losses from Southeast Asia’s economic problems; Nike’s future orders to the Asia-Pacific regions fell 12%; many U.S. overseas commodity prices have been cut to remain competitive with depressed economies.</p> <p>Citrus growers are being affected by depressed overseas economies.</p> <p>Warmer winter; longer water recreation and transportation season; changes in bird nesting patterns from open waters and warmer weather; dangerous conditions on lakes because of thin ice.</p> <p>Warmer winter; increased employment because of a longer seasonal work period; a surplus in the state’s snow removal budget.</p> <p>Warmer winter; weather allowed herds to graze open ranges longer than normal (cutting feed costs).</p> <p>Less-than-optimal snow base at most ski resorts.</p> <p>Apple shipments to Thailand are down 27% and 40% to Indonesia from last year; Fuji apple prices have dropped from about \$35/box to \$8/box in Thailand and the Philippines.</p>	<p>900,000-2.1 million lost jobs (168,734 in the computer industry; 122,026 in the electronic equipment sector; 64,694 in apparel and textile industries; 47,787 in the transportation sector); increase U.S. trade deficit by \$200 billion over the next two years; Microsoft could lose \$300 million in Asian-related revenues in the next six months.</p> <p>122,026 jobs lost from SE Asia’s economic problems.</p> <p>50,063 jobs lost from SE Asia’s economic problems.</p> <p>Lack of snow cover could cause increased soil erosion</p> <p>63,555 jobs lost from SE Asia’s economic problems.</p> <p>65,024 jobs lost from SE Asia’s economic problems.</p>
<p>Central America</p> <p>Costa Rica</p>	<p>High temperatures and a scarcity of rainfall; threatened water supplies; supply tanks are not filling at night and are more than 25% below the desired levels.</p>	<p>Water rationing moved up to February from March.</p>
<p>South America</p> <p>Columbia</p>	<p>Drought; creation of a \$30 million emergency fund for drought-affected small agricultural businesses (for construction and maintenance of dams and deep wells, and the acquisition of microwatering equipment); 40% average volume loss in the country’s rivers; 30% of the country’s municipalities have problems with their consumptive water supply.</p>	

<p>Southeast Asia</p> <p>Indonesia</p> <p>Borneo</p> <p>East Timor</p> <p>Java</p> <p>East Java</p> <p>Jakarta</p> <p>Irian Jaya</p> <p>Thailand</p> <p>Malaysia</p> <p>Vietnam</p> <p>Philippines</p>	<p>Drought, fires and an economic crisis; government is boosting short-term rice imports to 2 million tonnes from 1.5 million planned; wholesalers will freeze household goods prices until one week after the Moslem Eid ul-Fitr festival in late January; zero percent economic growth and 20 percent inflation in the 1998/99 fiscal year; at least 165,352 ha (413,000 acres) of forest burned last year; one million ha (2.5 million acres) of peat are still burning.</p> <p>Drought and fires.</p> <p>Drought and famine; “destroyed crops” (especially on the island of Atauro - home to 7,000 people); people are foraging for food and eating seed stock.</p> <p>Rains began to arrive in West Java and West Sumatra in mid-November and in December in Central and Eastern Java, though the frequency of rains is uneven and below average.</p> <p>Mobs have looted stores over high food prices; drought has affected rice harvests.</p> <p>Food prices have risen; famine has spread to the Moluccas region (threatening more than 80,000 people).</p> <p>Drought and famine; 670 deaths in the last six months; 143,600 people face starvation; easternmost Irian Jay remains dry; asking for shipments of cassava.</p> <p>Reduced rainfall; low volume of water in many reservoirs; preparing personnel, equipment and water trucks to help drought-affected people; will conduct a water conservation campaign from Feb - April.</p> <p>Drought; cocoa production declined 12% (107,000 tonnes from 122,000 in 1996), losses were held to 12% because of cocoa cloning efforts.</p> <p>High temperatures; temperatures are six degrees higher than average in the northern regions; central and southern provinces have also had warm weather; reservoirs are 10-20% low in the north and 10-25% low in the central and central highlands regions; southern rivers are down 0.4-0.5 meters from 1996 levels; saltwater intrusion into rivers is becoming a problem in the south.</p> <p>Severe water shortages; in Manila, water supply has been cut by 60% for the last three months.</p>	<p>Placement of additional water storage tanks in vulnerable portions of the country; extension of existing networks of public water pipes; digging deeper wells; focusing on health problems associated with water quality; providing increased medical and nutritional assistance.</p> <p>Without assistance in the next few months, thousands of people may die.</p> <p>Drought; reduced precipitation and high temperatures from January to May; the country’s lower north, northeast, upper central region and east may be more seriously affected than other parts due to lack of irrigation.</p> <p>If drought prevails in the main cocoa growing areas of east Sabah until the fruit-setting period for cocoa pods in April and May, the main harvest in October will be affected (though cloning may make up for losses). Facing severe drought.</p> <p>Similar conditions are likely until the rainy season begins in July.</p>
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<p>Southeast Asia (cont.) Papua New Guinea</p>	<p>Drought and frost with some recent rain; worst drought in 100 years; despite November and December rains, most water sources remain inadequate; 1.2 million (40% of the population) people facing severe shortages (260,000 are foraging for food in the bush and 980,000 have inadequate amounts of food); at least 75 people have died as of last month; some deaths from complications related to eating bush foods and leaves; have only released \$11.2 million of \$19 million in available relief funds; lack of clean drinking water (blamed for a rise in cases of malaria, diarrhea, and malnutrition in children) has been reported in isolated areas; 400,000 people were experiencing critical shortages of water (47,000 people have limited amounts of contaminated water for drinking and 363,000 others had to carry water of variable quality excessive distances); massive government and charity relief distribution programs (rice and other food, multi-vitamin drops, milk powder, vegetable seeds, sweet potato vines); lack of planting material in some parts of the country; Australia contributed \$4.5 -10.5 (?) million U.S. for relief efforts, \$2.2 million U.S. to six Australian NGO's working there, defense forces to transport rice, wheat, oil and seeds to villages (stepped up distribution from 60,000 to 70,000 people), and agronomists and nutritionists; emergency food supply trucks have been looted causing stricter security; Port Moresby residents face water and power rationing.</p>	<p>Capital (Port Moresby) could come to a standstill if there is no rain by March.</p>
<p>Southern Asia Sri Lanka</p>	<p>Plantation companies have prepared for short-term drought.</p>	<p>Island-wide drought in 1998, at least until April; crops in the north-central and northwestern provinces to be hit hardest.</p>
<p>West Africa Ghana</p>	<p>Drought; the low water level of Akosombo Dam has limited hydroelectric production by 20%; power rationing; Volta Aluminum Company has closed one of its four operating pot lines because of power rationing; promoting energy conservation in homes to preserve power for industry.</p>	<p>Drought and bushfires.</p>

<p>Central Africa Kenya</p> <p>Tanzania</p>	<p>Drought from September - December has given way to rains that are filling dams and restoring power; the drought killed thousands of livestock, pushing up the price of domestic meat (beef from \$1.33/kg to \$1.67/kg and goat from \$1.5/kg to \$1.67/kg); illegal monkey meat (\$0.75/kg) is now replacing the more expensive meats and may cause their extinction; more than 1.4 million people are still facing food shortages from the drought; 1996/97 cotton production was also effected by the drought (only 379,000 bales were produced); in 1997 the FAO provided \$2.65 million for drought relief and livestock disease control; power rationing was also frequent from September - December affecting industries, airports, and daily living.</p>	<p>The long rains season (starting in March) may be replaced with a La Niña-related drought.</p>
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<p>Southern Africa</p> <p>Zimbabwe</p> <p>Mavingo province</p> <p>Matabeleland province</p> <p>Lesotho</p> <p>Swaziland</p> <p>Zambia</p> <p>South Africa</p>	<p>Fears of severe and widespread drought have been dampened in some areas by recent rains.</p> <p>Drought fears are being eased by normal rains in the north and close to normal rains in most others; maize plantings have reduced 7-18% for fear of drought; many small farmers have stopped trading to reserve stocks; the government stockpiled over 500,000 tons of maize and targeting 436,000 additional tons; target exports have been reduced from 350,000 to 260,000 tons of the 1996/97 crop.</p> <p>301,000 people (25% of the population) in Mavingo province in the south registered for food aid under the government's grain loan program.</p> <p>Drought and famine; hundreds of villagers out of food (some eating wild fruits, roots and leaves); all communal-area crops have been affected and some commercial areas; some farmers are grazing their maize crops; some fear their gods have abandoned them; 50,000 people (>50%) have applied for drought relief aid; villagers are selling all possessions to buy food.</p> <p>December drought has been replaced with January rains; however, in the foothills and lowlands, low planted acreage and poor germination from dry conditions have affected crops; drought needs assessments have not been carried out; National Drought Relief Plan was presented Jan 15th.</p> <p>Some farmers have not planted at all for fear of drought.</p> <p>Farmers in the south have delayed planting because of uneven rainfall; accusations of "incompetence" for presenting "false warnings" of drought; last year's drought reduced crop yields 21% (in the grain belt of Copperbelt, Lusaka, Southern provinces and parts of the Eastern Province).</p> <p>Drought in the southern and western regions and rains in the north and east; in the Western Cape province drought has damaged vineyards and filled beaches; corn prices have fallen with the rains.</p>	<p>Shortfall in maize production from reduced plantings (down 7-18%) because of high interest rates and fear of drought; estimated yield is 750,000 tons of maize; cases of food relief throughout the country are expected to increase because of declining personal food reserves and possible drought.</p> <p>Food relief cases may increase because of declining food reserves.</p> <p>Foothill and lowland crop prospects are down 40% of normal.</p> <p>Drought may affect the whole country except the extremes of the southern, western, and northwestern provinces; the importing of 20,790 tons of maize is needed by March to maintain stocks.</p>
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