

El Nino meets 'the blob' – but will it help?

By Jeff DeLong, Reno Gazette-Journal

There's El Nino, and then there's "the blob."

Both are phenomena associated with warm water in the Pacific. Both could have some impact on the weather, including building hopes for a big winter that might help pull the West out of protracted drought.

No one really knows.

"This is a little bit of an unprecedented situation," said Kelly Redmond, deputy director of the Western Regional Climate Center in Reno. "It's like two sets of dice that influence the atmosphere. But do these sets of dice have a string connecting them?"

El Nino is characterized by warmer-than-normal surface water temperatures in the equatorial Pacific stretching from the coast of Peru to west of the international dateline. After a year of anticipation, conditions came together last March for an El Nino to be officially declared, with scientists now saying there's a better than 90 percent chance the condition will stick around into next winter.

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