

El Nino watch – Pacific Ocean abnormally warm

By Brian K. Sullivan, BloombergBusiness

The Pacific Ocean is warm. Very warm.

Last week, the U.S. Climate Prediction Center announced temperatures reached 5.6 Fahrenheit above normal in a key section of the Pacific called Nino 3.4, touching off a Twitter typhoon among some El Nino watchers alarmed that they were so high. Monday, the agency said readings had edged up to 3.1 degrees above normal.

It's probably too early to add this to the list of signs of the impending apocalypse. Instead, it's likely just an indicator that the sea-surface component of El Nino is getting ripe, said Kevin Trenberth, senior scientist at the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, Colo.

The weekly readings "are less reliable" than their monthly counterparts, which tend to be a bit cooler, he said. And El Nino isn't just sea-surface temperatures: It's also atmospheric changes that upend global weather patterns.

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