



## MEDIA ADVISORY

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
October 16, 2020

### **Wet Season Rainfall Outlook for the State of Hawaii**

#### **Summary of the dry season (May through September 2020)**

- Statewide: Most locations had near to below average rainfall.
  - Most areas of the state started the dry season drought-free due to wet conditions early in 2020.
    - Helped delay onset of significant drought impacts.
  - The exception was Maui County, which had a drier 2019 – 2020 wet season compared to the other counties.
    - Contributed to the development of the worst drought impacts in the state by the end of the 2020 dry season.
  - Drought spread to all counties and reached extreme levels (D3 category in U.S. Drought Monitor map) in the leeward areas of Molokai and Maui.
    - Significantly affected ranching operations and contributed to an increase in brush fires.
    - Public water conservation requested for Oahu and parts of Maui County.
- 11<sup>th</sup> driest dry season in the last 30 years (based on rankings from 8 key sites).
  - 2015 dry season was the wettest in the last 30 years.
  - 2003 dry season was the driest in the last 30 years.

#### **Outlook for the wet season (October 2020 through April 2021)**

- NOAA's Climate Prediction Center (CPC): The current La Nina conditions are likely to continue through spring 2021.
- Climate model consensus favors above average rainfall through the wet season.
  - Large scale wetter than average conditions December 2020 through April 2021.
  - Rainfall distribution can be influenced by the strength of La Nina.
    - Stronger La Nina events can have a higher than normal trade wind frequency which will focus rainfall on windward areas.
    - Weaker La Nina events tend to have more weather systems that produce significant leeward rainfall.
- Drought recovery more likely on the smaller islands (Kauai to Molokai), and over the windward slopes of Maui and the Big Island.
- Possibility of drought to continue through the wet season, especially over the leeward areas of Maui and the Big Island.



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### **Wet Season Rainfall Outlook for the State of Hawaii - cont'd**

#### **Wet season preparedness reminders**

- Do not drive on roads with fast-flowing water.
  - Just 2 feet of fast-flowing water can sweep most vehicles off a road.
  - Road may also be severely undercut.
- Do not walk across flooded streams.
  - If you're hiking and get stranded, wait for the water to recede.
  - Streams in Hawaii generally recede quickly.
- Expect more rainy weather impacts.
  - Increased road travel times
  - Possible detours or road closures due to flooding or landslides.
  - Outdoor activities may be postponed, canceled, or adjusted.
- The wet season brings increased potential for lightning strikes.
  - Be prepared for power outages.
  - Move indoors when you hear thunder.
  - Lightning strikes can occur even in areas where it is not raining.
- Although rare, thunderstorms occasionally produce damaging winds, large hail, and tornadoes in Hawaii.
- If you travel through a flood-prone area, identify alternate routes ahead of time.
- If you live in a flood-prone area, have an evacuation plan in case flood waters quickly threaten your home.
- Stay informed of conditions that could change rapidly
  - Sunny skies can turn cloudy with intense rainfall in less than an hour.
  - Check out the latest forecasts, watches, warnings, and advisories via the media, NOAA Weather Radio, the Internet, or one of several weather mobile phone apps.
  - Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) on mobile phones notify you that you're in a flash flood warning area.

#### On the Web:

NOAA National Weather Service Honolulu HI: <https://www.weather.gov/hfo/>

NOAA Weather Ready Nation: <https://www.weather.gov/wrn/>

NOAA Climate Prediction Center: <https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/>

FEMA Flood Preparedness Information: <https://www.ready.gov/floods>

Hawaii Emergency Management Agency: <http://dod.hawaii.gov/hiema/>

State of Hawaii-DLNR National Flood Insurance Page: <https://dlnreng.hawaii.gov/nfip/>

U.S. Drought Monitor: <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>