

WESTERN REGION TECHNICAL ATTACHMENT
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April 22, 1986

EL NIÑO/SOUTHERN OSCILLATION (ENSO) DIAGNOSTIC ADVISORY 86/3
issued by
THE CLIMATE ANALYSIS CENTER/NMC
April 11, 1986

This is an update of Advisory 86/2 issued March 13 which called attention to the possible development of an El Niño/Southern Oscillation (ENSO) episode during 1986.

During the past month the trend to above normal sea surface temperature, which began in the extreme eastern Pacific in January, has extended westward along the equator to around 140°W. At the same time, the positive anomalies in the extreme eastern Pacific have diminished with sea surface temperatures near the Peru coast near or below normal (Fig. A19). The weak warming during January and February apparently did not result in the occurrence of heavy rains in northwest Peru, a feature usually associated with El Niño.

In the western Pacific, increasing positive sea level pressure anomalies appeared for the second straight month at the key index station of Darwin, Australia. The positive sea surface temperature anomalies north of Australia continued to diminish and deficient rainfall conditions persisted over much of Australia during the month. These conditions are consistent with the early stages of an ENSO episode. However, other important indicators are not consistent with an incipient ENSO episode; i.e., the absence of any eastward extension of heavy rainfall, westerly wind anomalies or warm waters along the equator towards the date line.

These conflicting features do not at this time indicate whether or not this will be classified as an El Niño episode. The situation should be resolved by developments in the central and western equatorial Pacific during the next 2-3 months.

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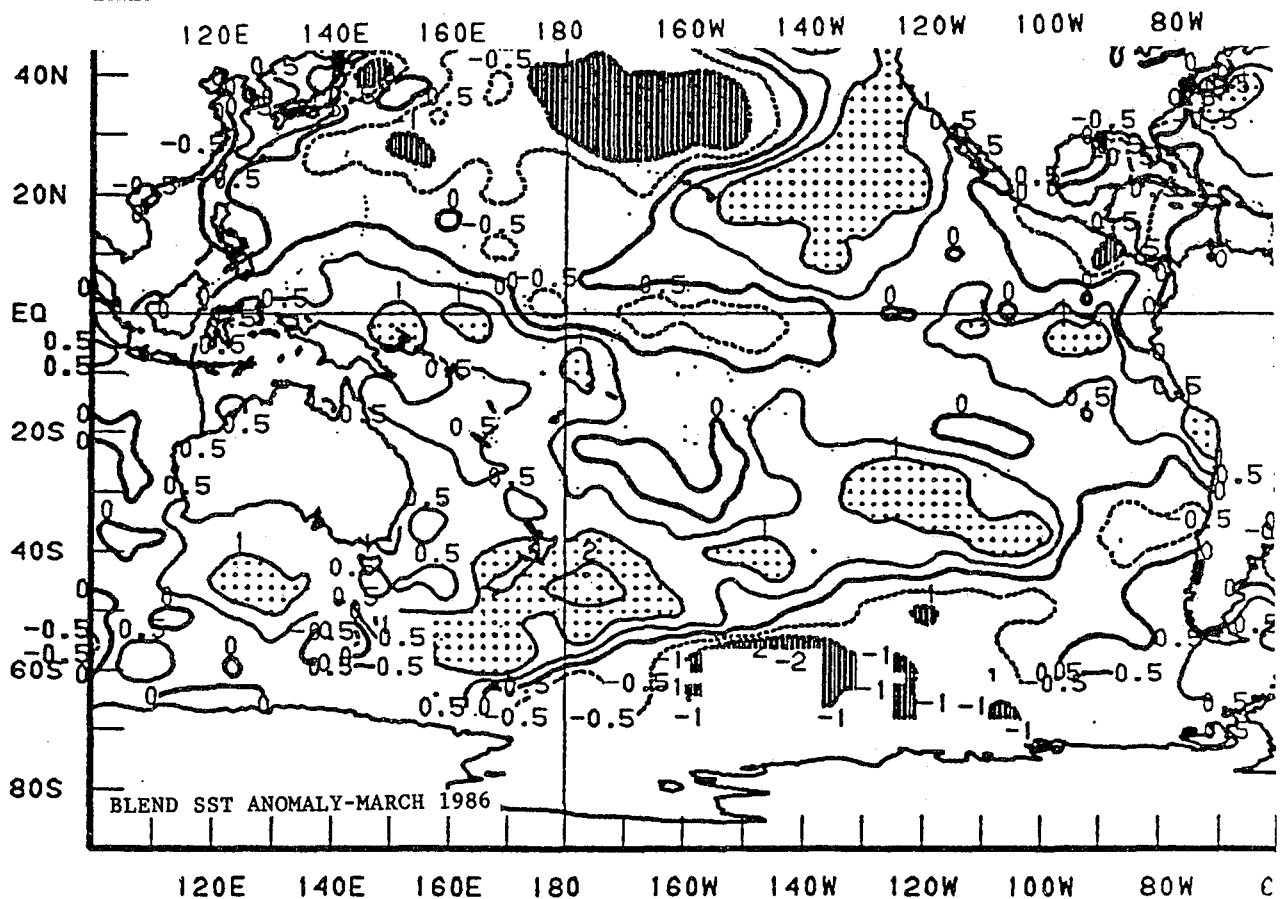
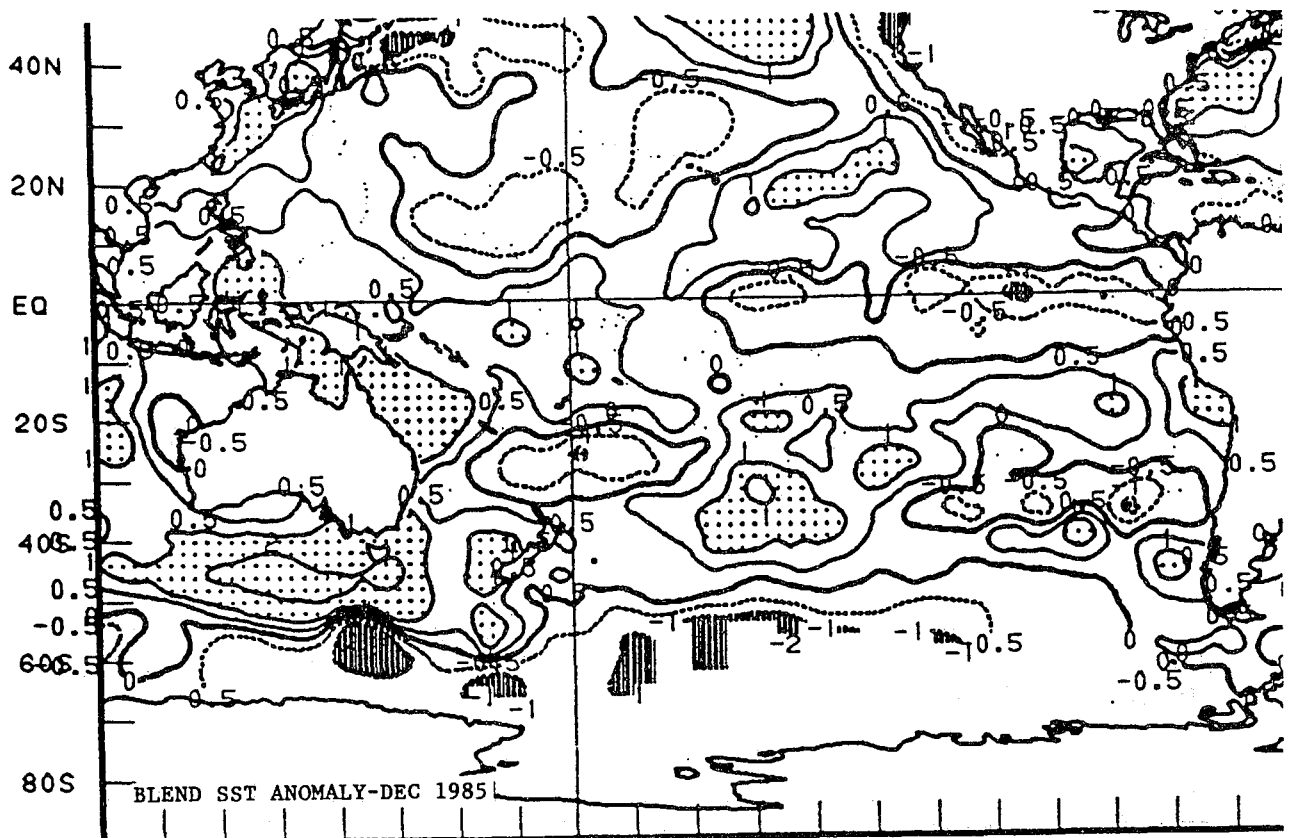


FIGURE A19- Blended sea surface temperature anomalies for December 1985 (top) and March (bottom). Anomalies are computed as departures from the CAC climatology (Reynolds, NOAA Tech. Rpt. NWS 31, 1982). Contour interval is 1°C except for additional contours at $\pm 0.5^{\circ}\text{C}$. Negative anomalies are indicated by dashed contours. Values less than -1.0°C are shaded. Stippling indicates values greater than 1.0°C .