

Is a super El Niño coming? What NOAA says and what it means for Michigan weather

NOAA issued an El Niño Advisory on June 11, 2026

LOCAL NEWS

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You may have heard that a “Super El Niño” is developing. Here is the important update: El Niño has begun, but it is not super yet. (Copyright 2026 by WDIV ClickOnDetroit - All rights reserved.)

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Drifting anyone? Take a wild ride at 'Roadkill Nights', happening Sat. at M1
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There is now a 63% chance that it will become very strong between November 2026 and January 2027.

“Super El Niño” is an informal nickname for a very strong event in which Pacific Ocean temperatures reach at least 2°C above average in a key area near the equator.

So, what exactly is El Niño? It is a natural climate pattern caused by unusually warm sea surface temperatures in the central and eastern tropical Pacific.

This warmth weakens the trade winds that normally blow from east to west.

The change affects clouds, air pressure, jet streams, and storm tracks worldwide.

Think of the Pacific Ocean as a giant engine that can gently steer the atmosphere.



What does this mean for Southeast Michigan during mid-June?

Probably less than some headlines suggest. El Niño’s effects are usually weaker and less predictable during summer. Our daily weather in Detroit, Ann Arbor, Flint, and Monroe is more directly controlled by cold fronts, humidity, Great Lakes water temperatures, and thunderstorms.

On June 18, Detroit’s weather is mostly cloudy, with temperatures near 70°F and a few showers possible.

The official summer outlook gives Southeast Michigan equal chances of above-normal, near-normal, or below-normal temperatures and rainfall. In other words, El Niño does not clearly point toward an especially hot, cool, wet, or dry summer.

It cannot be blamed for a single thunderstorm.

Here is a fun fact: El Niño means “the little boy” in Spanish. South American fishermen created the name after noticing unusually warm Pacific water near Christmastime.

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