

## Winter will be colder, longer than last year



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CTV.ca News Staff

Brace yourself, Canada: There will actually be a winter this year.

Preliminary forecasts show the country's in for a longer and more intense winter than last year's uncommonly mild weather, says Dave Phillips, senior climatologist with Environment Canada.

"It could still be warmer than normal... but it won't be a non-winter like last year," which saw the warmest and driest conditions on record, Phillips told CTV.ca earlier this week.

A series of factors contributed to last winter's freakish weather, notably El Nino, a climate pattern from the tropical Pacific Ocean that encourages more powerful westerly winds.

It's still early to make clear predictions for this year – the official forecast comes out Dec. 1 – but current models suggest winter will strike hardest out west, largely due to La Nina, El Nino's counterpart, he added.

La Nina is an extensive cooling of the central and eastern Pacific Ocean caused by the strengthening of easterly trade winds in the tropics. ***It can trigger generous snowfall from the interior of British Columbia*** to the Great Lakes region, according to Environment Canada.

The summer's hot and sunny weather has led many to worry that winter would be particularly harsh. "Canadians worry about the winter before the summer's even over," Phillips noted.

Consecutive heat waves shattered temperature records across the nation, boosting some crops while threatening others, and sending beer sales through the roof.

Last month, Canada was on track for its warmest year on record.

A sudden cold front that pushed temperatures into the teens last week saw some worry that the honeymoon may be over.

But experts say the fluctuations are normal, and predict a warm fall with spectacular colours in Central and Eastern Canada.

The Muskoka region and central Ontario will be at their colour best by the end of September, experts say, while Toronto and southern Ontario will have to wait until Thanksgiving.

"There's a paranoia that exists in this country, where we think nature is going to get us back for the good weather," Phillips said.

"Nature doesn't work that way. It would be too predictable."