

# El Niño's impact on the weather

- 1. Trade winds:** Normally push warm surface water away from South American coast towards Australia and Philippines
- 2. Western Pacific:** Sea becomes several degrees warmer and a metre higher than on eastern side of ocean
- 3. Upwelling:** Cold sub-surface water from *Humboldt current* replaces surface water. Nitrates and phosphates, nutrients in colder water, encourage growth of plankton – fish stocks thrive
- 4. El Niño:** Trade winds drop every two to seven years. Warm water surges back across Southern Pacific halting upwelling of cold water, decimating regional fish population and threatening storms, droughts and high winds around the world

Meteorologists predict that an *El Niño* weather system building up in the Pacific could be one of the most damaging this century. The most serious *El Niño* – Spanish for *The Christ Child* – occurred in 1982-83, costing \$13.6 billion in damage to crops and livelihoods

