

'Around five cyclones' expected this wet season

■ Gareth McKnight

A leading figure at Broome's Bureau of Meteorology has said the upcoming wet season will bring roughly five cyclones to the North West, with two potentially crossing the Kimberley or Pilbara coast.

Weather observer Ray Hegarty also said there would be close to average rainfall levels but a 65-70 per cent chance the average temperatures for November to March would be higher than usual.

Five cyclones formed in WA waters last wet season, and Mr Hegarty believes a similar number can be expected in 2013-14.

"We have done an outlook for the entire season based on a number of factors, and using historical data we are able to get some idea of the most likely outcome for the season," he said.

"It's not a rock-solid guarantee but we can get a pretty good idea of the statistical probability.

"This year we are expecting it to be pretty close to average, which for the North West is about five cyclones for the season.

"Statistically, about 40 per cent of them will cross the coast at some point, so we can expect two could have a coastal impact."

The last category-five cyclone to pass through Broome was Rosita in 2000, and Mr Hegarty said the town's location shields it from direct hits.

"With our geographical position, belts of low pressure where the cyclones are typically formed occur to our north — normally along the latitude of Darwin," he said.

"Once they form they will generally track westwards until they are captured by steering winds which will make them do a bit of a dogleg and head South East.

"If we get a cyclone form to the north of Broome and it tracks along the equatorial trough and peels off early

enough it can cross the coast near Broome.

"Typically that is most likely to happen early in the season or very late in the season, when the equatorial trough is further north. This gives it time to form, move west and do its dogleg and still be quite a long way north."

Mr Hegarty said temperatures were likely to be higher than the statistical average, which ranges between 32C and 34C in November to March.

The rainfall is expected to be close to average, according to the weather observer, with January and February traditionally the months with the most sustained downpours.



Ray Hegarty says Broome is set for an average wet season in 2013-14. Picture: Gareth McKnight

Town swelters in soaring temperatures

■ Cally Dupe

Fitzroy Crossing has sweltered

indoors and avoid the heat. "If you don't work in the air-conditioning you just can't handle it. If

skies has allowed maximum solar heating."

Mr Cook said the town could be

Finding your d