

= Hurricane Cindy (1963) =

Hurricane Cindy was the first hurricane to form in the Gulf of Mexico since 1960 . The third named storm of the 1963 Atlantic hurricane season , Cindy developed within a trough as a tropical storm in the Gulf of Mexico on 16 September . The disturbance swiftly intensified to hurricane strength , with a distinct eye becoming visible on satellite imagery as it drifted north @-@ northwestwards toward the Texas coastline . Despite favorable conditions , with high sea surface temperatures , the storm only intensified into a Category 1 hurricane . After peaking with 1 @-@ minute maximum sustained winds of 80 mph (130 km / h) , it made landfall at High Island on the morning of 17 September as a slightly weaker system with an atmospheric pressure of 996 mbar (hPa ; 29 @.@ 41 inHg) . Cindy remained nearly stationary for almost a day , dropping copious rainfall over the Texas coastal plain , before finally turning west @-@ southwestward and dissipating west of Corpus Christi on 20 September .

Hurricane watches and warnings were issued prior to Cindy 's landfall , hastening evacuations in coastal areas of Louisiana and Texas , with many refugees seeking safety in local shelters . Although tide and wind damage was minimal , extreme rainfall totaling upwards of 23 @.@ 50 in (597 mm) resulted in severe flooding in many areas of the Texas coastal plain ; 4 @,@ 000 homes were inundated in Jefferson , Orange , and Newton counties , many of them after a levee ruptured in Port Acres . Dozens of residents were forced to flee in rising flood waters , and many streets and roadways became impassable as a result of Cindy 's flooding . Strong winds shattered glass windows , and schools throughout southeastern Texas were closed due to the hurricane . Widespread crop damage was observed , with rice , cotton , and pecan harvests suffering the worst . Overall , damage amounted to \$ 12 @.@ 5 million (1963 USD) , and three deaths were recorded .

= = Meteorological history = =

The origins of Cindy can be traced to a low @-@ pressure area which formed within a trough positioned approximately 200 mi (320 km) east @-@ northeast of Brownsville , Texas on 16 September , though inclement weather had been reported in the Gulf of Mexico the previous two days . The disturbance soon strengthened into a tropical storm , developing a well @-@ defined circulation near 1800 UTC . By the afternoon , it had become well @-@ organized enough to prompt the New Orleans Weather Bureau office to initiate advisories on the storm , christening it Cindy . A distinct eye was noted on radar around 2000 UTC , and around then a possibly inaccurate maritime report issued by the SS Sabine documented winds of hurricane intensity . The compact storm meandered northward at 8 mph (13 km / h) throughout the rest of the day without any observable increase in wind speeds , despite being situated over an area of warm sea surface temperatures . As Cindy made its gradual approach towards Galveston that evening , only slightly heightened wind speeds were observed , peaking at 80 mph (130 km / h) .

Despite its favorable environment , Cindy remained disorganized , featuring an asymmetric 20 mi (32 km) -wide eye ; little further strengthening occurred over the course of the night . Upon Cindy 's landfall at High Island the following morning , its atmospheric pressure was measured at 996 mbar (hPa ; 29 @.@ 41 inHg) , and winds reached 75 mph (120 km / h) . Soon after moving ashore , Cindy became nearly stationary for 18 hours , maintaining Category 1 intensity before weakening to first to a tropical storm at 0600 UTC on 18 September then a tropical depression six hours later . The remnants of Cindy gradually turned westward @-@ to @-@ southwestward and decreased in strength during 18 and 19 September . As a result of its abnormally slow movement and deterioration , extremely heavy rains were recorded over Texas and Louisiana , especially in the storm 's northeastern quadrant . Cindy finally dissipated on 20 September while situated west of Corpus Christi . It was the first hurricane to form in the Gulf of Mexico since 1960 .

= = Preparations and impact = =

In advance of Cindy 's arrival , a hurricane watch was issued between Freeport , Texas and Grand Isle , Louisiana on 16 September . The New Orleans Weather Bureau office imposed a hurricane warning between Galveston , Texas and Vermilion Bay , Louisiana three hours later , and additionally replaced the earlier hurricane watch with a gale warning . After making landfall on the morning of 17 September , the hurricane warning for Cindy was discontinued , though flood warnings and small craft warnings remained in effect for coastal areas of southeastern Texas . Mandatory evacuations were ordered for low @-@ lying areas along a 300 mi (480 km) arc , and five buses were sent to help in evacuation efforts in Sabine County , Texas . Meanwhile , the Texas civil defense and disaster relief agency and other related organizations prepared for the storm as governor of Texas John Connally declared a state of emergency . In Cameron Parish , Louisiana , approximately 5 @, @ 000 individuals left the area prior to the storm , while 6 @, @ 000 fled in the state as a whole ; in neighboring Texas , 3 @, @ 600 individuals living along the state 's shoreline heeded the Weather Bureau 's warnings , evacuating to higher ground . Emergency shelters opened along the Gulf Coast , with 1 @, @ 500 taking refuge in Port Arthur , Texas , 525 in Beaumont , 1 @, @ 078 in Galveston , 300 in Port Bolivar , and 475 total in Texas City , Hitchcock , and Lamarque . A state of emergency was declared in the city of Lake Charles , Louisiana , where officials prepared to feed up to 10 @, @ 000 refugees as the Salvation Army and other relief agencies ' volunteers were deployed to the region .

One shrimp boat was initially reported missing and the tug Myra White transmitted a distress signal as its engines failed near an oil rig off of Galveston . High winds shattered glass windows at Port Arthur , Texas City , and Galveston , while schools were shut down in Galveston , Lamarque , Texas City , Alvin , and most of Galveston and Jefferson counties . Despite a brief power outage at Lamarque , electricity was quickly restored after the storm . Powerful gusts downed branches , electrical poles , and tore off shingles in Port Arthur and Galveston , but damage was minimal at High Island , where Cindy made landfall . The U.S. Coast Guard responded to four requests for assistance at Galveston , and nine vessels attempted to seek refuge at Port Arthur ; the Coast Guard eventually permitted six to enter , and the other three apparently traveled to Galveston . Meanwhile , to the northwest , the port of Houston was closed for the duration of the storm . Trucks and boats were dispatched by civil defense officials in Jefferson County after declaring a state of emergency following numerous requests for assistance by residents of flooded homes . Two children , initially unaccounted for , were later found safe under a bridge abutment .

In Amelia , a suburb of Beaumont , officials helped residents in low @-@ lying neighborhoods to higher ground , and in Beaumont proper , flooding inundated streets , rendering some impassible . The hurricane partially defoliated palm trees , leaving palm fronds on streets and roadways , and several structures were toppled or damaged along the coast . Overall damage , however , was minimal . An 8 ft (2 @. @ 4 m) levee sheltering Port Acres ruptured , forcing residents to stack 11 @, @ 000 sandbags and dump sand to protect the suburb . There , storm waters inundated homes up to roof level , and after carp were swept into local farm fields , many locals fished for them with clubs ; nearby , industrial complexes in Jefferson and Orange counties endured severe damage as well . Boats were tossed into the streets of Beaumont , and numerous highways were unusable for travel due to high water ; the widespread flooding forced police to rescue 30 residents in the Beaumont area . The storm inundated rice , cotton , and pecan crops , with rice harvests suffering the worst impacts . Two men left stranded on a burning fishing boat 50 mi (80 km) off of Morgan City , Louisiana were later rescued by the U.S. Coast Guard without issue .

Tides and winds resulted in few problems , with flooding causing the majority of Cindy 's damage ; storm surge reached 3 to 5 ft (0 @. @ 91 to 1 @. @ 52 m) above normal levels , enough to destroy only a few piers and damage several boats . The hurricane 's abnormally slow trajectory over the Texas coastal plain led to extremely high rainfall totals being measured in parts of Jefferson , Orange , and Newton counties in Texas , where storm waters inundated 4 @, @ 000 homes , and Calcasieu and Vermilion parishes in Louisiana . The most extreme rainfall totals were measured in Deweyville , Texas , where 23 @. @ 50 in (597 mm) of precipitation fell over a three @-@ day period , with 20 @. @ 60 in (523 mm) alone falling in 24 hours . Farther north , Cindy inundated 25 businesses and 35 homes in Guthrie , Oklahoma , where up to 2 @. @ 5 ft (0 @. @ 76 m) of water

forced 300 residents to flee . Upwards of \$ 11 @. @ 7 million (1963 USD) in property damage was noted , and crop damage reached \$ 500 @, @ 000 in Texas and \$ 360 @, @ 000 in Louisiana ; one man drowned after falling overboard on a boat taking oil rig personnel back to land , while two others drowned under high waters at Port Acres . Overall , Cindy inflicted \$ 12 @. @ 5 million in damage and three deaths .