

= Cyclone Inigo =

Cyclone Inigo was the most intense recorded cyclone in the Australian region . It developed from a tropical low that crossed eastern Indonesia in late March 2003 . Becoming a named tropical cyclone on 1 April , Inigo rapidly intensified as it tracked southwestward , reaching a minimum central pressure of 900 hPa on 4 April . An approaching trough weakened the cyclone and turned it to the southeast , and on 8 April Inigo dissipated after making landfall on Western Australia as a minimal tropical storm .

The precursor disturbance dropped heavy rainfall across eastern Indonesia , causing widespread flooding and mudslides . The worst of the damage was on Flores island , though damage was also reported on West Timor and Sumba . The flooding and mudslides damage or destroyed thousands of houses , forcing many to leave their homes . A total of 58 casualties were reported in association with the disturbance . In Australia , Inigo produced locally heavy rainfall , but little damage .

= Meteorological history =

By 26 March , an area of disturbed weather was located within the near @-@ equatorial trough near Papua New Guinea . Initially located within an area of easterly wind shear , it tracked westward due to the presence of a ridge to its south , and on 27 March a low pressure area formed over Western New Guinea . Thunderstorm activity increased around a mid @-@ level circulation as it crossed into the Arafura Sea , and its overall organization continued to increase . On 29 March , a low @-@ level circulation was visible , though significant tropical development was prevented due to wind shear and land interaction with islands in the Indonesian archipelago . It developed into a tropical low on 30 March , and after turning to the southwest , it crossed the island of Flores on 31 March ; upon doing so its convection greatly increased due to increased upper @-@ level divergence , which produced heavy rainfall on Flores and Timor . On 1 April , wind shear decreased as it crossed into the Savu Sea , and by early on 1 April it developed into a tropical cyclone to the northeast of Sumba .

At 1200 UTC on 1 April , the Joint Typhoon Warning Center (JTWC) issued its first advisory on the system , classifying it as Tropical Cyclone 26S . At 0000 UTC on 2 April , the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) warning center in Perth classified the low as Tropical Cyclone Inigo . The storm quickly intensified as it tracked southwestward , aided by low wind shear and strong divergence . An eye featured gradually organized , and early on 3 April the BOM classified Inigo as a severe tropical cyclone with winds of 80 mph (130 km / h) . Later that day , the cyclone underwent rapid intensification as the eye became increasingly better defined . On 4 April , Inigo attained Category 5 status on the Australian cyclone scale , and at 0600 UTC it reached peak winds of 240 km / h (150 mph) and an estimated minimum pressure of 900 hPa (mbar) while located about 950 km (590 mi) north of Onslow , Western Australia . Around the same time , the JTWC assessed Inigo as a powerful cyclone with 1 @-@ min winds of 260 km / h (160 mph) . With a minimum pressure of 900 hPa , Inigo tied Cyclone Gwenda of the 1998 @-@ 99 season as the most intense tropical cyclone on record in the Australian cyclone region .

Upon reaching peak intensity , Inigo maintained an eyewall 32 km (20 mi) in diameter . Late on 4 April , an approaching upper @-@ level trough increased wind shear over the system , which caused a steady weakening trend . On 5 April , the eye became cloud @-@ filled , and later that day the cyclone reached its westernmost point before the approaching trough turned it to the southeast . By 7 April , its winds decreased to below severe tropical cyclone status , or below 120 km / h (75 mph) . The convection continued to decrease , leaving the center exposed from the convection as it made landfall early on 8 April in the Pilbara region of Western Australia . Upon moving ashore , Inigo had winds of around 75 km / h (45 mph) , and the circulation dissipated within 12 hours after moving ashore .

= Impact =

The precursor tropical disturbance dropped heavy rainfall in eastern Indonesia ; on the island of Flores , Larantuka recorded 223 mm (8 @. @ 78 in) in a 24 ? hour period . The rainfall caused flash flooding and mudslides , primarily in Flores but also on West Timor and Sumba . In some locations , the depth of the floodwaters reached 5 meters (16 ft) . The Oesso River in West Timor exceeded its banks , which flooded seven villages . In Kupang in West Timor , the system destroyed hundreds of homes and large fields of corn , bean , and rice crop . Heavy damage was reported near Ende , where flooding and mudslides destroyed 20 houses and destroyed the roads connecting to East Flores . In Ende , a total of 294 animals were killed . The city 's airport was flooded with one meter (3 ft) of water , preventing aerial transportation and leaving the city temporarily isolated . In East Flores Regency in eastern Flores Island , the system left 75 destroyed houses , along with 77 severely damaged and a further 56 receiving light damage . Damage in Indonesia totaled less than \$ 6 million (2003 USD , \$ 6 @. @ 8 million 2007 USD) , and 102 injuries were reported . The Indonesian representative to the Tropical Cyclone Committee of the World Meteorological Organization in 2004 reported the death toll related to the disaster in Indonesia as 58 fatalities .

Additionally , the precursor disturbance produced rough seas along the coastlines , which resulting in the sinking of 12 sailing vessels . Two ships , each with a crew of five to eight people , were reported missing to the southwest of Sumba after Cyclone Inigo passed over their location on 3 April .

Inigo moved ashore on Australia as a weak tropical cyclone , though several locations reported winds of near gale force . The storm dropped light to moderate precipitation near where it made landfall which peaked at 226 mm (8 @. @ 90 inches) , of which 128 mm (5 @. @ 04 in) of rain fell in 80 minutes . No casualties or significant damage was reported in the country .

= = Aftermath = =

Shortly after the storm passed through Indonesia , local government and Red Cross officials distributed assistance to the storm victims , including food , medicine , clean water , and mattresses ; additionally , the government sent about \$ 400 million (2003 IDR , \$ 50 @, @ 000 2003 USD) . The affected citizens resided in temporary shelters , including schools , police offices , and shelters built by local governments . Officials deployed machines to remove debris from the roads affected by the landslides .

As a result of its damage , the name Inigo was retired subsequent to its usage ; its name was replaced with Iggy .