

= 1959 Mexico hurricane =

The 1959 Mexico hurricane is the deadliest eastern Pacific tropical cyclone on record . First observed south of Mexico on October 23 , the cyclone tracked northwest . It intensified into a Category 3 hurricane on October 25 and reached Category 4 intensity the following day . After turning toward the northeast , the hurricane maintained Category 4 status and made landfall near Manzanillo , Mexico . The system continued on that trajectory prior to dissipating the next day .

Impact from the hurricane was severe and widespread . Initially forecast to remain offshore , the system curved northeast and moved ashore , becoming one of Mexico 's worst natural disasters at the time . Up to 150 boats were submerged . Countless homes in Colima and Jalisco were damaged or destroyed , large portions of the states were inaccessible by flash flooding , and hundreds of residents were stranded . All coconut plantations were blown down during the storm , leaving thousands without work and instating fear that it would take the economy years to recover . Torrential rainfall across mountain terrain contributed to numerous mudslides that caused hundreds of fatalities . In the aftermath of the cyclone , convoys delivering aid were hindered by the destruction . Residents were vaccinated to prevent the spread of disease . Overall , the hurricane inflicted at least \$ 280 million (1959 USD) in damage .

= = Meteorological history = =

On October 22 , a low pressure area was present south of the Gulf of Tehuantepec , having originated out of an area of disturbed weather in the region the day before . That day , two ships reported gale @-@ force winds , suggesting that a tropical storm formed by 12 : 00 UTC . Moving west @-@ northwestward parallel to the southwest coast of Mexico , the system steadily intensified , reaching hurricane status by late on October 23 . The storm continued to intensify , although there were few ships in the path to record the intensity until October 26 . During that time , interpolation of observations suggests that the storm attained major hurricane intensity ? a Category 3 on the modern Saffir @-@ Simpson scale ? with winds of 115 mph (185 km / h) on October 25 .

On October 26 , the hurricane turned abruptly to the northeast toward the Mexican coast . At 00 : 00 UTC on October 27 , a nearby ship recorded winds of 130 km / h (80 mph) , confirming the increase in intensity . Six hours later , another ship recorded winds of 115 mph (185 km / h) . At around 12 : 00 UTC on October 27 , the hurricane made landfall just northwest of Manzanillo , Colima , with an eye 13 mi (20 km) in diameter . The Mary Barbara ? a ship in Manzanillo Harbor ? estimated winds of 155 mph (250 km / h) , which was the basis for the previous estimated landfall intensity of 160 mph (260 km / h) , which was later determined to be an overestimate . The same ship reported a minimum barometric pressure of 958 mbar (28 @.@ 3 inHg) in the southeastern periphery of the eyewall ; this , in conjunction with other nearby readings , suggested a minimum central pressure of 955 mbar (28 @.@ 2 inHg) . A reanalysis in 2016 indicated that the hurricane 's peak intensity at landfall was 140 mph (220 km / h) , based on uncertainties in the wind estimates , the central pressure , as well as the storm 's small size and slow movement . The hurricane rapidly weakened over the mountainous terrain of southwestern Mexico . Within 12 hours of landfall , the system weakened to tropical storm status , and on October 28 the storm dissipated .

= = Preparations and impact = =

Thousands of people were unprepared for the storm . Thus , the system was dubbed " a sneak hurricane " . After passing well offshore from Acapulco , it was forecast to head out to sea . Instead , it recurved east and made landfall .

The hurricane had devastating effects on the places it hit . It killed at least 1 @,@ 000 people directly , and a total of 1 @,@ 800 people . At that time , it was Mexico 's worst natural disaster in recent times . Most of the destruction was in Colima and Jalisco . A preliminary estimate of property damage was \$ 280 million (1959 USD) .

The storm sank three merchant ships , and two other vessels . On one ship , the Sinaloa , 21 of 38

hands went down . On another , the El Caribe , all hands were lost . As many as 150 total boats were sunk .

A quarter of the homes in Cihuatlán , Jalisco , were totally destroyed , leaving many homeless . In Manzanillo , Colima , 40 percent of all homes were destroyed , and four ships in the harbor were sunk . Large portions of Colima and Jalisco were isolated by flooding . Hundreds of people were stranded . Minatitlán , Colima , suffered especially , as 800 people out of its population of 1000 were dead or missing , according to a message sent to President Adolfo López Mateos . In Colima , all coconut plantations were blown down and thousands of people were left out of work . That state 's economy was damaged enough that officials thought it would take years to recover .

The hurricane also dumped heavy rains along its path . This water @-@ logged the hills near Minatitlán , and contributed to huge mudslide late on October 29 that claimed 800 victims . The slide uncovered hundreds of venomous scorpions and snakes , which killed tens more people in the aftermath . Additional hordes of scorpions were driven from their nests when the adobe walls crumbled away . The Governor of Colima , Rodolfo Chávez Carrillo and his wife issued a plea for venom inoculations afterwards . In some places , the mud was 10 feet (3 @.@ 0 m) deep . Water supplies were badly polluted , both by debris and dead bodies .

= = Aftermath and records = =

In the aftermath , air rescue operations were conducted , but the destruction of roads in the area hindered convoys carrying aid . Planes also made supply drops , but rescue operations were hindered by broken roads and rails . Survivors were vaccinated against typhoid and tetanus . Part of Manzanillo was placed under quarantine .

The cyclone was the deadliest east Pacific hurricane . Its death totals are higher than any other known Pacific hurricane , including Hurricanes Paul and Liza .