

= Hurricane Bob (1979) =

Hurricane Bob was the first Atlantic tropical cyclone to be officially designated using a masculine name after the discontinuation of Joint Army / Navy Phonetic Alphabet names . Bob brought moderate damage to portions of the United States Gulf Coast and areas farther inland in July 1979 . The storm was the first hurricane in the Gulf of Mexico to form in the month of July since 1959 , and was the fifth tropical cyclone to form during the annual hurricane season . Though the origin of Bob can be traced back to a tropical wave near the western coast of Africa in late June , Bob formed from a tropical depression in the southwestern Gulf of Mexico on July 9 . Tracking in a general northward direction , favorable conditions allowed for quick strengthening . Less than a day after formation , the system reached tropical storm intensity , followed by hurricane intensity on July 11 . Shortly after strengthening into a hurricane , Bob reached its peak intensity with maximum sustained winds of 75 mph (121 km / h) and a minimum barometric pressure of 986 mbar (hPa ; 29 @. @ 12 inHg) . At the same intensity , Bob made landfall west of Grand Isle , Louisiana , and rapidly weakened after moving inland . However , the resulting tropical depression persisted for several days as it paralleled the Mississippi and Ohio rivers . On July 16 , the system emerged into the western Atlantic , where it was subsequently absorbed by a nearby low @-@ pressure area .

Widespread offshore and coastal evacuations took place along the United States Gulf Coast in preparation for Hurricane Bob . Effects from the hurricane on the United States were mostly marginal and typical of a minimal hurricane . The cyclone produced a moderate storm surge , damaging some coastal installments and causing coastal inundation . Strong winds were also associated with Bob 's landfall , though no stations observed winds of hurricane force . The winds downed trees and blew out windows , in addition to causing widespread power outages . Heavy rainfall was also reported in some locations , peaking at 7 @. @ 16 in (182 mm) in Louisiana . Further inland , the torrential rains led to flooding in Indiana , resulting in more considerable damage as opposed to the coast . Bob also spawned eight tornadoes , with two causing significant damage . Overall , Bob was responsible for one death and \$ 20 million in damage .

= = Meteorological history = =

The origin of Hurricane Bob can be traced to a tropical wave that was first located near Cape Verde towards the end of June . The disturbance tracked westward with minimal signs of development , and reached the northwestern Caribbean Sea on July 6 . The following day , the tropical system tracked across the Yucatán Peninsula the following day , and upon emerging into the Gulf of Mexico , the cluster of storms began to develop a weak circulation center . This enabled for more rapid tropical cyclogenesis , and at 1200 UTC on July 9 , the disturbance was analyzed to have organized into a tropical depression ? the third of such in the Atlantic that year . The depression strengthened rather quickly , and on the morning of July 10 a United States Air Force reconnaissance flight indicated that the tropical cyclone had strengthened to tropical storm intensity while situated 740 mi (1 @, @ 190 km) south of Louisiana . Due to the storm 's intensity , the system was consequentially named Bob , making it the first Atlantic tropical cyclone to receive a masculine name since 1952 . At the time the flight measured a minimum barometric pressure of 998 mbar (hPa ; 29 @. @ 47 inHg) .

Upon reaching tropical storm intensity , Bob began to curve further northward as opposed to its prior , northeasterly track , due to the presence of a strengthening , upper @-@ level trough to the storm 's west . The trough greatly enhanced atmospheric conditions around Bob , allowing for the tropical cyclone to intensify rapidly . At 0000 UTC on July 11 , Bob was estimated to have strengthened to hurricane intensity based on additional reconnaissance flight data . This made Bob the first July hurricane in the Gulf of Mexico since Hurricane Debra in 1959 . Though the hurricane 's maximum sustained winds would hold steady at 75 mph (120 km / h) for approximately the ensuing twelve hours , the storm 's barometric pressure would fluctuate before reaching a minimum of 981 mbar (hPa ; 28 @. @ 98 inHg) at 1200 UTC that day ; this would be Bob 's lowest documented barometric pressure . At around the same time , the hurricane made landfall west of Grand Isle ,

Louisiana . After moving inland , Bob quickly weakened due to land interaction , and was a mere tropical depression by July 12 . However , the resulting depression would maintain its intensity for the next several days . On July 13 , the low @-@ pressure area drifted into southern Ohio and afterwards curved eastward . On July 16 , Bob 's remnants moved into the western Atlantic , where they were subsequently absorbed by another low @-@ pressure area .

= = Preparations = =

As Bob moved towards the U.S. Gulf Coast , the National Weather Service issued gale warnings for coastal regions extending from Vermilion Bay , Louisiana to Biloxi , Mississippi at 1600 UTC on July 10 . These warnings were upgraded to hurricane warnings upon Bob 's strengthening to such an intensity . During the storm 's existence , forecasts and predictions from the National Hurricane Center were of greater accuracy than on average . In addition to tropical cyclone warnings and watches , the agency also advised small craft from Port Arthur , Texas to Pensacola , Florida to remain in port .

In preparation for the storm , 8 @, @ 000 offshore oil workers were evacuated . Despite typical evacuation procedure , Chevron Corporation immediately evacuated their offshore oil staff rather than executing a three phase evacuation plan . On land , 2 @, @ 500 residents and tourists on Grand Isle were also evacuated . In total , as many as 80 @, @ 000 people evacuated from coastal areas leading up to Bob 's eventual landfall . In New Orleans , 4 @, @ 000 people checked in to the city 's 19 evacuation centers . The Mississippi River was temporarily closed to shipping by the United States Coast Guard for eight hours before reopening after the storm .

= = Impact = =

Effects in the United States as a result of Bob were typical of a minimal hurricane , and were not of considerable nature . At the coast , Bob caused moderate storm surge , resulting in coastal waters rising to as high as 5 ft (1 @. @ 5 m) above normal . The rough seas sunk several boats and caused significant damage to piers . A levee on Grand Isle was breached by the surge , resulting in some coastal inundation . Minor beach erosion occurred on the coast of Mississippi . In Mobile County , Alabama , the wave action damaged cars near the shore and disrupted seafood operations in the Bayou La Batre area .

Strong winds were reported in association with the storm , but no station documented sustained winds within hurricane force . The highest wind observation was taken on an oil rig off the coast of Louisiana , which clocked sustained winds at 63 mph (101 km / h) . However , the strongest wind gust in association with the hurricane was measured in Bay St. Louis , Mississippi , at 64 mph (103 km / h) . In New Orleans , these strong winds damaged trees and power lines , and also broke several windows in the city 's central business district . In addition , widespread power outages impacted 53 @, @ 000 electricity customers in the city 's area . Similar incidents took place in Houma , Louisiana . In Lafitte , Louisiana , two men were blown off of the roof of a marina , and one of them was killed ; this would be the only death associated with the hurricane . Further east , in Florida , trees and power lines were downed in Niceville .

Hurricane Bob also produced a widespread area of rain that was heavy in localized areas . Rainfall associated with the hurricane peaked at 7 @. @ 16 in (182 mm) in Louisiana , where the storm made landfall . Statewide rainfall totals peaked at 6 @. @ 64 and 4 @. @ 81 in (169 and 122 mm) in Pascagoula , Mississippi and Robertsedale , Alabama , respectively . Further inland , the remnants of Bob dropped heavy rainfall in the Midwestern United States , peaking at 5 @. @ 72 in (145 mm) at a station in Indiana University Bloomington . In addition to the strong winds and heavy rain , Bob produced eight tornadoes across the southern United States . One of these tornadoes caused \$ 27 @, @ 500 in damage after striking areas of Biloxi , Mississippi . Another tornado impacted areas near Red Level , Alabama destroying or damaging several buildings and uprooting trees . Overall , Hurricane Bob caused approximately \$ 20 million in damage . However , \$ 15 million in damage resulted from flooding in Indiana , with the rest of the storm 's monetary impacts arising from coastal

regions .