

= Hurricane Lily ( 1971 ) =

Hurricane Lily was a short @-@ lived Category 1 hurricane of August 1971 that devastated the city of Puerto Vallarta in Mexico . Forming from an area of cloudiness associated with former Atlantic Tropical Storm Chloe , the storm slowly intensified , building to peak intensity just before landfall northwest of Manzanillo , Colima on August 31 . The hurricane quickly weakened and became extratropical . After leaving land , the extratropical remnants of Lily dissipated on September 1 . The storm 's movement close to land affected shipping due to the limited warning , which was partially set back due to difficulties in clarifying the hurricane 's position on radar from reconnaissance aircraft .

The hurricane was Puerto Vallarta 's worst in two decades and the second hurricane of the season to heavily impact Mexico after Hurricane Bridget . The storm caused the Cuale River to overflow its banks , inundating the downtown section of Puerto Vallarta with water that was up to 8 feet ( 2 @.@ 4 m ) deep in some sections . The Mexican army flew in aid after trucks were blocked by flooded roads . The hurricane claimed three lives on the mainland and nine lives when a boat capsized .

= = Meteorological history = =

On August 25 , Tropical Storm Chloe made landfall on British Honduras ( present day Belize ) as a tropical depression . After dissipating , the remnants of the storm crossed into the Pacific Ocean , where they contributed to an area of shower activity that persisted over the Gulf of Tehuantepec . On August 28 , the tropical activity organized around a circulation which quickly developed into a tropical depression the same day . The depression was upgraded to a tropical storm on August 29 based on satellite presentation that depicted significant cirrus outflow and a comma ? shaped cloud mass spanning 2 ° of latitude in diameter and was subsequently named Lily .

Following its upgrade to tropical storm intensity , Lily began developing a spiral cloud structure and heavy anticyclonic outflow on August 30 and was upgraded to a hurricane the same day . During its intensification , United States Air Force reconnaissance tried to fly into the hurricane , but penetration was rendered impossible due to the cumulonimbus clouds in the spiral bands , causing the aircraft to rely on radar readings , which showed an eye 40 miles ( 65 km ) in diameter . Following the flight , the hurricane turned to the north @-@ northwestward towards the Mexican coast . On August 31 , a ship called the Turrialba reported a 980 @-@ millibar ( 29 inHg ) sea ? level pressure while in the eye of the hurricane . Shortly after the report , the hurricane peaked in intensity with winds of 85 mph ( 140 km / h ) just prior to landfall 30 miles ( 50 km ) northwest of Manzanillo . The cyclone quickly weakened overland , and after only six hours over land , its winds weakened to only 30 mph ( 50 km / h ) , a decline of 55 mph ( 90 km / h ) and the cyclone became extratropical . The now ? extratropical Lily continued to cross the Mexican coast , and shortly after emerging over water on September 1 , the cyclone dissipated .

= = Impact = =

The north @-@ northwestward track Lily took off the Mexican coast was not well @-@ forecast due in part to difficulties in interpreting the radar data from the reconnaissance flight . As a result , many ships got caught in hurricane @-@ force winds and high seas while trying to cross between it and the coastline . The Turrialba also reported that many exhausted tropical birds were taken aboard the ship while in the eye . The ship had to maneuver in order to avoid hitting other ships in the area . Another boat with twelve people aboard capsized off a beach near Puerto Vallarta while weathering wind gusts of 110 mph ( 180 km / h ) from the hurricane . Nine aboard the ship were reported dead as a result , but four others were able to swim back to shore .

The hurricane was the worst to strike Puerto Vallarta in 20 years . 5 @,@ 000 people were evacuated due to the hurricane with an addition 500 people on vacation becoming stranded inside their hotels . At least 600 evacuees sought refuge in a customs house , with an additional 1000 more evacuating to an airport terminal . More evacuees sought shelter in schools and the city hall .

Four major rivers , including the Cuale River , which flows into the city , overflowed their banks , inundating the city along with several neighboring communities . Some areas of downtown Puerto Vallarta were submerged in depths of up to 8 feet ( 2 @.@ 4 m ) due to the flooding . Telephone lines in the city were suspended and highways were rendered impassable by the floods . One person died during a house collapse in the city and two others drowned . Another source reported five deaths from house collapses , although the post @-@ season report regards only three deaths in association with Lily in Mexico . The hurricane also passed over the nearby town of Barra de Navidad , where the residents took refuge inside the church of San Antonio . A local legend states that during the hurricane , the arms of Jesus Christ on the church 's crucifix broke and hung down . The moment the arms broke , the hurricane 's effects in the town stopped . The figure has since been known as the Christ of the Cyclone .

= = = Aftermath = = =

Relief efforts following the hurricane were mostly affected by the associated flooding . Trucks transporting food and medicine from the Jalisco state government were forced to turn back because of flooded roads . The army then decided on an aerial transport . This effort was hampered because , after three federal helicopters and Air Force planes touched down at the local airport , the road into the city was still flooded , meaning the aid could not be distributed .

Lily 's effects in Puerto Vallarta made it the second hurricane of the season to be declared the worst hurricane to strike a specific city in twenty or more years . The first was Hurricane Bridget , which struck Acapulco . Despite the damage , the name was not retired and was reused in 1975 , but due to a change in names lists in 1978 , the name Lily has not been used since .