

= Hurricane Fran (1973) =

Hurricane Fran , also referred initially as Subtropical storm Bravo , was a long @-@ tracked Category 1 hurricane that caused little damage during its existence in early October 1973 . Originating from a tropical wave that developed off the coast of Hispaniola on October 1 , the precursor to Fran slowly developing during the first week of October . By October 4 , a surface low formed within the system and convective activity increased . The system was eventually classified as a subtropical depression on October 8 and was upgraded to Subtropical Storm Bravo shortly thereafter . Bravo became increasingly tropical throughout the day as it intensified . Following a reconnaissance mission into the storm on October 10 , it was deemed fully tropical and upgraded to a hurricane , at which time it was renamed Fran .

Hurricane Fran rapidly tracked towards the northeast in response to an area of low pressure within the westerlies . By October 11 , the hurricane attained its peak winds of 80 mph (130 km / h) and its lowest barometric pressure of 978 mbar (hPa ; 28 @.@ 88 inHg) after bypassing the Azores islands . Situated over exceedingly cold waters , Fran transitioned into an extratropical cyclone late on October 12 as it neared the French coastline . Shortly before reaching land , the system was absorbed by a cold front . Throughout its existence , Fran had little effect on land .

= = Meteorological history = =

Hurricane Fran originated from a tropical wave associated with an area of convection north of Hispaniola on October 1 . The system tracked westward at 15 mph (24 km / h) but gained little strength and the National Hurricane Center (NHC) did not anticipate development of the storm . By October 4 , the system interacted with a mid @-@ tropospheric trough near the southeast United States , resulting in the formation of a surface low . Tracking eastward , showers and thunderstorms began to develop around the circulation ; however , the structure of the system was not fully tropical . On October 7 , ships in the vicinity of the low reported decreasing barometric pressures , indicating a strengthening system . Satellites monitoring the system depicted a disorganized storm with mainly subtropical characteristics . Late on October 8 , the cyclone had become sufficiently organized to be classified a subtropical depression .

Cold air from the remnants of a cold front became entrained within the circulation ; however , the cold air gradually warmed . On October 9 , winds increased to gale @-@ force and the depression was upgraded to a subtropical storm , at which time it was given the name Bravo . By October 10 , Bravo had intensified substantially , as hurricane hunters recorded hurricane @-@ force winds roughly 15 mi (25 km) from the center of the storm . Following this finding , the National Hurricane Center reclassified the system as a tropical system and renamed it Fran , dropping its previous designation of Bravo . Upon becoming tropical , Fran developed a strong outflow and several convective feeder bands . Additionally , the storm had developed a 35 mi (55 km) wide eye .

Steered generally eastward by a deep surface low in the westerlies , Fran accelerated towards the Azores Islands . The storm traveled at a rapid pace of 30 to 35 mph (48 to 56 km / h) but continued to organize . By October 11 , the hurricane began to undergo an extratropical transition as it continued to move unusually fast towards the northeast . Around this time , Fran attained its peak winds of 80 mph (130 km / h) . Shortly after bypassing the Azores islands on October 12 , the system moved over an area with sea surface temperatures around 60 ° F (16 ° C) , well below what is required for tropical cyclone development . Later that day , the central pressure of Fran decreased to 978 mbar (hPa ; 28 @.@ 88 inHg) , the lowest recorded in relation to the hurricane . Shortly after reaching this intensity , the hurricane transitioned into an extratropical cyclone and quickly merged with a cold front off the coast of France .

= = Preparations and impact = =

Although Fran passed near the Azores as a hurricane , winds on the islands only reached 45 mph (75 km / h) and no damage was recorded . On October 12 , a French ship encountered the storm ,

recording sustained winds of 40 mph (65 km / h) and an air pressure of 981 mbar (hPa ; 28 @. @ 97 inHg) . Ships near the English and French coastlines recorded winds up to 60 mph (95 km / h) as the extratropical remnants of Fran passed through the region .