

= Hurricane Florence (1953) =

Hurricane Florence was a minimal Atlantic hurricane that struck the Florida Panhandle in September of the 1953 season . The eighth storm and fifth hurricane of the season , Florence developed in the western Caribbean from a tropical wave near Jamaica on September 23 . It produced heavy rainfall on the nearby island , and later caused damage in western Cuba . The storm quickly intensified into a hurricane over the Yucatan Channel , and as it moved north through the Gulf of Mexico , Florence 's maximum sustained winds reached 125 mph (205 km / h) . On September 26 , the hurricane hit in a sparsely populated region of western Florida , and shortly after landfall became an extratropical cyclone .

Damage from Florence , with 421 houses damaged and another three destroyed . The winds destroyed the roofs of three evacuation shelters , resulting in one injury . The city of Apalachicola , Florida was temporarily isolated due to the storm 's impact . There were no deaths associated with Florence , and damage totaled \$ 200 @, @ 000 (1953 USD , \$ 1 @. @ 77 million 2016 USD) . After becoming extratropical , the remnants continued to the northeast , producing rainfall along its path before dissipating on September 28 southeast of New England .

= = Meteorological history = =

The origins of Hurricane Florence were from a tropical wave that moved through the Lesser Antilles into the eastern Caribbean Sea on September 21 . The wave tracked generally westward , and spawned a tropical storm on September 23 about 100 mi (160 km) southeast of Jamaica . Given the name Florence , the storm steadily intensified after developing , although a well @-@ defined circulation was not observed until September 24 . That day , Florence attained hurricane status in the Yucatán Channel between the Yucatán Peninsula and the western tip of Cuba .

After turning north and entering the Gulf of Mexico , Florence quickly intensified , with the Hurricane Hunters estimating winds of 125 to 140 mph (205 to 225 km / h) ; the official peak intensity was reported as 125 mph (205 km / h) , along with a pressure of 968 @. @ 0 mb (28 @. @ 59 inHg) . However , the estimate of the peak winds may have been too high , as ships in the region did not confirm them . On September 26 , it began quickly weakening , due to a combination of colder water temperatures and cool air . At around 1800 UTC that day , Florence made landfall in a sparsely populated area between Fort Walton and Panama City Beach , Florida with winds of 80 mph (130 km / h) . Within six hours after moving ashore , the hurricane had transitioned into an extratropical cyclone near the borders of Florida , Alabama , and Georgia . The remnants of Florence turned the northeast along a cold front , crossing Georgia before emerging near Savannah . The storm paralleled the Carolinas just offshore , dissipating on September 28 southeast of New England .

= = Preparations and impact = =

While the storm was first developing , Florence dropped heavy rainfall up to 10 in (250 mm) in Jamaica , which isolated villages and blocked roads . Early in its existence , Hurricane Florence produced strong winds and waves along the west coast of Cuba , producing locally heavy damage . Prior to the hurricane making landfall on the United States Gulf Coast , the Weather Bureau issued warnings and recommended evacuations , which were credited in preventing any deaths or major injuries . In Florida and Alabama , the National Guard were activated in the event of heavy damage being caused , although they were ultimately not required . The Air Force flew hundreds of planes away from the region for safety . In addition , the Coast Guard drove along the beach to warn people of the approaching hurricane . In Panama City , Florida , about 10 @, @ 000 people were evacuated . All warnings related to the hurricane were lowered by the New Orleans U.S. Weather Bureau office at 4 pm CDT on September 26 . Offshore , a United States Coast Guard ship came to a standstill for 18 hours from the morning of September 25 into the early morning hours of September 26 while battling the cyclone out in the Gulf of Mexico .

The strongest winds recorded were 84 mph (135 km / h) at Eglin Air Force Base . Although

Florence made landfall in Florida , the heaviest rainfall related to Florence was 14 @. @ 71 in (374 mm) in Lockhart , Alabama . Two intense rainbands , one on each side of the center , were responsible for the heaviest rainfall from the hurricane , including hourly rainfall rates of over 1 @. @ 5 in (38 mm) . Panama City reported 3 @. @ 66 in (93 millimetres) in a three @- @ hour period . The combination of winds and heavy rainfall caused minor crop damage in the Florida panhandle and southeastern Alabama . Along the coast , Florence damaged 421 houses and destroyed three others . The winds destroyed the roofs of three shelters ? one at Eglin Air Force Base and two in Crestview , Florida , forcing the evacuees to leave for safer areas ; one person was injured in the process . The winds also destroyed the roofs of nine houses in Crestview . Strong waves , reaching up to 14 ft (4 @. @ 3 m) in height , damaged 100 ft (30 m) of a fishing pier in Panama City . The waves also washed over portions of U.S. Route 98 near Apalachicola , leaving the city isolated after power lines were downed .

Due to the strongest winds affecting a sparsely populated area near the coast , overall damage in the United States was minor , estimated around \$ 200 @, @ 000 (1953 USD , \$ 1 @. @ 77 million 2016 USD) . Heavy rainfall was reported in portions Alabama , including a total of 8 @. @ 72 in (221 mm) , one inch shy of the 24 ? hour precipitation record in Montgomery set in 1892 . There , the rainfall backed up sewer drains , flooding homes and cars . The storm left about 4 @, @ 000 people without electricity in the area . While Florence moved across the southeastern United States , the heaviest rainfall fell to the near and left of its center , due to interaction with a cold front .