

= Typhoon Bess (1974) =

Typhoon Bess , known in the Philippines as Typhoon Susang , was responsible for the disappearance of a United States Air Force weather reconnaissance aircraft . Developing out of a poorly organized system on October 8 to the east of the Philippines , Bess featured two centers of circulation . Initially the southern low was monitored ; however , a low to the north soon became the dominant center . Tracking generally west @-@ northwestward , the storm gradually intensified before striking northern Luzon as a minimal typhoon on October 11 . Temporary weakening took place due to interaction with land . After moving back over water the following morning , Bess regained typhoon intensity . This was short @-@ lived though , as conditions surrounding the cyclone soon caused it to weaken . Now moving due west , the weakening storm eventually struck Hainan Island as a tropical storm on October 12 before diminishing to a tropical depression . The depression briefly moved back over water before dissipating in northern Vietnam on October 14 .

Bess produced heavy rains throughout the Philippines , especially in Luzon where 782 @.@ 3 mm (30 @.@ 80 in) was measured in Baguio . These rains triggered extensive flooding and landslides that killed 26 people and left 3 others missing . Many homes were destroyed and damage amounted to \$ 9 @.@ 2 million (1974 USD) . On October 12 , a reconnaissance plane , with a crew of six , investigating the periphery of the storm went missing . It is presumed that the entire crew was lost when the aircraft crashed off the coast of Luzon . Though the center remained offshore , strong winds and high tides also impacted Hong Kong , causing minor flooding .

= = Meteorological history = =

On October 6 , 1974 , the Joint Typhoon Warning Center (JTWC) began monitoring a tropical disturbance several hundred miles southeast of Guam . Tracking quickly westward to west @-@ northwestward in response to a strong subtropical ridge to the north , the system gradually organized , passing near Ulithi atoll on October 7 . Accompanied by a broad monsoonal flow , the disturbance featured multiple centers of circulation . On October 8 , it developed into a tropical depression and soon into a tropical storm , at which time it was assigned the name Bess . Early on October 9 , an aircraft reconnaissance mission into Bess revealed that a new dominant center of circulation had developed to the north of the original low . The southern low soon dissipated as the northern one became a tropical storm . The northern system retained the name Bess and is considered the same storm by the JTWC .

After the northern circulation became the dominant center on October 9 , a deepening trough in the westerlies caused a decrease in synoptic pressures , resulting in Bess ' forward motion greatly decreasing . Maintaining a west @-@ northwesterly track , strong outflow developed , especially to the southwest of the circulation . The storm eventually intensified into a typhoon on October 10 as it approached the northern Philippines . Due to the cyclone 's proximity to the country , the Philippine Atmospheric , Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration also monitored the storm and assigned it with the local name Susang . Later that day , Bess made landfall in northern Luzon , roughly 95 km (60 mi) south of Escarpada Point , with winds estimated at 120 km / h (75 mph) . Though classified a minimal typhoon by the JTWC , the Hong Kong Royal Observatory reported that reconnaissance planes had recorded surface winds of 140 km / h (85 mph) before the system moved ashore . Inland , a barometric pressure of 976 @.@ 9 mbar (hPa ; 28 @.@ 85 inHg) was recorded in Tuguegarao as the typhoon passed 55 km (35 mi) to the north .

Due to the interaction with the high terrain of northern Luzon , Bess temporarily weakened to a tropical storm before regaining typhoon strength over the South China Sea during the afternoon of October 11 . As the storm emerged back over water , satellite images revealed a relatively large system with clouds spanning an area 485 km (300 mi) in diameter . Upon reintensifying , Bess turned due west in response to a dominating high pressure area over Southern China . With a large difference in pressures between the two systems , a strong northeasterly flow developed between them . This resulted in gale @-@ force winds occurring up to 400 km (250 mi) from Bess 's center . During the evening of October 12 , the combined effects of a winter monsoon and entrainment of

cool , dry air from mainland China began to weaken the system . By the following morning , Bess had weakened to tropical storm as it passed 305 km (190 mi) south of Hong Kong . The system later struck Hainan Island with winds of 85 km / h (50 mph) before lessening to a tropical depression . The dissipating system emerged over the Gulf of Tonkin on October 14 and ultimately dissipated as it began moving ashore in northern Vietnam later that day .

= = Impact = =

Striking northern Luzon as a typhoon , Bess produced damaging winds and torrential rainfall across the region . Gusts peaked at 178 km / h (111 mph) in Aparri , Cagayan while Baguio City experienced gusts of 150 km / h (90 mph) . Communication across the region was greatly disrupted as numerous power lines and trees were downed . While much of the peninsula received 130 to 150 mm (5 to 6 in) of rain , a 24 ? hour maxima of 782 @. @ 3 mm (30 @. @ 8 in) was reported in Baguio . The rainfall triggered widespread flash flooding and landslides , resulting in 26 fatalities and extensive damage . One death took place in Baguio after a girl was buried in a landslide . At least three other people were reported missing . In a town roughly 805 km (500 mi) south of Manila , a landslide destroyed eight homes and a school . Flood waters inundated four villages in the central Philippines . The storm affected a total of 35 @, @ 562 people , of which about 4 @, @ 000 became homeless . Total losses amounted to \$ 9 @. @ 2 million (1974 USD) .

On October 11 , a level one warning signal was raised for Hong Kong , indicating that a tropical cyclone was approaching the region . This was soon raised to level three as strong winds were expected to affect the area . Although the center of Bess passed roughly 305 km (190 mi) south of Hong Kong , the pressure gradient between the tropical storm and high pressure to the north resulted in strong winds across the region . On the Pratas Islands , ten @- @ minute sustained winds of 95 km / h (60 mph) were reported . In Hong Kong itself , winds reached 45 km / h (30 mph) and gusted to 85 km / h (50 mph) . Gusts up to 113 km / h (71 mph) occurred on Tate 's Cairn . In contrast to the unusually strong winds , Bess produced virtually no rainfall as it passed by , with only a trace of precipitation measured between October 11 and 14 in Hong Kong . Along the coast , abnormally high tides combined with storm surge flooded low @- @ lying areas of the city . Tides at Tai Po Kau reached 3 @. @ 6 m (12 ft) with a surge of 1 @. @ 5 m (4 @. @ 9 ft) . Sea water leaked into the city 's underground sewage system and caused minor flooding in the area 's western district . Some property damage was reported .

While over the South China Sea on October 12 , a United States Air Force WC @- @ 130H Hercules reconnaissance aircraft (call sign Swan 38) , with a crew of six , went missing while collecting data on the cyclone . The plane took off from Clark Air Base during the night on October 12 and made its final contact six hours later roughly 95 km (60 mi) north of Manila . A rescue team of five Air Force aircraft and the USS White Plains was dispatched to look for survivors . Search and rescue missions for the crew only found pieces of debris , such as an aircraft survival radio , soundproofing material , and orange cushion @- @ like material . All six crewmen were never found and are presumed dead . Following the incident , the 53d Weather Reconnaissance Squadron established the Swan 38 Memorial Scholarship for outstanding students in the 403d Wing .

Because of the damage and loss of life caused by the storm , the name Bess was retired and replaced with Bonnie . However , when the list of typhoon names was changed to incorporate male names in 1979 , the name was re @- @ introduced to the roster . Coincidentally , it was again retired in 1982 when a powerful storm named Bess caused extensive damage and loss of life in Japan . This marked the only occasion where a single name was removed twice in the same basin .