

= 1851 Atlantic hurricane season =

The 1851 Atlantic hurricane season was the first Atlantic hurricane season to be included in the official Atlantic tropical cyclone record . Six known tropical cyclones occurred during the season , the earliest of which formed on June 25 and the latest of which dissipated on October 19 . These dates fall within the range of most Atlantic tropical cyclone activity . None of the cyclones existed simultaneously with another . Of the six storms , two only have a single point in their track known .

Two other hurricanes were reported during the season , one near Tampico and the other near Jamaica ; however , they are not in the official hurricane database . There may have been other unconfirmed tropical cyclones during the season . Meteorologist Christopher Landsea estimates that between zero and six storms were missed from the official database , due to small tropical cyclone size , sparse ship reports , and relatively unpopulated coastlines .

= = Season summary = =

Five of the six tropical cyclones affected land , including three making landfall with winds of over 74 mph (119 km / h) . The first struck Texas as a hurricane , which caused moderate to heavy damage , particularly to shipping in Matagorda Bay . One death was indirectly related to the hurricane , as well as at least two injuries .

The strongest and deadliest hurricane of the season tracked from east of the Lesser Antilles , through the Greater Antilles , and across the southeastern United States before last being observed near Newfoundland ; it was tied for having the longest duration for a hurricane prior to 1870 . When it hit near Panama City , Florida with winds of 115 mph (185 km / h) , it caused at least 23 deaths , including five when a lighthouse was destroyed . Many houses were destroyed along its path , primarily along the Florida Panhandle .

The other landfalling hurricane was one that struck near Tampico , where it caused heavy damage . The last tropical storm of the season made landfall on Rhode Island , though associated damage is unknown . A tropical storm affected the Lesser Antilles in early July , and another tropical storm remained nearly stationary for three days to the southeast of North Carolina .

= = Timeline = =

= = Storms = =

= = = Hurricane One = = =

A small 90 mph (150 km / h) hurricane was first observed on June 25 , about 75 miles (120 km / h) southeast of Freeport , Texas . It tracked westward , moving ashore near Matagorda Bay later that night near peak intensity , with an estimated minimum barometric central pressure of 977 mbar ; due to lack of observations , it is possible the hurricane struck as the equivalent of a Category 2 hurricane on the Saffir @-@ Simpson scale . The cyclone slowly weakened as it turned northwestward , with hurricane force wind gusts reported 24 hours after landfall in current @-@ day Medina County . It is estimated that the storm dissipated early on June 28 over central Texas .

The hurricane produced heavy damage near where it moved ashore , having been described as the most disastrous experienced there to date . The winds destroyed every wharf and several houses in Port Lavaca . On Matagorda Island , the saltwater contaminated the fresh water supply , and in Matagorda Bay , heavy shipping losses were reported . As the cyclone progressed inland , it dropped light to moderate rainfall , peaking at around 3 inches (75 mm) in Corpus Christi . A fort near current day Laredo reported 2 @.@ 48 inches (63 mm) of precipitation . Across its path , the winds downed several trees and houses , leaving two people injured and contributing to a death when a sick person was exposed to the storm .

== Hurricane Two ==

A moderate hurricane made landfall near Tampico , which was described as having moved ashore before July 7 ; the Hurricane Research Division assessed the date as July 5 . Heavy damage was reported in Tampico .

== Tropical Storm Three ==

A tropical storm passed through the southern Lesser Antilles on July 10 . Overall documentation on the storm was weak , and its track elsewhere is unknown .

== Hurricane Four ==

The fourth known tropical cyclone of the season , also known as the San Agapito Hurricane and the Great Middle Florida Hurricane of August 1851 , the storm was first observed on August 16 about 775 miles (1250 km) east of Barbados . It tracked west @-@ northwestward , attaining hurricane status on August 17 as it approached the Lesser Antilles . Shortly thereafter , the hurricane passed between Antigua and Saint Kitts and later south of Saint Croix . On August 18 it brushed the southern coast of Puerto Rico , though it affected the entire island due to a large size of the storm . The next day it made landfall on the southern coast of the Dominican Republic . The cyclone rapidly weakened to tropical storm status over Hispaniola , though it regained hurricane status as it paralleled the southern coast of Cuba just offshore . Late on August 20 , the cyclone crossed western Cuba , briefly weakening to tropical storm status before again regaining hurricane status in the southeastern Gulf of Mexico . It quickly strengthened and reached peak winds of 115 mph (185 km / h) early on August 23 about 215 miles (345 km) south @-@ southeast of Pensacola , Florida . Turning northeastward , the hurricane moved ashore near Panama City , Florida at peak intensity , with an estimated barometric pressure of 960 mbar . It accelerated across the Southeastern United States , weakening to a tropical storm before exiting North Carolina into the Atlantic Ocean on August 25 . On August 27 , it was last observed over Newfoundland as a weak tropical storm .

The hurricane passed near Saint Lucia on August 17 , where high tides and rough seas were reported . Flooding was reported in northern Puerto Rico during its passage . Impact is unknown in Hispaniola and Cuba . The hurricane produced an estimated storm tide of 12 feet (3 @.@ 7 m) at Saint Marks ; the combination of waves and the storm tide flooded coastal areas , destroying 50 % of the cotton crops in some areas . Rough seas destroyed a brig , killing 17 people , and another person drowned due to a shipwreck . Many ships were expected to have been lost in the storm , resulting in fear of potentially hundreds of deaths . The storm caused heavy damage along the coastline , and in Apalachicola the winds destroyed the roofs of all but two or three buildings . Dog Island Light was destroyed , resulting in five deaths . Further inland , many houses were blown over in Tallahassee , totaling \$ 60 @,@ 000 in damage (1851 USD) . Heavy damage was reported in Alabama , including destroyed crops and damaged houses ; damage in the state was less than in Florida . Hurricane force winds extended into southwestern Georgia , while tropical storm force winds were reported along the coastline . In Savannah , the winds damaged many houses and downed many trees . In North Carolina and Virginia , winds from the storm destroyed crop fields and small buildings ; in the region , it was described as the worst storm in 30 years . Storm damage was reported as far north as Cambridge , Massachusetts .

== Tropical Storm Five ==

On September 13 , a tropical storm was first observed about 225 miles (360 km) southeast of Cape Hatteras , North Carolina . A nearby ship with the call sign Cushnoc reported estimated winds of 60 mph (95 km / h) , which was judged to be the peak intensity of the tropical storm . Another ship on September 16 reported similar winds in the same location ; Thus , it was estimated to have

remained nearly stationary for three days . Its complete track is unknown .

= = = Tropical Storm Six = = =

A tropical storm developed on October 16 about 155 miles (250 km) east of Cape Canaveral , Florida . It tracked northeastward , gradually strengthening to attain peak winds of 70 mph (110 km / h) early on October 17 . On October 18 , the storm turned more to the north @-@ northeast as its forward motion increased . Gradually weakening , the storm dissipated late on October 19 after making landfall on Rhode Island .

= = = Other storms = = =

On August 2 , a hurricane was reported in the vicinity of Tampico . However , it was not listed as a tropical cyclone in the official hurricane database .

An assessment by scholar Michael Chenoweth indicated the presence of a hurricane in the vicinity of western Jamaica around November 7 . It is not currently listed in the official hurricane database .