

= Hurricane King =

Hurricane King was the most severe hurricane to strike the city of Miami , Florida , since the 1926 Miami hurricane . It was the eleventh tropical storm and the last of six major hurricanes in the 1950 Atlantic hurricane season . The cyclone formed in the western Caribbean Sea on October 13 , and initially moved northeastward , slowly strengthening . Hurricane King crossed Cuba on October 17 , causing seven deaths and \$ 2 million in damage ( 1950 USD ) . It reached its peak intensity of 130 mph ( 210 km / h ) and subsequently made landfall on downtown Miami . The hurricane damaged 20 @, @ 861 houses in southern Florida , 580 of them severely , and destroyed a further 248 . Further inland , King caused heavy crop damage , particularly to the citrus industry . After weakening to a tropical storm , King moved across Georgia , where it caused isolated power outages and minor damage . Across the United States , the hurricane left four fatalities and \$ 30 million in damage ( \$ 316 @, @ 000 @, @ 000 in 2014 USD ) .

= = Meteorological history = =

The origins of Hurricane King were from a tropical depression that developed just off the north coast of Honduras on October 13 . It was a small system throughout its duration , and initially moved toward the east and east @-@ northeast . At the time , the system was considered a weak and broad depression , producing convection , or thunderstorms , from Honduras to western Cuba . It tracked to the east @-@ northeast , becoming a tropical storm on October 14 . The system was later given the name " King " from the Joint Army / Navy Phonetic Alphabet .

The tropical storm slowly intensified as it tracked toward Cuba , and on October 16 , King attained hurricane status while passing between Jamaica and the Cayman Islands . It quickly intensified that day , and at 2200 UTC , the hurricane made landfall just west of Camagüey with winds of 90 mph ( 150 km / h ) . The hurricane remained small , as the city of Camagüey reported peak winds of only 65 mph ( 105 km / h ) . Within twelve hours , Hurricane King crossed central Cuba , during which it weakened into a minimal hurricane . After entering the Florida Straits , King quickly re @-@ intensified , and Hurricane Hunters indicated maximum winds of 100 to 105 mph ( 160 to 165 km / h ) over water . At the time , the barometric pressure was 988 mbar , and the eye was 20 miles ( 32 km ) in diameter . The hurricane quickly intensified as it turned north @-@ northwestward . Early on October 18 , King attained major hurricane status ; it was the sixth and final major hurricane of the season . In 24 hours , the pressure dropped 33 @. @ 2 mbar and the eye contracted to 5 miles ( 8 km ) in diameter . At 0500 UTC on October 18 , Hurricane King made landfall on downtown Miami , Florida with peak winds of 130 mph ( 210 km / h ) , making it a Category 4 hurricane . The city 's Weather Bureau office , which was struck by the eastern eyewall , recorded sustained winds of 122 mph ( 197 km / h ) with gust estimated at 150 mph ( 240 km / h ) .

Over land , the compact hurricane weakened as it continued through the state . After crossing Lake Okeechobee , Hurricane King passed over the city of Okeechobee , which recorded a pressure of 977 mbar . The winds diminished along the southern and western side of the storm , although winds gusted to hurricane force in many locations in eastern coastal Florida . Early on October 19 , King weakened to tropical storm status over north @-@ central Florida , and later that day weakened further into a tropical depression over western Georgia . King curved northwestward , dissipating over Alabama on October 20 .

= = Preparations and impact = =

= = = Caribbean = = =

Early in its duration , King produced a widespread area of convection that spread from Honduras to Cuba . Swan Island , located just off of the coast of Honduras , reported 2 @. @ 03 in ( 52 mm ) of rainfall . Prior to its first landfall , officials posted hurricane warnings across eastern Cuba and the

Bahamas . While crossing over Cuba , Hurricane King produced winds of up to 120 mph ( 195 km / h ) . The hurricane killed seven people and caused \$ 2 million ( 1950 USD ) in damage throughout the country . Offshore , a freighter sunk during the storm , prompting the crew 's rescue by the Cuban navy . There was an initial report of ten people missing on the ship , although it is unknown how many , if any , were related to the seven confirmed deaths in the country .

= = = Florida = = =

About 36 hours prior to the hurricane making landfall , when it was still south of Cuba , the Miami Weather Bureau issued a hurricane alert for South Florida . About 18 hours before landfall , the alert was replaced by a hurricane warning . The advance warning time was believed to have prevented many deaths ; however , the population was considered complacent with the warning , causing additional damage when they executed improper preparations , such as securing windows .

Hurricane King struck Miami around midnight local time with a very compact area of strong winds . Its eye was about 5 @. @ 2 miles ( 8 @. @ 4 km ) in diameter ; the western edge of the eye moved across Miami International Airport , which reported wind gusts of 125 mph ( 202 km / h ) , and the eastern side struck the Miami Weather Bureau office , which recorded sustained winds of 122 mph ( 197 km / h ) . The principal damage zone was sharply @-@ defined in an area 14 miles ( 23 km ) in diameter ; the boundaries of the damage resembled the path of a tornado , although a subsequent analysis indicated the majority of the damage was not tornadic in nature . There was one confirmed report of a damaging tornado in Davie . As it made landfall , Hurricane King produced lightning near its center , which was the first confirmed occurrence in Florida . The Weather Bureau considered King the severest hurricane since the 1926 Great Miami Hurricane to hit the area .

Across Florida , damage totaled \$ 27 @. @ 75 million ( 1950 USD ) , of which \$ 15 million was in the Miami metropolitan area . The hurricane damaged 20 @, @ 861 houses in southern Florida , 580 of them severely . Additionally , 248 trailer homes were damaged , 188 of them severely . A total of 248 houses or trailers were destroyed in the Miami area . A preliminary survey indicated there were about 2 @, @ 000 store windows that were broken during the storm . In West Hollywood , a town of 2 @, @ 000 people located north of Miami , strong winds destroyed or severely damaged about 150 houses , leaving hundreds homeless . At the Broward County airport in Fort Lauderdale , the winds damaged 55 buildings and destroyed one plane . Further north , damage was lighter in Palm Beach , consisting of downed trees and flooded streets . Along its path through the state , strong winds were observed around Lake Okeechobee , with a 93 mph ( 150 km / h ) gust in Clewiston . In Orlando , the winds destroyed the roof of an airport hangar .

In central Florida , the hurricane caused widespread damage to crops and properties . Damage to the grapefruit crop was heaviest in the region along the Indian River , where losses were expected to reach 30 % . The orange crop was not as affected , and no area reported total losses at more than 5 % . Losses to the citrus crop were considered better than initially anticipated . Overall , the citrus crop damage totaled about \$ 3 million , with 2 @. @ 5 million boxes destroyed . Additionally , the hurricane flooded about 20 @. @ 3 sq mi ( 53 km<sup>2</sup> ) of vegetable fields around Lake Okeechobee . Near Pompano , high winds and rain caused heavy losses to crops planted during early autumn , including snap beans , lima beans , cucumbers , eggplant , pepper , and squash ; most of the crops required replanting . Elsewhere , the snap bean and sweet corn crops were severely damaged around the Everglades , and farms around Fort Pierce experienced heavy losses to the tomato crop .

Intense rainbands spread across the state 's eastern coastline ; Hillsboro Inlet Light near Fort Lauderdale recorded sustained winds of 91 mph ( 147 km / h ) , and St. Augustine Light recorded a gust of 87 mph ( 141 km / h ) . Further inland , Jacksonville reported sustained winds of 72 mph ( 116 km / h ) with gusts to 82 mph ( 133 km / h ) . In Jacksonville , Hurricane King left widespread power outages due to the winds knocking over trees and power lines . Street flooding was reported , and around 30 families required evacuation due to the storm .

Overall , there were 50 injuries in the state , as well as at least three deaths . Two of them ? a woman in West Hollywood , Florida and a man in Hallandale ? were killed when their houses

collapsed from the strong winds . The third death occurred in Sanford when a boy drowned in a flooded stream . There were also unconfirmed reports of a fourth person drowning when his boat capsized west of Bunnell . The hurricane was one of two major hurricanes ? a Category 3 or higher on the Saffir @-@ Simpson scale ? to hit the state in 1950 . It was the first time on record that two storms of such intensity hit Florida in the same year , and has only been repeated since in 2004 with hurricanes Charley and Jeanne , and in 2005 with hurricanes Dennis and Wilma .

= = = Elsewhere in the United States = = =

Later in its duration , King moved into Georgia as a weakening tropical storm before dissipating . The storm brought heavy rainfall and wind gusts of up to 55 mph ( 90 km / h ) , causing a three @-@ hour power outage in Valdosta and downing several trees . Across the state , King produced \$ 250 @, @ 000 in damage ( 1950 USD ) and caused one death .

Throughout the United States , Hurricane King caused 4 deaths and \$ 30 million in damage ( 1950 USD ) . The hurricane also caused 199 injuries , of which 16 were severe .

= = Aftermath = =

After the hurricane 's passage , officials deployed the Florida National Guard to affected areas in order to maintain order and quell looting . Across Florida , a total of 3 @, @ 897 people filed damage claims after receiving damage from the hurricane , 80 % of them in the Miami area . Insurance companies paid about \$ 1 million to compensate for the storm damage . Due to the loss in citrus crop , prices briefly increased , although they returned to normal levels by late October .

The name King was not used again after the season , although it was on the naming list for 1951 and 1952 due to being part of the Joint Army / Navy Phonetic Alphabet . The Phonetic Alphabet was decommissioned in 1953 in favor of using female names . Based on population growth in south Florida , it is estimated that a storm identical to Hurricane King would cause \$ 2 @. @ 8 billion in insured damage if it struck in 2001 , with the total roughly split between Broward and Miami @-@ Dade counties .