

= Hurricane How (1951) =

Hurricane How was the only tropical cyclone to make landfall on the United States in 1951 . It was the eighth storm of the season , forming on September 28 in the northwest Caribbean and , after entering the Gulf of Mexico , turned eastward and became a tropical storm . The storm brought heavy rainfall to Florida , causing flooding and \$ 2 million in damage . Tropical Storm How later became a hurricane , passing near the Outer Banks of North Carolina where it produced strong winds and high tides . A ship called the " Southern Isles " capsized off of Cape Hatteras , killing 17 out of the crew of 23 . Rains and high tides occurred in southeastern New England , before the hurricane moved out to sea and became extratropical .

= = Meteorological history = =

The origins of Hurricane How were from an easterly wave that organized into a tropical depression , in the western Caribbean Sea on September 28 , 1951 . It moved to the north @-@ northwest , passing by the Yucatan peninsula before turning to the east in the central Gulf of Mexico on October 1 . That day , a reconnaissance aircraft in the system reported gale force winds and , as a result , it was upgraded to Tropical Storm How . The storm strengthened to just below hurricane force , making landfall near Punta Gorda , Florida with 70 mph (110 km / h) winds (115 km / h) . While it crossed the state , the center was not very organized , and consequently the strongest winds were in the south and southeastern portion of the storm ; heavy rains , however , fell across its path .

Tropical Storm How emerged into the Atlantic Ocean near Vero Beach , quickly intensifying to hurricane strength by October 3 . Turning northeastward , Hurricane How reached peak winds of 110 mph (180 km / h) on October 4 as it passed near the Outer Banks of North Carolina . Subsequently the hurricane embarked on a slow weakening trend , as it briefly posed a threat to New England . It passed southeast of Cape Cod before turning more to the east @-@ northeast . It became an extratropical storm on October 7 , and the next day the remnants of How dissipated in the far northern Atlantic .

= = Impact and records = =

As the storm was not very well @-@ organized when it crossed Florida , the strongest winds were not near the center , and instead were confined to squalls in the Florida Keys and the southeast coast . Miami reported a gust of 60 mph (96 km / h) , and West Palm Beach reported 55 mph (88 km / h) winds . Wind damage was minor , confined to a few broken windows and the sinking or damaging of some small craft . Nevertheless , heavy rainfall occurred along its path . The highest total was 15 @.@ 7 inches (40 cm) near Bonita Springs , near where it moved ashore . Elsewhere , Fort Myers reported 10 @.@ 43 inches (26 @.@ 5 cm) , while Clewiston along the western shore of Lake Okeechobee received about 10 inches (25 cm) ; the lake rose about 4 inches (10 cm) from the rainfall , but no overflow was expected . Elsewhere , the precipitation caused some significant street flooding , while about 7 @,@ 000 acres (28 km²) of tomato and bean fields were deluged .

Further north , the hurricane threatened to strike or move very close to the Outer Banks . Hurricane warnings were posted from Cape Hatteras to Manteo , and ships were advised to remain at port . Hurricane How produced 50 mph (80 km / h) winds and high tides along the Outer Banks and southeastern Virginia . Some minor damage was reported , and two ships were washed ashore . In New England , the Weather Bureau issued storm warnings from Block Island , Rhode Island to Portland , Maine , with rains , fog , and heavy surf reported . Several roads were closed in Massachusetts due to the tides .

Offshore , a ship called Southern Isle was wrecked by the high surf . It had been sailing from Puerto Rico with a full load of iron ore and , as it approached the hurricane , the vessel changed directions and slowed down . By October 5 , winds were strong and the seas were moderately rough . Very quickly , the ship broke into two , which prevented any time to escape on lifeboats . By the day after

the wreck , rescue boats and helicopters found seven people , one of whom later died from their injuries . Ultimately , 17 people died in the event .

Overall , Hurricane How caused about \$ 2 million (USD) in damage . It was the only storm to strike the United States during the year , and consequently , 1951 had the least tropical cyclone damage in the United States since the 1939 season .