

= Hurricane Alberto ( 1982 ) =

Hurricane Alberto caused the worst flooding in western Cuba in 32 years . The first tropical storm and hurricane of the 1982 Atlantic hurricane season , Alberto developed from a tropical disturbance on June 2 in the southern Gulf of Mexico . It rapidly organized and attained hurricane status the following day , the earliest date for a hurricane in the Atlantic Ocean since Hurricane Alma in May 1970 . Shortly after reaching peak winds off 85 mph ( 140 km / h ) , Alberto rapidly weakened due to approaching upper @-@ level winds . Initial forecasts predicted the hurricane would continue northeastward into Florida ; it turned sharply westward and drifted erratically for several days across the eastern Gulf of Mexico , before dissipating on June 6 .

Alberto produced heavy rainfall in western Cuba , causing flash flooding and severe damage . The storm damaged 8 @, @ 745 houses and destroyed 154 buildings , leaving hundreds homeless . Heavy rainfall continued in the country for several weeks after the storm , and damage from Alberto totaled about \$ 85 million ( 1982 USD , \$ 208 million 2016 USD ) . At least 23 people were killed in the country . Initially , Alberto was forecast to continue northeastward and strike Florida , though it turned and rapidly weakened , resulting in minor effects in the state .

= = Meteorological history = =

In late May , a tropical disturbance gradually developed over the northwestern portion of the Caribbean . It drifted westward into the Yucatán Peninsula , and on June 1 the convection organized into a circular cloud pattern in association with a low pressure system . The system tracked northeastward into the Gulf of Mexico while continuing to organize , and subsequent to the formation of a low @-@ level circulation it developed into Tropical Depression One while located about 40 miles ( 65 km ) north @-@ northwest of Cancún . Reconnaissance Aircraft confirmed the existence of the tropical depression later that day . Early on June 3 , it is estimated the depression intensified into Tropical Storm Alberto while located about 150 miles ( 240 km ) north @-@ northwest of the western tip of Cuba , based on a ship report of 45 mph ( 75 km / h ) winds about 115 miles ( 185 km ) south of its center . An Air Force flight was scheduled into the storm , though was forbidden by the Cuban government due to its presence in Cuban airspace .

Alberto quickly strengthened while moving northeastward through the southeastern Gulf of Mexico , and intensified into a hurricane about nine hours after attaining tropical storm status . Late on June 3 , Alberto attained peak winds of 85 mph ( 140 km / h ) while located about 120 miles ( 195 km ) west @-@ southwest of Key West , Florida . Shortly after peaking in intensity , strong upper @-@ level westerly winds impacted the deep convection of the storm . By early on June 4 Alberto weakened to a tropical storm after turning sharply westward due to weak steering currents . It drifted erratically as the circulation became exposed , and early on June 5 it degenerated into a convectiveless tropical depression . As a tropical depression , Alberto drifted to the east @-@ northeast and later turned to the east , and late on June 6 it dissipated while located about 70 miles ( 115 km ) off the coast of Florida .

= = Preparations and impact = =

= = = Cuba = = =

The rainbands of Alberto produced heavy rainfall and flash flooding across western Cuba . The rainfall peaked at 39 @. @ 84 inches ( 1012 mm ) , the fourth highest rainfall total in the country since 1963 . More than 50 @, @ 000 were forced to evacuate from the resulting floods , which were described as the worst flooding in the northwestern portion of the country since 1950 .

Hurricane Alberto damaged a total of 8 @, @ 745 houses in the country . In Pinar del Río Province , 71 homes were destroyed , and across the nation hundreds of people were left homeless . 83 buildings were collapsed in the capital city of Havana , while six factories in Havana Province

received damage . The passage of Alberto left several districts in Havana without electricity , telegraph , telephone , and mail service . The Cuban military was deployed to rescue those trapped in flooded homes and also to remove fallen trees . Agricultural damage included about 250 @, @ 000 downed banana trees and 400 drowned cattle . Heavy rainfall continued for weeks after the passage of Alberto , resulting in severe damage to the tobacco crop . Subsequent winds and rains destroyed storage sheds which ruined 1 @. @ 8 million lb . ( 900 @, @ 000 kg ) of the recently finished harvest ; 2 @. @ 6 million lb . ( 1 @. @ 3 million kg ) of tobacco leaves were also damaged . Two days after its closest approach , the death toll in Cuba reached 11 , and a day later it was raised to 23 fatalities . The final death toll was reported as either 23 or 24 , with one report indicating 17 people missing ; Pinar del Río Province reported at least 20 deaths and Havana reported three casualties . Damage was estimated at \$ 85 million ( 1982 USD , \$ 208 million 2016 USD ) .

= = = Florida = = =

Due to its sudden development and project track into southwest Florida , the National Hurricane Center issued a tropical storm warning and hours later a hurricane warning from the Dry Tortugas to Marathon in the Florida Keys and along the southwestern coastline northward to Fort Myers . A hurricane watch was also issued from Marathon to Jupiter Inlet . At the time of the issuance of the hurricane warning , Alberto had been moving steadily northeastward ; extrapolating its motion indicated a landfall on Key West within 12 hours and a mainland landfall at Key Largo within 24 hours . Additionally , most computer models predicted Alberto to continue northeastward across south Florida . Only one model , not available until later , suggested a weakness in steering currents that would prevent a Florida landfall .

Officials ordered mandatory evacuations along the southwest coast of Florida . More than 1 @, @ 000 left their homes to stay in nine emergency shelters . Air Florida canceled all flights from Miami to Key West . Many residents in the lower Florida Keys were unable to evacuate to the mainland , with about 50 people in Key West evacuating to four emergency shelters set up in the city . Officials closed schools in Monroe County at midday on June 3 and also sent all nonessential city and county employees home .

Gale force winds and heavy rainfall were reported in the lower Florida Keys ; Key West reported 6 @. @ 25 inches ( 160 mm ) during a 24 @- @ hour period , with the maximum reported winds at a land station being 70 mph ( 115 km / h ) in the Dry Tortugas . Moderate rainfall was reported throughout southern Florida and the eastern Florida Keys , as well , peaking at 16 @. @ 47 inches ( 418 mm ) at Tavernier . Alberto spawned three tornadoes and a waterspout in the Florida Keys , one of which at Stock Island which damaged several boats . One of the three tornadoes picked up a moving car and lightly injured the driver . Another knocked down two telephone poles on the Overseas Highway , which resulted in an hour traffic delay . Damage from the tornadoes totaled \$ 275 @, @ 000 ( 1982 USD , \$ 620 @, @ 000 2010 USD ) .