

= Hurricane Lester (1992) =

Hurricane Lester was the first Pacific tropical cyclone to enter the United States as a tropical storm since 1967 . The twelfth named storm and seventh hurricane of the 1992 Pacific hurricane season , Lester formed on August 20 from a tropical wave southwest of Mexico . The tropical storm moved generally northwestward while steadily intensifying . After turning to the north , approaching the Mexican coast , Lester attained hurricane status . The hurricane reached peak winds of 85 mph (140 km / h) before making landfall on west @-@ central Baja California . The system weakened while moving across the peninsula and then over northwestern Mexico . Not long after entering Arizona , Lester weakened to a tropical depression , and dissipated on August 24 , 1992 , over New Mexico .

In Mexico , the hurricane resulted in \$ 3 million in damage (1992 USD , \$ 4 @.@ 7 million 2011 USD) . It also left 5 @,@ 000 people left homeless , and was responsible for three fatalities . The remnants of Lester also produced moderate rainfall and minor flooding across southern California , Colorado , Arizona and New Mexico , as well as rare August snow in the Rocky Mountains .

= = Meteorological history = =

A weak tropical wave moved off the coast of Africa on August 7 . It tracked across the Atlantic Ocean and Caribbean Sea without development due to strong wind shear . The wave then split into two , with the northern portion dissipating over Cuba on August 15 and the southern portion continuing westward . The wave crossed Central America and entered the Pacific Ocean on August 16 . Deep convection increased over the wave upon entering the Pacific , and early on August 19 it started to become better organized . After the development of a low @-@ level circulation , the system organized into Tropical Depression Fourteen @-@ E on August 20 while located about 275 miles (445 km) south @-@ southwest of Manzanillo , Colima .

The depression gradually tracked northwestward at 15 mph (24 km / h) . Although the center of the depression was initially uncertain , it slowly strengthened and steadily organized . The depression attained tropical storm status late on August 20 , upon which the storm was named Lester . The cyclone continued to the northwest , and passed directly over Socorro Island on August 21 . By early the next day , an eastward moving trough weakened the ridge to its north , resulting in a to turn to the north . Around this time , forecasters at the National Hurricane Center predicted the storm would not strengthen to hurricane intensity before making landfall . Despite this , Lester intensified into a hurricane late on August 22 while located about 240 miles (385 km) west of La Paz in Baja California Sur .

The hurricane continued to organize and banding @-@ type eye soon formed . Early on August 23 it attained peak winds of 85 mph (140 km / h) with a minimum central pressure of 985 mbar (hPa ; 29 @.@ 09 inHg) . Lester weakened steadily as the storm turned to the northeast , and made landfall as a minimal hurricane near Punta Abreojos , Baja California Sur about ten hours after reaching peak intensity . It degenerated into a tropical storm while crossing the Baja California Peninsula . After passing through the northern Gulf of California , it made a second landfall near Isla Tiburon in the state of Sonora . Lester entered Arizona as a tropical storm on August 24 , the first time since Hurricane Katrina in 1967 that an Eastern Pacific tropical cyclone entered the United States with winds of at least tropical storm intensity . Lester maintained tropical storm status until it weakened into a tropical depression near Tucson , Arizona . Later that day , the low level circulation dissipated over New Mexico , and Lester ceased to exist as a tropical cyclone . The storms remnants transitioned into an extratropical cyclone as it continued to the north @-@ northeast ahead of an approaching trough , and merged with the remnants of Hurricane Andrew on August 29 over Pennsylvania .

= = Preparations and Impact = =

== Mexico ==

The Government of Mexico issued tropical storm watches and warnings for Baja California on August 21 . The following day , a hurricane warning was issued for the peninsula from Punta Eugenia southward to Cabo San Lazaro . The government of Mexico also issued a tropical storm warning for the Sonora and Sinaloa mainland from Cabo Tepopa to Los Mochis . All watches and warnings were discontinued as the storm weakened and dissipated . The threat of the hurricane prompted the evacuation of about 10 @, @ 000 residents .

No observations exist for the duration when Lester , as a tropical depression , moved over Socorro Island , while winds were estimated to have reached 37 mph (59 km / h) . However , a station reported winds of 23 mph (37 km / h) six hours after Lester passed over Socorro Island . Several ships came in contact with Lester , with one in the eye reporting hurricane @-@ force winds for 11 hours on August 22 . The ship in the eye reported rough seas , causing it to roll 33 ° to each side and thus was responsible for a large amount of cargo to go overboard .

Hurricane Lester produced heavy rainfall across its path through the Baja California Peninsula and Sonora . Peak rainfall occurred in Mulege with 13 @. @ 58 in (345 mm) . A weather station in Presa Rodriguez reported 8 @. @ 66 inches (203 mm) of precipitation , with several other locations reporting over 2 inches (50 mm) . The heavy rainfall caused extensive flood damage to the west of Hermosillo , destroying some entire communities and flooding a large highway . Roads were washed out , and power lines were knocked out . Waves up to 20 ft (6 @. @ 1 m) were recorded . Flash flooding from Lester caused 10 @, @ 000 people to be evacuated from their homes . In addition , mudslides killed three people , and left 5 @, @ 000 homeless . The storm resulted in \$ 3 million (1992 USD) , equivalent to \$ 4 @. @ 7 million (2011 USD) . The Mexican Army provided relief efforts to residents after the storm .

== United States ==

The remnants of Lester produced heavy rainfall across the Southwestern United States . In Arizona , rainfall amounted to over 5 inches (125 mm) near Phoenix and Tucson , with much of the rest of the state reporting over 1 inch (25 mm) . Moderate rainfall was also reported in western New Mexico and southern Utah , while one location in southwestern Colorado reported over 5 inches (125 mm) of precipitation . In the later location , rains caused flash flooding of arroyos and a mudslide along U.S. Route 180 . Additional rainfall caused moderate flooding in Denver . In addition to the rainfall , moisture from the remnants of Lester dropped 2 to 4 inches (50 to 100 mm) of snow across portions of Colorado , causing traffic problems in mountainous areas . A weather station on Mt . Harvard recorded about 4 inches (100 mm) of snow during Lester 's passage through Colorado . Moisture enhanced from a cold front , the remnants Lester extended through the eastern United States , with Mattoon , Illinois reporting a peak of 5 @. @ 96 inches (151 mm) . In all , rain from Lester caused rainfall records in Minnesota , Nebraska , Colorado , and North Dakota .