

= Tropical Storm Claudette (2009) =

Tropical Storm Claudette was the third named storm of the 2009 Atlantic hurricane season and the first tropical cyclone of 2009 to affect the United States . Forming out of a tropical wave and an upper @-@ level low pressure system on August 16 , Claudette quickly intensified into a tropical storm offshore south of Tallahassee , Florida . By the afternoon , the storm had attained winds of 60 mph (95 km / h) and steadily tracked towards the Florida Panhandle . Early on August 17 , the center of Claudette made landfall on Santa Rosa Island . Several hours after landfall , the storm weakened to a tropical depression and the Hydrometeorological Prediction Center took over primary responsibility of the storm . Later on August 17 , the final public advisory was issued on the system as it dissipated over Alabama .

The National Hurricane Center issued tropical storm warnings for the coastline and residents in some counties were advised to evacuate storm @-@ surge @-@ prone areas . One fatality resulted from rough seas off the coast of Panama City , Florida . Later that day , another man drowned after falling off his ship near Bay County . An EF @-@ 0 tornado spawned by the storm in Cape Coral , Florida damaged 11 homes , leaving \$ 103 @,@ 000 (2009 USD) in damages . Additional damages to coastal property and beaches amounted to \$ 125 @,@ 000 (2009 USD) as a result of Claudette .

= Meteorological history =

Tropical Storm Claudette originated from a tropical wave that moved off the west coast of Africa on August 7 . On August 11 , the National Hurricane Center (NHC) began monitoring the wave when it was located roughly 600 mi (965 km) east of the Lesser Antilles . Disorganized shower and thunderstorm activity was associated with the westward moving wave ; however , the NHC did not anticipate further development of the system . By the afternoon of August 12 , little convective activity remained with the wave . Strong upper @-@ level wind shear created an unfavorable environment for the system to re @-@ organize as it tracked through the eastern Caribbean Sea .

By August 15 , convection began to consolidate around the center of the system as it passed over the Florida Keys . Early on August 16 , the system rapidly organized , with a low @-@ level circulation developing roughly 80 mi (130 km) southwest of Tampa , Florida . Favorable environmental conditions led to the NHC anticipating the system to develop into a tropical depression later that day . Several hours later , the first advisory was issued on Tropical Depression Four . Low wind shear provided an environment that promoted quick development of the cyclone and the storm was forecast to attain tropical storm status within 12 hours . The depression tracked northwest around the periphery of a subtropical ridge to the east . Around 11 : 00 am EDT , the NHC upgraded the depression to a tropical storm and gave it the name Claudette in light of information from the NEXRAD Doppler weather radar in Tallahassee , Florida that found winds of 40 mph (65 km / h) around the center of circulation .

During the afternoon of August 16 , a brief increase in wind shear due to a trough over the southeastern United States , caused the center to become exposed . Despite this , Claudette attained its peak winds of 60 mph (95 km / h) around this time . Around 1 : 10 am EDT (0510 UTC) on August 17 , the storm made landfall near the eastern end of Santa Rosa Island with winds of 45 mph (85 km / h) . Shortly thereafter , the barometric pressure decreased to 1005 mbar (hPa ; 29 @.@ 68 inHg) , the lowest pressure recorded in association with the storm . Several hours after landfall , convection associated with the storm quickly decreased and by 8 : 00 am EDT , the NHC issued their final advisory on Claudette as it weakened to a tropical depression . At this time , the Hydrometeorological Prediction Center (HPC) began issuing advisories on the system . The HPC issued their final advisory late on August 17 as the remnants of Claudette began to dissipate over Alabama . The remnants persisted for several more hours before becoming indistinguishable over Mississippi , on August 18 .

= Preparations =

Upon being classified a tropical depression , the National Hurricane Center issued a tropical storm warning for areas between the Alabama @-@ Florida border and the mouth of the Suwanee River . Residents in these areas were urged to quickly prepare for the storm by ensuring their hurricane kit was fully stocked and ready . East of the center of Claudette , along western Florida , residents were warned about possible heavy rainfall that could cause flooding . Storm surge near where the storm was forecast to make landfall was expected to reach 3 to 5 ft (0 @.@ 91 to 1 @.@ 52 m) . Residents in areas of Wakulla County prone to storm surge were urged to evacuate before the arrival of the storm by the Wakulla County Emergency Management Office . Shortly after 3 : 00 pm EDT , the National Weather Service in Mobile , Alabama issued a tropical storm wind warning for areas between Destin , Florida and Pascagoula , Mississippi . A flood watch was also issued for most of the Florida Panhandle , as rainfall from Claudette was anticipated to exceed 7 in (180 mm) . An inland tropical storm warning was also issued for most of southeastern Alabama .

During the afternoon of August 16 , officials issued a mandatory evacuation order for residents in St. Joseph Peninsula State Park and Stone State Park on Cape San Blas in Gulf County , Florida . Two shelters were opened in Bay County , one at the Dean Bozeman High School and the other at Bozeman Learning Center . Voluntary evacuation orders were also given to residents living in low @-@ lying areas along the coastline . Although no plans were put in place to open shelters , the Emergency Operations Center in Washington County raised their activation level to stage two . In Franklin County , the Emergency Operations Center was placed at stage three and voluntary evacuation orders were issued for Alligator Point . After an afternoon briefing , officials in Walton County declared a State of Emergency based on available information on the storm . In Wakulla County , the American Red Cross opened a shelter in Crawfordville at a local church .

= = Impact = =

= = = Florida = = =

By the evening of August 16 , upwards of 1 @.@ 71 in (43 mm) of rain had fallen in parts of Franklin County . In Apalachicola , a daily record of 3 @.@ 57 in (91 mm) of rain fell on August 16 , surpassing the previous record set in 1931 . However , with an exception of a tree falling across U.S. Route 98 , no damage was caused to Apalachicola . By the dissipation of the storm , a maximum of 5 @.@ 62 in (143 mm) of rain fell in Big Coppitt Key .

A tornado was reported near Cape Coral and multiple tornado warnings were issued for Florida in association with rain bands from the storm . Twenty @-@ three homes were damaged by the tornado in Cape Coral . Damages to 11 out of 23 of the homes from the tornado amounted to roughly \$ 103 @,@ 000 . Florida Governor Charlie Crist briefly toured the damage from the tornado . The tornado was later rated EF @-@ 0 on the Enhanced Fujita Scale with winds between 70 and 80 mph (110 and 120 km / h) . The National Weather Service also stated that the tornado was on the ground for 0 @.@ 35 mi (0 @.@ 56 km) between 4 : 42 pm and 4 : 45 pm EDT .

One drowning was reported off Panama City , Florida . By the early evening , officials closed down a 1 mi (1 @.@ 6 km) segment of Highway 20 due to a fallen tree and power line . In Leon County , a total of 440 residences lost power . By 9 : 40 pm EDT , the highway was reopened and power to all 440 homes was restored . Other power outages were reported near Parker and in downtown Panama City . Roughly 500 residences were left without power in Walton County .

In Okaloosa County , up to 1 @,@ 267 residents lost power during the storm . Most of the residents had their power restored within a few hours ; however , due to continuing wind damage , scattered power outages , affecting up to 500 homes at a time , occurred throughout the county . Throughout the county , roughly \$ 25 @,@ 000 was sustained in flood losses . A second fatality occurred after a man was knocked off his ship near the coast of Bay County . Rescuers managed to reach him but during the rescue , he fell off the life raft and was lost . The search was later called off as he was presumed dead .

Along the coastline , waves produced by Claudette resulted in the loss of 30 to 40 ft (9 @. @ 1 to 12 @. @ 2 m) of sand in coastal areas of Bay , Walton , Franklin and Gulf counties . An estimated \$ 100 @, @ 000 worth of sand was lost in all four counties . A maximum storm surge of 2 @. @ 3 ft (0 @. @ 70 m) was recorded in Destin as the storm made landfall . In all , two people were killed throughout the state and damages amounted to \$ 228 @, @ 000 .

= = = Elsewhere = = =

Upon making landfall , flash flood watches were issued for parts of southern Alabama due to the threat of heavy rainfall . In the state , Claudette produced widespread moderate rainfall , peaking at 2 @. @ 11 in (54 mm) in Bradley . Some areas received up to 2 in (51 mm) in a two @- @ hour span , prompting the National Weather Service to issue flash flood warnings . Flash flood watches were also issued for Hale , Sumter and Perry counties . The remnants of Claudette created a very moist atmosphere in parts of Alabama , resulting in several days of afternoon thunderstorms . Some of these thunderstorms produced gusty winds , recorded up to 45 mph (75 km / h) in Jefferson County . In Rainbow City , lightning struck an apartment building , sparking a fire and leading to the evacuation of two units of the building . Damage from the fire was estimated at \$ 20 @, @ 000 . In Georgia , outer bands of the storm also a maximum of 2 @. @ 37 in (60 mm) at Fort Benning .