

= Hurricane Alma (1970) =

Hurricane Alma was one of only four Atlantic tropical cyclones to reach hurricane status in the month of May . It developed on May 17 , 1970 north of Panama , and rapidly intensified on May 20 to peak winds of 80 mph (130 km / h) , near Jamaica and the Cayman Islands . It stalled south of Cuba and deteriorated due to wind shear , and by May 22 it weakened to tropical depression status . After progressing northwestward and crossing western Cuba , Alma reorganized in the Gulf of Mexico , although continued shear prevented strengthening . It moved across Florida on May 25 , and on May 27 it dissipated off the coast of Virginia .

The storm first brought gusty winds and heavy rainfall to Jamaica and the Cayman Islands . While it was weakening , Alma produced flooding in central and eastern Cuba , causing seven deaths and forcing 3 @, @ 000 people to evacuate . Moderate precipitation spread across Florida , while thunderstorms from the storm caused light damage and killed one girl . Moisture from the storm spread up the Atlantic coast .

= = Meteorological history = =

Late on May 17 , the US National Hurricane Center , reported that a tropical depression had formed about 470 miles (760 km) to the southeast of Kingston , Jamaica . Over the next couple of days , the depression became better organized as it moved towards the northwest ; on May 19 it entered an area of favorable environmental conditions , which enabled the depression to rapidly intensify . On May 20 it strengthened into a tropical storm , at which point it was given the name Alma . That day , it rapidly strengthened under favorable developmental conditions , which included low wind shear , strong upper @-@ level outflow , and apparent eastward inflow . Later on May 20 , a Navy reconnaissance plane recorded winds of 80 mph (130 km / h) , which proved to be the peak intensity of Alma . It became one of only four Atlantic hurricanes on record in the month of May .

Subsequent to its peak intensity , increasing westerly shear disrupted the storm 's circulation and thermal pattern , which caused rapid weakening to tropical storm strength and later tropical depression status . By May 22 , the low pressure area became poorly defined after stalling south of Cuba ; with only a few squalls and showers , advisories were discontinued on Alma . The remnants of Alma continued westward near the Cayman Islands , and later turned to the north , passing over western Cuba .

On May 24 , the low pressure area reorganized as spiral rainbands became more evident on radar , and Alma was re @-@ classified as a tropical depression . As the depression approached the Florida coast , radar imagery indicated the system remained well @-@ organized , with a spiral band structure around an eye feature ; however , wind shear limited convection and strength , and Alma moved ashore as a depression near Cedar Key on May 25 . It turned northeastward and moved across the southeastern United States , becoming extratropical in North Carolina on May 27 . After moving off the coast of Virginia , the remnants of Alma were absorbed by an approaching cold front .

= = Impact = =

After Alma weakened from hurricane status , it passed near the Cayman Islands on May 21 , where winds of up to 65 mph (105 km / h) were recorded . Gale force winds and heavy rainfall also occurred in Jamaica . Heavy rains ahead of the storm caused flash flooding in central and eastern Cuba . Seven people died as a result , and several homes were destroyed . The flooding forced the evacuation of 3 @, @ 000 people in Oriente Province . Inclement weather closed 16 sugar mills , which stalled harvesting that was already behind schedule in the country .

In Florida , the remnants of Alma brought rainfall across most of the state , with some isolated areas experiencing 5 inches (12 @. @ 70 cm) or more . The highest rainfall from the storm was near Miami , Florida , with 6 @. @ 66 inches (16 @. @ 92 cm) of rain . The rainfall was beneficial in alleviating drought conditions , although thunderstorms caused hazardous driving conditions in the

Florida Keys and elsewhere in the state . Small craft warnings were posted along the coast . One girl died from lightning in Miami , and a thunderstorm near Fort Myers damaged some roofs and outbuildings . In Saint Petersburg , flooding disrupted phonelines in about 400 households . Merritt Island experienced 45 mph (72 km / h) wind gusts . In Georgia , South Carolina , North Carolina , Virginia , and Maryland , Alma dropped moderate rainfall , with some isolated areas receiving up to 3 inches (7 @. @ 62 cm) . Near Columbia , South Carolina , the remnants of Alma spawned a tornado which destroyed a roof .