= Cyclone Connie =

Cyclone Connie was a strong tropical cyclone that affected both Mauritius and Réunion in late January 2000 . On January 24 , 2000 , a tropical disturbance developed well east of Madagascar . Despite moderate wind shear , it gradually strengthened while stalling offshore , and late on January 25 , was believed to have attained tropical storm status . After turning generally southeast , Connie attained cyclone intensity on January 27 . Rapid intensification ensued . Shortly after developing a well @-@ defined eye , Connie attained peak intensity at 0000 UTC on January 28 as an intense tropical cyclone . Thereafter , Connie slowly weakened due to increased wind shear as thunderstorm activity quickly diminished around the eye . After threatening Mauritius , Connie then turned southwest , passing very close to Réunion late on January 28 . After briefly leveling off in intensity that evening , Connie soon became less organized , and midday on January 29 , the eye became less defined . The next day , Connie weakened to a severe tropical storm . Despite forecasts of additional weakening , Connie maintained its intensity for most of January 31 . However , weakening resumed on February 1 and the storm transitioned to an extratropical cyclone on February 2 . Two days later , Connie merged with another low @-@ pressure area .

Despite passing well offshore Mauritius , both the airport and the port were closed due to lack of certainty in the storm 's path . Connie brought several days of heavy rains and gusty winds to the island . One person was killed there and power was briefly disconnected . Overall , damage on Mauritius was minor . While passing near Reunion , Cyclone Connie brought heavy rains to the island nation . Power was knocked out to around 40 @,@ 000 individuals . Roughly 100 homes were destroyed , leaving 600 people were homeless . Another 300 sought shelter . Two people were killed , but damage in Reunion was minimal . The extratropical remnants of the system later brought flooding to Mozambique , where 20 @,@ 000 people were listed as homeless .

= = Meteorological history = =

On January 22 , an area of disturbed weather developed around 10 ° S to 15 ° S , a prime location for tropical cyclone formation within the basin . Although the system gradually became better organized , moderate easterly wind shear prevented significant development . By January 24 this area was located approximately 600 km (375 mi) east of the northern tip of Madagascar . Following a significant increase in organization due to decreased wind shear , the Météo @-@ France office in Reunion (MFR) upgraded the system into Tropical Disturbance 4 . At 1100 UTC on January 25 , MFR upgraded the disturbance into a tropical depression while the Joint Typhoon Warning Center (JTWC) issued a Tropical Cyclone Formation Alert (TCFA) for the system . At 1800 UTC that day , the MFR upgraded the system into Moderate Tropical Storm Connie while the JTWC also upgraded Connie into a tropical storm .

Situated in an environment of favorable wind shear , Connie steadily became better organized . It quickly developed rainbands and good outflow . At first , Connie was nearly stationary but on January 26 , moved northeastward under the influence of a subtropical ridge . Tropical Cyclone Connie slowly strengthened , although this process was slowed due to upwelling of cold ocean waters . That morning , the JTWC upgraded Connie to a 120 km / h (75 mph) hurricane . At 0703 UTC , satellite imagery dedicated a 50 km (30 mi) wide eye . Despite the eye feature , MFR assessed the intensity at 80 km / h (50 mph) . Early the next day , however , MFR classified Connie as a severe tropical storm following satellite data , which suggested that Connie had developed an 80 % closed eyewall . Moving east @-@ southeast , Connie was upgraded to cyclone intensity at noon on January 27 . Meanwhile , the JTWC revised the storms intensity to 160 km / h (100 mph) , equivalent to a low @-@ end Category 2 hurricane on the Saffir ? Simpson hurricane wind scale (SSHWS) roughly 780 km (485 mi) north @-@ northwest of Mauritius .

With an upper @-@ level high located near the cyclone , the tropical cyclone steadily became better organized and thus Connie began to strengthen rapidly , as previously indicated by many tropical cyclone forecast models . The system then began to slowly turn southeast in the general direction of Mauritius and Réunion . By 1800 UTC on January 27 , Tropical Cyclone Connie

developed a very well defined eye ; based on this , MFR upgraded Connie to a very intense tropical cyclone . Around this time , the JTWC raised the intensity of Connie to 215 km / h (135 mph) , equal to a borderline Category 4 hurricane on the SSHWS , based on Dvorak intensity estimates of T5.5 and T6.0. After passing around 500 km (310 mi) north @-@ northwest of Mauritius , Connie then decelerated east @-@ southeast . At 0000 UTC on January 28 , MFR estimated that Connie attained its peak intensity of 185 km / h (115 mph) . Despite this cloud tops associated with Connie began to warm , even though the eye remained well @-@ defined . Thus , the JTWC lowered the intensity of Connie to 190 km / h (120 mph) , based on a blend of satellite intensity estimates .

Early on January 28 , Connie made its closest approach to St. Brandon and initially appeared to be approaching Mauritius . However , many computer models correctly predicted Connie to turn southwest and threaten Reunion . Throughout the day , Connie maintained its intensity , but by the evening on January 28 , thunderstorm activity diminished and the cloud structure became less organized , though the storm maintained a small eye . Increased southerly wind shear from a tropical upper tropospheric trough (TUTT) took toll on the system . During the morning hours of January 29 both agencies reduced the intensity to 145 km / h (90 mph) as the storm began to encounter dry air . By the afternoon , MFR downgraded Connie to tropical cyclone status ; the eye had become cloud @-@ filled , although it was still visible on radar . That night , the storm passed 130 km (80 mi) northwest of Reunion . Early on January 30 , MFR downgraded Connie to a severe tropical storm . Later that day , the JTWC estimated that Connie lost hurricane @-@ force winds roughly 500 km (310 mi) east of the southern tip of Madagascar ; all of the storm 's deep convection by this time was displaced to the south .

After moving away from Reunion , Connie accelerated towards the south around a subtropical ridge situated near Amsterdam Island . On January 31 , Connie turned southeast , steered about a trough to the southeast . Contrary to forecasts which predicted continued weakening , MFR kept the intensity at 105 km / h (65 mph) for most of January 31 . Based on satellite derived intensity estimates , the JTWC briefly re @-@ upgraded Connie to a Category 1 hurricane equivalent on the SSHWS at 1800 UTC . However , the re @-@ strengthening trend was short lived due to increased northwesterly wind shear . Satellite imagery early on February 1 revealed an exposed circulation and a rapid decreased of thunderstorm activity in bothy coverage and intensity . Based on this and the fact that the storm appeared to be losing tropical characteristics , MFR issued its final advisory on Connie . However , the JTWC continued to track Connie until February 2 , when it merged with an extratropical low . At the time of dissipation , the JTWC assessed the intensity of Connie at 50 km / h (30 mph) .

= = Impact = =

Despite large uncertainty in the storm 's path , the international airport on the eastern side of Mauritius and all ships within the Port Louis harbor had departed . A cyclone warning was declared and 165 shelters were opened . As a precaution , power was turned off . However , on the afternoon of January 29 all sea and airports were re @-@ opened and power was turned back on as the storm moved away .

While making its closet approach to Mauritius on January 28 , Connie brought heavy rains and strong winds to the archipelago . Winds greater than 100 km / h (62 mph) were recorded through much of the island , including a peak of 134 km / h (83 mph) in Médine . During a six @-@ day period from January 26 to January 31 , many locations along the eastern portion of the island received 600 mm (25 in) , equivalent to approximately a month 's worth of rainfall , including a maximum rainfall of 647 mm (25 @.@ 5 in) . These rains helped relieve extreme drought conditions . Offshore , waves up to 7 @.@ 95 m (26 @.@ 1 ft) in height were reported . One man perished on his roof while trying to fix his antenna . Two rivers were flooded but all in all , damage was minimal .

Due to its slow motion , Intense Tropical cyclone Connie deluged Reunion with heavy rains for several days before suddenly tampering off on January 29 . Throughout the passage of the cyclone , many locations recorded wind gusts in excess of 100 km / h (62 mph) , highlighted by 133 km / h (

83 mph) in Le Port , 155 km / h (95 mph) in Peite France , and 21 km / h (13 mph) in Maida . Moreover , a peak rainfall total of 1 @,@ 752 mm (69 @.@ 0 in) was measured in Commerson , 1 @,@ 296 mm (51 @.@ 0 in) of which occurred in a 24 ? hour time frame . Many roads across Reunion were damaged . Power was knocked out to 40 @,@ 000 customers while more than 100 homes were demolished . Two persons were killed , including a young man that fell while trying to observe the cyclone . A total of 600 people were reported homeless ; roughly 300 people were evacuated . Although the agriculture sector suffered the most significant damages , overall , damage was minor . However , the French government later provided relief aid to Reunion as a result of the damage .

The non @-@ tropical remnants of Connie brought flooding to Southern Africa for several days . In Maputo , 328 mm (12 @.@ 9 in) of rain fell within a day . Large sections of many neighborhoods were inundated . Roughly 20 @,@ 000 people were rendered homeless . The road that linked Maputo to South Africa was cut . The Ministry of Education was forced to delay the start of the school year . Following the floods , roughly 20 emergency shelters were opened . These rains help set the stage for additional flooding caused by Cyclone Leon ? Eline and Cyclone Hudah .