

= Hurricane Henri (1979) =

Hurricane Henri was a rare tropical cyclone that entered the Gulf of Mexico without having made landfall ; it was the second of four times this occurred during the 20th century . The eighth named storm and fifth hurricane of the 1979 Atlantic hurricane season , it formed on September 14 in the northwestern Caribbean Sea . Throughout much of its duration , Henri moved erratically and initially maintained a general westward track . On September 16 it attained tropical storm status , and a day later it reached hurricane status . By two days later , after experiencing hostile conditions , Henri weakened to tropical depression status as it turned to the northeast , and on September 24 it merged with a frontal low in the northeast Gulf of Mexico . Due to its slow and erratic motion , the hurricane forced evacuations along the Mexican coastline . Its remnants brought rainfall and flooding to the Florida Panhandle .

= Meteorological history =

Hurricane Henri developed as Tropical Depression Eighteen in the extreme northwestern Caribbean Sea on September 14 from a tropical wave , which had previously moved off the coast of Africa . The formation of a tropical depression was confirmed by reports from Hurricane Hunters . The depression tracked northward , brushing the eastern portion of the Yucatán Peninsula . After reaching the Gulf of Mexico it turned sharply westward , with a ridge preventing further northward movement . The depression turned southwestward , and intensified into Tropical Storm Henri on September 16 .

Tropical Storm Henri continued to intensify as it tracked through the Bay of Campeche . On September 17 , the storm turned northwestward after the ridge to its north weakened , and later that day Henri reached hurricane status ; six hours later , it reached peak winds of 85 mph (140 km / h) about 150 miles (245 km) northeast of Veracruz . Subsequently , a broad low pressure area developed over the western Gulf of Mexico , causing the motion of Henri to become erratic . On September 18 , the cyclone began a steady weakening trend , believed to have been caused by land interaction and the funneling of moisture toward a developing disturbance near the Texas coast . Henri turned eastward on September 19 and weakened to tropical depression status . It failed to regain significant convection , and it turned northeastward along an extended cold front . On September 24 , Henri merged with the frontal trough in the northeastern Gulf of Mexico .

Hurricane Henri was one of only four tropical cyclones to enter the Gulf of Mexico without making landfall during the 20th century . The others were Laurie of 1969 , Jeanne of 1980 , and Alberto of 1982 .

= Preparations and impact =

Although Henri did not affect land in any way as a hurricane , the developing system threatened several states along the southwestern coastline in Mexico . Mexican forecasting officials issued an advisory for the Gulf coast towns of Tampico in Tamaulipas , and Tuxpan and Nautla in Veracruz , to evacuate to higher ground . The government of Veracruz issued warnings on radio and television of possible flooding in oil @-@ rich coastlines . The storm affected cleanup operations of the Ixtoc I oil spill as it passed over the spill area , damaging a 310 @-@ ton steel cap designed to stop the blowout . Henri caused driving rains , strong winds , and floods in Ciudad del Carmen , Campeche , forcing over 2000 people from their homes . Waters swelled in the town to about 12 inches (305 mm) above sea level . Maximum rainfall recorded in Mexico in association with Henri was 19 @.@ 59 inches (498 mm) at Solosuchiapan .

The remnants of Henri brought showers and thunderstorms to west @-@ central Florida , causing river flooding and some evacuations .