

= Hurricane Able (1952) =

Hurricane Able was the only hurricane to make landfall in the United States in the 1952 season . Forming on August 18 off the west coast of Africa , Able moved generally west- to west @-@ northwestward for much of its duration . It was first observed by the Hurricane Hunters on August 25 to the north of the Lesser Antilles . Two days later , Able attained hurricane status , and on August 30 it turned sharply to the north @-@ northwest in response to a cold front . The hurricane reached peak winds of 105 mph (170 km / h) just prior to moving ashore near Beaufort , South Carolina on August 31 . Although it quickly weakened below hurricane force , Able maintained tropical storm force for almost two days over land , eventually dissipating over Maine on September 2 .

The threat of the storm prompted hurricane warnings in the southeastern United States , resulting in the evacuation of tourists on Labor Day Weekend . Able produced heavy rainfall from Florida through New England , which caused widespread flooding . The city struck by the hurricane was heavily damaged and briefly isolated due to downed power and telephone lines . Overall damage in the United States totaled \$ 2 @. @ 75 million (1952 USD , \$ 24 @. @ 5 million 2016 USD) , mostly from crop damage in South Carolina . Further north , Able produced flooding and gusty winds , which washed out a portion of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad .

= = Meteorological history = =

A tropical depression developed between the Cape Verde islands and the west coast of Africa on August 18 , although it was not classified as a tropical cyclone for another week . The depression tracked west @-@ southwestward for three days , followed by a turn to the west and later west @-@ northwest . Late on August 24 it intensified into a tropical storm about 700 mi (1100 km) east @-@ northeast of Guadeloupe in the Lesser Antilles . The next day , the Miami Weather Bureau Office initiated advisories on Tropical Storm Able after the Hurricane Hunters confirmed the presence of a poorly defined center . Continuing to the west @-@ northwest , the storm passed north of Puerto Rico and attained hurricane status on August 27 .

After reaching hurricane status , Able tracked west @-@ northwest and gradually intensified . The lowest pressure in relation to the storm , 998 mbar , was reported shortly after it attained hurricane status . After reaching a position about 130 mi (210 km) east of Jacksonville , Florida on August 30 , Able slowed and turned to the north @-@ northwest due to an approaching cold front . By that time , the Hurricane Hunters reported a well @-@ defined eye , and the next day estimated winds of 125 mph (200 km / h) as they reported concentric eyewalls . Officially , the strongest winds in Able were 105 mph (170 km / h) , attained early on August 31 . At 0300 UTC that day , the hurricane made landfall in a sparsely populated area near Beaufort , South Carolina where the pressure was unofficially reported as 985 mbar .

As the hurricane turned north and northeastward over land , the winds quickly weakened to tropical storm force , although Able maintained winds of at least 40 mph (64 km / h) through North Carolina , Virginia , and Maryland . Able was able to retain its intensity over land for so long because it remained over the flat terrain east of the Appalachian Mountains in addition to retaining a plume of tropical moisture from its south . After the storm weakened to a tropical depression , it still produced 50 mph (80 km / h) gusts as it crossed Pennsylvania through New England . Late on September 2 , the circulation of Able dissipated near Portland , Maine .

= = Preparations and impact = =

As the hurricane approached the southeastern United States , the U.S. Weather Bureau issued storm warnings from Vero Beach , Florida to Wilmington , North Carolina . Later , the agency issued a hurricane warning from Fernandina , Florida to Georgetown , South Carolina , prompting the threatened areas to enact storm preparations and for ships to return to harbor . Near Jacksonville , Florida , the United States Navy sent 17 planes to the Naval Air Station Olathe in Olathe , Kansas .

Before moving ashore in South Carolina , Able produced rainfall in the western portion of its

circulation . Fernandina Beach , Florida reported 6 @. @ 20 in (157 mm) , and in neighboring Georgia , precipitation peaked at 2 @. @ 10 in (53 mm) in Mount Vernon . Wind gusts in Savannah , Georgia only reached 35 mph (56 km / h) .

When Able moved ashore in South Carolina , the western eyewall moved over Beaufort , where winds of up to 90 mph (140 km / h) were reported . The town received heavy damage from the storm , with houses losing their roofs and downed trees blocking roads due to the winds . For several hours , Beaufort was isolated after the winds downed power and telephone lines . The strongest winds over land were unknown since they crossed over an unpopulated swampy area . Winds in Charleston reached 63 mph (101 km / h) , about 50 mi (80 km) east of where the storm made landfall . There , the hurricane caused two serious injuries and left streets flooded in ankle @- @ deep water . Able also swept a freighter ashore near Charleston . The storm dropped heavy rainfall in the state , peaking at 6 @. @ 53 in (166 mm) in Conway . The combination of the rainfall and winds left heavy damage to the cotton industry , and crop damage in the state totaled \$ 1 @. @ 5 million (1952 USD , \$ 13 @. @ 4 million 2016 USD) . Other damage in the state resulted from property and communications , totaling about \$ 700 @, @ 000 (1952 USD , \$ 6 @. @ 24 million 2016 USD) . The hurricane also caused two indirect deaths in the state , one from touching a downed power line , and the other from driving into a fallen tree during a period of heavy rain .

As the storm spread into North Carolina , winds of around 40 mph (64 km / h) were observed , causing light damage . Able spawned a tornado in Stokes County which damaged a few farm buildings . Rainfall in the state peaked at 6 @. @ 11 in (155 mm) in Carthage . The rainfall caused low @- @ flooding , covering a few highways and washing out a few roads . Damage in the state is estimated less than \$ 50 @, @ 000 (1952 USD) .

In the Mid @- @ Atlantic states , moderate rainfall continued along the storm 's path , including 4 @. @ 97 in (126 mm) at the National Arboretum in Washington , D.C. The peak rainfall in each state was 5 @. @ 60 in (142 mm) in Big Meadows , Virginia , 6 @. @ 09 in (155 mm) in Emmitsburg , Maryland , 4 @. @ 06 in (103 mm) in two locations in West Virginia , and 2 @. @ 55 in (65 mm) in Wilmington , Delaware . The rainfall caused flooding across the region , which washed out the tracks of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad near Baltimore after a stream rose above its banks . In Ellicott City , Maryland , the rains flooded several houses , forcing families to evacuate . In addition , Able maintained stronger winds in the region , producing a gust of 60 mph (97 km / h) at Washington National Airport . The winds downed trees and power lines , which disrupted power and telephone service . The storm also spawned a damaging F2 tornado in Franconia , Virginia , which was potentially the same as another tornado in Potomac , Maryland . The former tornado destroyed one house and the roofs of two others , and also flung a car 100 ft (30 m) . Damage in the area was estimated at around \$ 500 thousand . Further northeast , rainfall reached over 6 in (150 mm) in Pennsylvania , New Jersey , and New York , resulting in localized flooding and damage to the fruit crop . One indirect death was reported in Pennsylvania . Across New England , Able produced 1 ? 3 in (25 ? 75 mm) of rainfall .