= Tropical Storm Alma =

Tropical Storm Alma of the 2008 Pacific hurricane season was the easternmost forming Pacific tropical cyclone on record . It formed within the monsoon trough just off the coast of Costa Rica on May 29 . Initially forecast to remain a weak tropical storm , the cyclone rapidly strengthened and developed an eye before making landfall in Nicaragua near León with peak winds of 65 mph (100 km / h) . Alma was the first tropical storm on record to strike the Pacific coast of Nicaragua . In Costa Rica , heavy rainfall caused flooding and landslides , killing two and causing $ 35 million (USD) in damage . Three people were killed in Nicaragua , one from drowning and two others from electrocution . Five others died in Honduras from an aviation accident likely related to the storm and one other was swept away in floodwaters .

= = Meteorological history = =

Towards the end of May 2008 , computer hurricane models forecast the development of a broad low pressure area to the southwest of Central America . On May 26 , a large trough extended from the southwestern Caribbean Sea across Costa Rica into the eastern Pacific Ocean , forming a broad low pressure area across the region . A scattered area of strong convection developed , partially in association with the Intertropical Convergence Zone . Located within an area of weak steering currents , the disturbance remained nearly stationary , and on May 27 its shower activity increased in organization . Initially the system consisted of several cyclonic swirls , of which the most pronounced one was located about 340 miles (550 km) west @-@ southwest of San José , Costa Rica . The system gradually became better organized , and with a sufficiently well @-@ developed circulation and convective structure , the National Hurricane Center (NHC) classified the system as Tropical Depression One @-@ E at 0300 UTC on May 29 , about 105 miles (165 km) west @-@ northwest of Cabo Blanco , Costa Rica .

With a mid @-@ level ridge located in the Gulf of Mexico , the depression drifted generally northward through an area of warm water temperatures and low wind shear . Initially its convection was weak and confined to a few rainbands far from the center . As such , intensification was not expected beyond minimal tropical storm status . However , the system quickly developed intense thunderstorms near the center with increased banding in its southern semicircle , and at 1500 UTC on May 29 the NHC upgraded the depression to Tropical Storm Alma , about 55 miles (85 km) southwest of Managua , Nicaragua . Its intensity was set at 45 mph (75 km / h) , and the storm was forecast to intensity only slightly more before moving ashore . However , one hour after it was upgraded to tropical storm status , the NHC re @-@ assessed the intensity as 65 mph (100 km / h) , citing updated observations from satellite imagery and QuikSCAT . An eye feature formed , surrounded by a very tight ring of convection , and at around 1900 UTC on May 29 Alma made landfall near León , Nicaragua as a strong tropical storm . The storm quickly weakened after moving ashore , though a small area of thunderstorms persisted as it crossed into the mountainous region of southern Honduras . After passing near Tegucigalpa Alma weakened to tropical depression status , and at 1500 UTC on May 30 the cyclone dissipated near the border of Honduras and Guatemala . On May 31 , after crossing Central America as a low pressure area , Alma 's remnants moved into the Gulf of Honduras and spawned Tropical Storm Arthur .

= = Preparations and impact = =

Coinciding with the first advisory on the depression , the government of Costa Rica issued a tropical storm warning for the entire Pacific coast of the country . About four hours prior to landfall , when Alma was named , a tropical storm warning was in effect for the entire coastlines of Costa Rica , Nicaragua , Honduras , and El Salvador . When it was realized the storm was much stronger than previously thought , a hurricane warning was issued for the coasts of Nicaragua and Honduras , and Alma was forecast to attain hurricane status . Prior to moving ashore , the NHC warned that the storm could produce up to 20 inches (500 mm) of rainfall , resulting in mudslides and flash flooding

. The National Emergency Commission of Costa Rica activated emergency shelters prior to the arrival of the storm ; 250 people in Parrita evacuated from their homes . In Nicaragua , officials evacuated about 5 @,@ 000 people , while 3 @,@ 000 troops were mobilized to assist in the aftermath of the storm .

When Tropical Storm Alma made landfall it produced moderate to heavy rainfall across Central America . The city of David , Chiriquí in western Panama reported 5 @.@ 75 inches (141 mm) of precipitation in 48 hours . Additionally , the capital city of San José , Costa Rica reported 3 @.@ 07 inches (78 mm) of rainfall in a 48 ? hour period . In Costa Rica , the precipitation caused river flooding , threatening 17 communities . It also caused widespread mudslides , which closed at least eight roads . The storm downed trees and power lines , leaving about 42 @,@ 000 people without electricity in the country . Two deaths were reported in the country , and damage in Costa Rica was estimated at about ? 20 billion colónes ($ 35 million 2008 USD) .

In León near where it moved ashore in Nicaragua , the passage of Alma left the city without power . Several buildings were destroyed in the city , and some roads were damaged . Much of the departments of León and Chinandega experienced power outages , due to the strong winds . One person died from electrocution , due to a downed high @-@ tension cable , and another person died in a similar manner . Offshore , one person drowned when he rode out the storm in his boat . In Tegucigalpa , TACA Flight 390 skidded off a runway sodden by torrential rain , killing three passengers (plus two more on the ground) and injuring over eighty . One other fatality was reported in Honduras when a young girl was swept away in a raging stream .

= = Records and retirement = =

Forming at 86.5ºW , Alma developed farther east than any other Pacific tropical cyclone on record . Excluding systems crossing in from the Atlantic , only seven other systems , Francesca in 1970 , Bridget and Priscilla in 1971 , Jimena in 1979 , Paul in 1982 , Cristina in 1996 , and Rosa in 2000 , developed east of 90ºW . Alma made landfall farther east than any other Pacific tropical cyclone , and it was the only to do so on the Pacific coast of Nicaragua . When the storm formed on May 29 , it marked the ninth year in a row when a Pacific tropical cyclone formed in May , which was the most consecutive years in which storms formed in May . Alma 's remnants contributed to the formation of Tropical Storm Arthur in the Atlantic ; although not strictly speaking the same cyclone due to the circulation of Alma dissipating ,

Despite its low death toll and low damage , the World Meteorological Organization retired the name Alma from the list of Pacific hurricane names and replaced it with Amanda for the 2014 Pacific hurricane season . This makes Alma the first tropical storm to be retired in the Eastern Pacific since Hazel in 1965 .