= Hurricane Gordon ( 2006 ) =

Hurricane Gordon was the first tropical cyclone since 1992 to affect the Azores while retaining tropical characteristics . The eighth tropical storm , third hurricane , and first major hurricane of the 2006 Atlantic hurricane season , Gordon formed on September 10 in the tropical Atlantic Ocean . It gradually matured into a hurricane as it tracked northward , reaching its peak intensity with winds of 120 mph ( 195 km / h ) early on September 14 while located about 575 mi ( 925 km ) southeast of Bermuda . After becoming nearly stationary , Gordon weakened to minimal hurricane status , although it re @-@ intensified after accelerating to the east . It weakened again after moving over cooler waters , and passed through the Azores on September 20 . Shortly thereafter , it became an extratropical cyclone and subsequently affected Spain , Ireland , and the United Kingdom .

The only land area affected while Gordon was tropical ? the Azores ? sustained little damage , in spite of wind gusts reaching hurricane force on Santa Maria Island . Impact was much more significant from the storm in its extratropical phase . In Spain , wind gusts reached 114 mph ( 183 km / h ) along the northwest coast and left 100 @,@ 000 people without power . Five people in the country sustained storm @-@ related injuries . Further north , the storm brought a surge of tropical air to Ireland and the United Kingdom , contributing to record warm temperatures . In Northern Ireland , high winds left 120 @,@ 000 people without power and caused one injury .

= = Meteorological history = =

On September 1 , a tropical wave exited the west coast of Africa and quickly showed signs of organization . It possessed a low pressure area and some convection as the system moved generally westward . The National Hurricane Center ( NHC ) first pinpointed the system as an area for potential development late on September 2 while it was about 750 mi ( 1 @,@ 210 km ) west @-@ southwest of Cape Verde . However , an upper @-@ level trough associated with the developing Hurricane Florence to its west increased wind shear across the region , which prevented significant tropical cyclone development over the next week . However , on September 5 , the NHC noted the potential for the storm system to organize into a tropical depression within the next several days , but its close proximity to Florence continued to stall its strengthening . By September 9 , the trough moved far enough away from the system to allow wind shear to relent , signalling an increase in convective thunderstorm activity . At around 1800 UTC that day , the system developed into a tropical depression about 540 mi ( 870 km ) east @-@ northeast of the Lesser Antilles .

Upon developing , the depression , small in physical size , moved slowly west @-@ northwestward . Initially , the NHC faced difficulties in forecasting the future of the system due to the potential for resumed strong wind shear , as well as uncertainty in its path of direction . It gradually organized and intensified , and based on observations from the Hurricane Hunters , the NHC assessed the depression as a tropical storm late on September 11 ; upon doing so , they gave it the name Gordon . As it strengthened , Gordon developed more substantial outflow and increasing banding features . On September 12 , the storm slowed and turned toward the north through a weakness in the subtropical ridge created by Florence . Wind shear decreased further , and the storm 's convection became more symmetric with an intermittent eye feature in the center . Based on the presence of the eye and estimates from satellite imagery , it is estimated that Gordon intensified into a hurricane early on September 13 .

After becoming a hurricane , Gordon underwent rapid deepening as the eye became better defined and more intense . In 24 hours , the winds increased by 45 mph ( 72 km / h ) to a peak intensity of 120 mph ( 195 km / h ) early on September 14 , while located about 575 mi ( 925 km ) southeast of Bermuda . This made Gordon a major hurricane , as well as a Category 3 on the Saffir @-@ Simpson scale , the first of 2006 . As it curved to the northeast , the hurricane maintained its peak intensity for about 24 hours , during which the eye decreased in size and the eyewall convection weakened . Afterward , Gordon began weakening due to moving over an area of cooler water temperatures . On September 15 , the trough that was previously guiding the hurricane moved further away , allowing the ridge to build to the north and causing Gordon 's motion to become

nearly stationary . Increased wind shear imparted further weakening , and the hurricane 's slow motion resulted in upwelling ? the motion of cooler water to the ocean 's surface . On September 17 , a building ridge to the east caused Gordon to begin a steady northeast motion . By that time , the convection had diminished significantly and the winds weakened to minimal hurricane @-@ force . One NHC forecast predicted extratropical transition to occur within 48 hours .

 On September 18 , Hurricane Gordon began accelerating to the northeast around a strengthening ridge , and later toward the east as guided by a trough . Wind shear decreased , which allowed for convection to redevelop near the eye . Unexpectedly , the hurricane began restrengthening , despite moving over slightly cooler waters ; instability from cooler upper @-@ level temperatures allowed for the reintensification . Despite continued forecasts of a weakening trend , Gordon 's resiliency presented a rare threat ? the first since Hurricane Charley in 1992 ? to the Azores , a Portuguese archipelago in the northeast Atlantic Ocean . At about 0600 UTC on September 19 , the hurricane attained its secondary peak intensity of 105 mph ( 169 km / h ) about 485 mi ( 775 km ) west @-@ southwest of the Azores . By that time , the cyclone consisted of a solid ring of convection around a contracting eye . Shortly thereafter , Gordon began steadily weakening due to the combination of increasing wind shear and even cooler water temperatures . Its motion became just south of due east , causing the strongest winds to remain south of the islands . At around 0900 UTC on September 20 , Gordon passed through the Azores between the islands of Santa Maria and São Miguel , producing hurricane @-@ force wind gusts on the former island . At the time , its sustained winds were estimated around 75 mph ( 121 km / h ) , which remained south of any landmasses . The cloud pattern had become less organized and more ragged .

 After passing the Azores , Gordon began interacting with an approaching cold front . Early on September 21 , it completed the transition into an extratropical storm while simultaneously weakening below hurricane @-@ force , located about 275 mi ( 443 km ) west @-@ northwest of the west coast of Portugal . The cyclone maintained its identity as the system turned sharply northeastward and later northward , after passing about 100 mi ( 160 km ) northwest of the Spanish province of Galicia . Its forward motion accelerated to about 60 mph ( 97 km / h ) , steered by another extratropical storm , while still maintaining sustained winds of 65 mph ( 105 km / h ) . After moving along the west coast of Ireland , the extratropical remnants of Gordon turned to the northwest and intensified to hurricane @-@ force winds . It turned to the southwest and later to the southeast , completing a large cyclonic loop before dissipating on September 24 to the south of Ireland .

= = Preparations and impact = =

 Late on September 18 , while Gordon was beginning to accelerate to the northeast , a tropical storm watch was issued for all of the Azores . The hurricane was expected to weaken to tropical storm @-@ force before affecting the islands . When it became apparent that Gordon would continue intensifying , a hurricane warning replaced the watch about 27 hours before the strongest winds affected the region . The advance of the storm forced the closure of all schools in the region . Concurrently , officials increased the number of emergency workers on stand @-@ by . The two westernmost islands ? Corvo and Flores ? were placed under a red alert , the highest on a four @-@ level scale , which indicated the greatest threat for severe weather . The remainder of the archipelago was placed on low alert . Ultimately , the Azores escaped significant damage as the hurricane passed farther south than expected . Overall impact was limited to toppled trees and power lines , leaving portions of Santa Maria Island without electrical service . Santa Maria recorded sustained winds of 56 mph ( 90 km / h ) , with gusts to 82 mph ( 132 km / h ) .

 In Portugal , coastal regions were put under a yellow alert , the second lowest level , since the extratropical remnants of Gordon were expected to produce rough seas and heavy rains . In Spain , the Galicia region was placed on red alert by authorities in anticipation of the storm . Classes on September 21 were also suspended by the regional education ministry . Eleven other regions of Spain , extending as far east as Madrid and as far south as Andalusia , received lower levels of warning . The storm 's threat also prompted the cancellation or delay of flights along the coast .

While passing northwest of Spain , the remnants of Gordon produced strong wind gusts , reaching 114 mph ( 183 km / h ) at Punta Candieira in Galicia on the country 's northwest coast . The nearby city of A Coruña recorded sustained winds of 43 mph ( 69 km / h ) , while further inland , a station near Madrid reported winds of 65 mph ( 107 km / h ) . Along the coast , waves reached 23 ft ( 7 m ) in height , while rainbands dropped heavy precipitation , including a total of 2 @.@ 58 in ( 65 @.@ 5 mm ) in Canfranc . Wind @-@ blown debris injured four people in the country , and a fifth storm @-@ related injury occurred as the result of a tree falling onto an occupied vehicle . The winds downed trees , traffic lights , and power lines , leaving about 100 @,@ 000 people without power . Throughout Galicia , total monetary losses reached ? 3 million ( US $ 3 @.@ 8 million ; 2006 USD ) .

Stormy conditions threatened to affect the 2006 Ryder Cup in Straffan , County Kildare , Ireland at the K Club , and September 25 was set aside as an additional " reserve day " . The club 's media center was briefly evacuated , and one woman at the event was injured after being struck by a tree branch broken by the storm . The remnants of Gordon caused stormy conditions that left at least 5 @,@ 000 people without power in eastern and southern Ireland . One electric company had over 400 workers on duty to restore power in affected areas . High winds blowing down trees were responsible for power outages which affected 126 @,@ 000 people in Northern Ireland .

The remnants of Gordon affected the United Kingdom with strong winds , including gusts to 60 mph ( 97 km / h ) in the Isles of Scilly off the southwest coast and 81 mph ( 130 km / h ) on the mainland . The storm system produced heavy precipitation and thunderstorms that caused localized flooding . Wainfleet , Lincolnshire recorded 1 @.@ 66 in ( 42 @.@ 2 mm ) of rainfall , of which almost half fell within the span of an hour . High winds delayed rail service , and in Dawlish , the rail line was damaged by coastal flooding . More than 1 @,@ 000 homes were left without power in Truro , Cornwall . The storm brought moist air northward that contributed to record warm temperatures across portions of the UK .