

= Cyclone Herbie =

Tropical Cyclone Herbie was the only known tropical system to impact Western Australia during the month of May on record . The final cyclone of the 1987 ? 88 Australian region cyclone season , Herbie was first identified northwest of the Cocos Islands on 17 May . The following day , the system was classified as a tropical low by the Australian Bureau of Meteorology and intensified into a Category 1 cyclone later that day . Several hours after this upgrade , the storm attained its initial peak intensity with winds of 75 km / h ( 45 mph 10 @-@ minute sustained ) . Around the same time , the Joint Typhoon Warning Center classified Herbie as Tropical Storm 21S .

On 19 May , the cyclone formed a new low pressure center and relocated roughly 300 km ( 190 mi ) south . Shortly thereafter , the storm began to accelerate towards the southeast and started to undergo an extratropical transition . Early on 21 May , Herbie made landfall in Shark Bay before losing its identity the following day over the Great Australian Bight . Although a weak storm , Herbie brought flooding rains and severe dust storms to portions of Western Australia . Additionally , a 30 @, @ 000 ton freighter broke in half amidst rough seas produced by the storm . Total losses from the storm reached A \$ 20 million ( \$ 15 @. @ 6 million USD ) . Due to the significant damage wrought by Herbie , the name was retired following its use .

= = Meteorological history = =

Tropical Cyclone Herbie originated from an area of low pressure on 17 May 1988 northwest of the Cocos Islands . Later that day , the Australian Bureau of Meteorology began monitoring the system as a tropical low . Several hours after , the Joint Typhoon Warning Center ( JTWC ) classified the system as Tropical Depression 21S , having attained winds of 45 km / h ( 30 mph 1 @-@ minute sustained ) . Following slight development , the system intensified into a Category 1 cyclone and was given the name Herbie by the Australian Bureau of Meteorology early on 18 May . Several hours after being named , the storm attained its initial peak intensity with winds of 75 km / h ( 45 mph 10 @-@ minute sustained ) and a barometric pressure of 990 hPa ( mbar ) .

Around the same time , the JTWC upgraded the system to a tropical storm , estimating the cyclone to have attained peak winds of 65 km / h ( 40 mph 1 @-@ minute sustained ) . On 19 May , satellite imagery of the system depicted that a new low pressure centre had developed roughly 300 km ( 190 mi ) south of the original low . Several hours after the relocation , the JTWC downgraded Herbie to a tropical depression as the system 's movement began to accelerate towards the southeast . As the storm moved at a rapid speed towards the coastline of Western Australia , it began to undergo an extratropical transition . During a 24 @-@ hour period ( 20 ? 21 May ) Herbie tracked roughly 1 @, @ 500 km ( 930 mi ) , with the movement of the storm reaching 70 km / h ( 43 mph ) at times .

Late on 20 May , the JTWC ceased advisories on the system as it weakened below tropical depression status offshore . However , the Bureau of Meteorology continued to monitor the system . Early on 21 May , the center of Herbie made landfall in Shark Bay with wind gusts up to 120 km / h ( 75 mph ) and a pressure of 980 hPa ( mbar ) . Due to the rapid movement of the storm , it reached the Great Australian Bight while retaining tropical characteristics despite its low @-@ latitude . Early on 22 May , the system lost its identity south of Australia as an extratropical cyclone .

= = Impact = =

Although a weak storm , its fast approach allowed for little preparation . According to officials in the coastal town of Denham , " .. the cyclone struck virtually without warning . " Most tourists staying in the region evacuated the day before Herbie 's arrival . Herbie caused moderate structural damage across Western Australia in coastal areas between Carnarvon and Denham . Banana plantations within this area also sustained extensive damage . In Denham , a storm surge of 2 m ( 6 @. @ 6 ft ) broke the town 's retaining wall and flooded low @-@ lying areas along the shore . Several fishing vessels were brought inland by the surge and left beached on streets once the water subsided . About 15 homes in Denham lost their roofs after wind gusts estimated at 160 km / h ( 99 mph )

battered the town . Due to the storms extratropical transition , areas south of Herbie received moderate to heavy rainfall while areas north of the center reported severe dust storms fueled by the cyclone 's high winds . Most areas affected by the storms rain recorded around 50 mm ( 2 @. @ 0 in ) with isolated totals near 100 mm ( 3 @. @ 9 in ) . The Irwin and Greenough Rivers overflowed their banks , inundating parts of Dongara . In all , the storm wrought approximately A \$ 20 million worth of structural and agricultural damage in Western Australia .

Offshore , a 30 @, @ 000 ton freighter , the Korean Star , sustained extreme damage during the storm . Rough seas caused the hull of the ship to break and the vessel was separated into two pieces . Although the freighter was in two pieces , the ship did not sink and the wreckage of it came ashore near Cape Cuvier . No one on the ship sustained injury as all 19 crew members abandoned ship . The crew was rescued within a day of sustaining the damage and flown to Carnarvon .

In the wake of the storm , the town hall in Denham was converted into a temporary shelter for the homeless . Repair to damaged roofs and downed power lines began on 22 May . Within a few days of the storm 's passage , appeals were made for relief funds in regions affected by Herbie . As of January 2010 , Cyclone Herbie is the most recent tropical system to either directly or indirectly impact the town of Geraldton , a region that is struck by tropical cyclones once every six to eight years . Although the storm caused relatively little damage , the name Herbie was retired following its usage and will never be used again to name a tropical cyclone in the Australian region .