= Hurricane Linda (1997) =

Hurricane Linda was the second @-@ strongest eastern Pacific hurricane on record . Forming from a tropical wave on September 9 , 1997 , Linda steadily intensified and reached hurricane status within 36 hours of developing . It rapidly intensified , reaching winds of 185 mph (295 km / h) and an estimated central pressure falling to 902 millibars (26 @.@ 6 inHg) ; both were records for the eastern Pacific until Hurricane Patricia surpassed it in 2015 . The hurricane was briefly forecast to move toward southern California , but instead , it turned out to sea and dissipated on September 17 . It was the fifteenth tropical cyclone , thirteenth named storm , seventh hurricane , and fifth major hurricane of the 1997 Pacific hurricane season .

While near peak intensity , Hurricane Linda passed near Socorro Island , where it damaged meteorological instruments . The hurricane produced high waves along the southwestern Mexican coastline , forcing the closure of five ports . If Linda had made landfall on southern California as predicted , it would have been the strongest storm to do so since a storm in 1939 . Though it did not hit the state , the hurricane produced light to moderate rainfall across the region , causing mudslides and flooding in the San Gorgonio Wilderness ; two houses were destroyed and 77 others were damaged , and damage totaled $ 3 @.@ 2 million (1997 USD , $ 4 @.@ 3 million 2008 USD) . Despite the intensity , the name was not retired .

= = Meteorological history = =

The origins of Hurricane Linda are believed to have been in a tropical wave that moved off the coast of Africa on August 24 . The wave tracked westward across the Atlantic Ocean and Caribbean Sea without development . An area of convection developed to the west of Panama in the Pacific Ocean on September 6 , which is believed to have been related to the tropical wave . The system continued westward , and within three days of entering the basin , a poorly defined circulation formed . Banding features began to develop , and at around 1200 UTC on September 9 , the system organized into Tropical Depression Fourteen @-@ E. At the time , it was approximately 460 miles (740 km) south of the Mexican city of Manzanillo .

On becoming a tropical cyclone , the depression moved northwestward at 6 and 12 miles per hour (9 @.@ 7 and 19 @.@ 3 km / h) , partially under the influence of a mid- to upper @-@ level low near the southern tip of the Baja California peninsula . Deep convection and banding features increased , and the depression intensified into a tropical storm early on September 10 . Upon being designated , the cyclone was named Linda by the National Hurricane Center (NHC) . As upper @-@ level outflow became well @-@ established , the storm began to strengthen quickly . By September 11 , an intermittent eye appeared , by which time the NHC estimated that Linda reached hurricane status . The storm began to rapidly intensify ; its small eye became well @-@ defined and surrounded by very cold convection . In a 24 ? hour period , the minimum pressure dropped 81 millibars (2 @.@ 4 inHg) , or an average drop of 3 @.@ 38 millibars (0 @.@ 100 inHg) per hour . Such intensification met the criterion for explosive deepening , an average hourly pressure decrease of at least 2 @.@ 5 millibars (0 @.@ 074 inHg) . By early September 12 , Hurricane Linda reached Category 5 status on the Saffir @-@ Simpson scale , and around 0600 UTC , Linda attained estimated peak winds of 185 mph (295 km / h) about 145 mi (235 km) southeast of Socorro Island . Its maximum sustained winds were estimated between 180 mph (285 km / h) and 195 mph (315 km / h) , based on Dvorak T @-@ numbers of 7 @.@ 5 and 8 @.@ 0 respectively , and gusts were estimated to have reached 220 mph (350 km / h) . The hurricane 's pressure is estimated at 902 millibars (26 @.@ 6 inHg) , making Linda the most intense Pacific hurricane at the time . When the storm was active , its pressure was estimated to have been slightly lower , at 900 millibars (27 inHg) .

Shortly after reaching peak intensity , Hurricane Linda passed near Socorro Island as a Category 5 hurricane . Around that time , tropical cyclone forecast models suggested that the hurricane would turn toward southern California due to an approaching upper @-@ level trough . Had Linda struck the state , it would have been much weaker at that time , possibly moving ashore as a tropical storm

. Instead , Hurricane Linda turned west @-@ northwestward away from land in response to a building ridge to the north of the hurricane . Despite remaining away from land , moisture from the storm reached southern California to produce rainfall . On September 14 , the Hurricane Hunters and airplanes from National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration investigated the hurricane to provide better data on the powerful hurricane . Hurricane Linda quickly deteriorated as it tracked toward cooler waters , weakening to tropical storm status on September 15 . Two days later , when located about 1 @,@ 105 miles (1 @,@ 778 km) west of the southern tip of the Baja California peninsula , it weakened to tropical depression status . Linda no longer met the criteria for a tropical cyclone by September 18 , although its remnant circulation persisted for a few more days before dissipating .

Forecasters and computer models did not anticipate how quickly Linda would strengthen ; in one advisory , the NHC under @-@ forecast how strong the winds would be in 72 hours by 115 miles per hour (185 km / h) . The maximum potential intensity for Linda was 880 millibars (26 inHg) , 22 millibars (0 @.@ 65 inHg) lower than its actual intensity . The 1997 season was affected by the 1997 @-@ 98 El Niño event , which brought warmer than normal water temperatures and contributed to the high intensity of several storms . Hurricane Linda occurred about a month after the similarly powerful Hurricane Guillermo , which also reached Category 5 status . The passage of Linda cooled the waters in the region , causing Hurricane Nora to weaken when it passed through the area on September 21 .

= = Preparations and impact = =

Although the eye of Hurricane Linda did not make landfall , the hurricane passed near Socorro Island while near peak intensity . The hurricane cut power to wind and pressure instruments . A station on the island recorded a pressure of 986 millibars (29 @.@ 1 inHg) before it stopped producing data . No tropical cyclone warnings or watches were issued for the hurricane . However , the threat for high tides and strong winds in Mexico prompted officials to issue coastal flood warnings and to close five ports . Waves of up to 7 @.@ 8 feet (2 @.@ 4 m) were reported along the coastline , causing flooding in the states of Michoacán , Jalisco , Nayarit , and Sinaloa .

When Linda was predicted to turn towards the northeast , it was forecast to move ashore in southern California as a weak tropical storm , which would have made Linda the first to do so since a tropical storm in 1939 . The Oxnard , California National Weather Service office issued public information and special weather statements that discussed the possible impact of Linda on southern California . The advisories mentioned forecasting uncertainty , and advised the media not to exaggerate the storm . The office noted a threat for significant rainfall ? possibly causing flash flooding ? as well as high surf . To prepare for possible flooding , workers cleaned storm drains and prepared sandbags for coastal properties .

Although the storm did not make the turn , 15 and 18 feet (4 @.@ 6 and 5 @.@ 5 m) waves reached southern California . In Newport Beach , a wave swept five people off a jetty and carried them 900 feet (270 m) out to sea , although all were rescued by a passing boat . Moisture from the hurricane moved across the state , producing heavy rainfall and golfball @-@ sized hail . A station in Forrest Falls , located within the San Gorgonio Wilderness , recorded rainfall rates of 2 @.@ 5 inches (64 mm) per hour . The rainfall caused severe flooding and mudslides which destroyed two houses , damaged 77 others , and inflicted $ 3 @.@ 2 million in damage (1997 USD , $ 4 @.@ 3 million 2008 USD) . San Diego recorded 0 @.@ 05 inches (1 @.@ 3 mm) of rain , the first measurable precipitation in 164 days ; this tied the record for the longest duration without rainfall at the station , previously set in 1915 and 1924 . Moisture from Linda extended into the Upper Midwest , contributing to a record daily rainfall total of 1 @.@ 97 inches (50 mm) in Minneapolis , Minnesota .

= = Records = =

With an estimated pressure of 902 millibars (26 @.@ 6 inHg) , Hurricane Linda became the most

intense Pacific hurricane since reliable records began in the 1966 season . Until Hurricane Patricia of 2015 , Linda was also believed to have been the strongest since overall records began in the basin in 1949 . The previous most intense hurricane was Hurricane Ava in 1973 , which contained a confirmed pressure of 915 millibars (27 @.@ 0 inHg) . Since no observations recorded the pressure during Linda 's peak , its peak intensity was estimated . As such , Ava remained the strongest measured hurricane in the basin at that time .