

= Hurricane Lester ( 1998 ) =

Hurricane Lester was the fifteenth tropical cyclone , twelfth named storm and eighth hurricane of the 1998 Pacific hurricane season . Lester originated from a tropical wave that emerged off the coast of Africa on September 29 . Under favorable conditions , the storm was classified as a tropical depression on October 15 . The depression was upgraded to a tropical storm later that day and a hurricane on October 16 . After undergoing fluctuations in intensity , Lester reached peak winds of 115 mph ( 185 km / h ) , a Category 3 hurricane on the Saffir @-@ Simpson Hurricane Scale . After several days , it degenerated into a tropical storm on October 26 , and dissipated shortly after . The hurricane made its closest approach to land on October 18 , producing moderate winds and heavy rainfall . A mudslide triggered by the precipitation killed two children , although damage is unknown .

= = Meteorological history = =

A tropical wave moved off the coast of Africa on September 29 , 1998 and on October 5 , an area of convection along the wave developed into Atlantic Hurricane Lisa . The wave axis continued westward , and after crossing Central America a low @-@ level circulation developed on October 13 , about 170 miles ( 275 km ) south of the border between El Salvador and Guatemala . The system drifted northwestward , and as convection increased around the center a banding featured began to develop . At 0000 UTC on October 15 , the National Hurricane Center designated it as Tropical Depression Fourteen @-@ E. The depression contained a large envelope of convective activity , and under favorable conditions including warm water , low vertical wind shear and good outflow , it gradually began to intensify . Initially , the exact direction of forward movement was somewhat uncertain , although a northwestward track was predicted . On the morning of October 15 , visible satellite imagery suggested that the center of circulation was located northeast of the previous estimates . Thunderstorm activity organized close to the center by 1400 UTC , and by 1800 UTC the depression was upgraded to Tropical Storm Lester .

Shortly thereafter , the storm took a slight jog to the west , and at the same time outflow became restricted to the southwest of the circulation . At 1400 UTC on October 16 , data from a Reconnaissance Aircraft confirmed that the storm had attained hurricane intensity with a minimum central pressure of 992 mb . The first signs of an eye began to appear embedded within a ring of deep convection by early on October 17 , while moving west @-@ northwest at about 6 mph ( 9 @.@ 7 km / h ) . Shortly after , the hurricane became nearly stationary due to a shortwave which passed north of the system , shortly before reaching Category 2 status on the Saffir @-@ Simpson Hurricane Scale . Early on October 18 , the eye began to wobble slightly and the ring of cold cloud tops were showing signs of disorganization , slowing further intensification for several hours . At 1400 UTC , Lester 's winds increased to 100 mph ( 160 km / h ) and the storm made its closest approach to land on October 18 , about 70 miles ( 110 km ) south of Puerto Angel , Oaxaca . Later that day , it weakened to Category 1 status , although quickly re @-@ intensified .

Vertical wind shear associated with a mid @-@ to @-@ upper @-@ level low pressure system developed and began to affect the storm 's circulation on October 19 , thus weakening it slightly . However , early on October 20 the hurricane regained organization and once again intensified . Lester strengthened to reach a peak intensity of 115 mph ( 185 km / h ) on October 22 , about 355 miles ( 570 km ) southwest of Manzanillo , Colima . Coinciding with its peak intensity , a short @-@ wave trough caused Lester to stall before turning to the southwest and weakening . At 0200 UTC on October 23 Lester rapidly lost deep convection , and weakened to Category 1 status . Later that morning , the storm was downgraded to a tropical storm while tracking southwest . By October 24 , the low @-@ level center of circulation became exposed from the cloud structure , and at 0000 UTC on October 16 , Lester had degenerated into a tropical depression , about 500 miles ( 805 km ) southwest of the southern tip of Baja California Peninsula , shortly before dissipating .

= = Preparations and impact = =

In anticipation of the storm , the government of Mexico issued a hurricane warning from Puerto Arista to Punta Maldonado and later from Salina Cruz to Acapulco . A tropical storm warning was also issued from Sipacate , Guatemala to Puerto Arista , Mexico . The threat of the hurricane prompted officials to order the evacuation of 3 @, @ 000 people along the southern coast of Mexico to 500 emergency shelters .

The storm dropped heavy rainfall across southwestern Guatemala . Up to 9 inches ( 228 mm ) of rainfall was reported in localized areas along the Pacific coast of the country . Moisture brought around the northeast periphery of the Sierra Madre Occidental led to a narrow band of heavy rainfall along the upslope side of the mountain range , with a local precipitation maximum exceeding 14 inches ( 360 mm ) . It is reported that tropical @-@ storm @-@ force winds occurred along coastal areas of southern Mexico . The rainfall destroyed some houses and killed numerous livestock , and triggered a mudslide which killed two children . In Honduras , rainfall from the Lester destroyed a bridge which affected transportation for about 1 @, @ 000 people . Heavy rainfall was reported in Chiapas , causing moderate river flooding though no reported damage .