

= Effects of Hurricane Isabel in New York and New England =

The effects of Hurricane Isabel in New York and New England were relatively minor and primarily limited to wind damage . Hurricane Isabel formed from a tropical wave on September 6 , 2003 in the tropical Atlantic Ocean . It moved northwestward , and within an environment of light wind shear and warm waters it steadily strengthened to reach peak winds of 165 mph (265 km / h) on September 11 . After fluctuating in intensity for four days , Isabel gradually weakened and made landfall on the Outer Banks of North Carolina with winds of 105 mph (165 km / h) on September 18 . It quickly weakened over land and became extratropical over western Pennsylvania the next day .

Damage in New York totaled \$ 90 million (2003 USD , \$ 105 million 2008 USD) , with Vermont reporting about \$ 100 @, @ 000 in damage (2003 USD , \$ 117 @, @ 000 in 2008 USD) . Falling trees from moderate winds downed power lines across the region , causing sporadic power outages . Two people died as a result of the hurricane , both due to the rough surf from Isabel .

= Preparations =

Hours before Isabel made landfall on North Carolina , the National Hurricane Center issued a tropical storm warning for a portion of the southern Long Island coastline from the New Jersey / New York border to Moriches . About a day before the hurricane moved ashore , forecasters estimated the hurricane possessed a 10 % chance of passing within 75 miles (120 km) of New York City . Other portions of southern New England were estimated to have similar probabilities , with the same forecast predicting a 3 % chance for it passing within 75 miles (120 km) of Eastport , Maine . By about two days before Isabel struck land until several hours after it moved ashore , forecasters predicted the storm to pass over western New York as a transitioning tropical cyclone before passing into Canada as an extratropical cyclone .

New York Governor George Pataki urged residents to purchase emergency supplies and to fill cars with gasoline . The State Emergency Management Office began preparing for the hurricane about a week before it moved ashore . The office also issued a Level 1 emergency activation , with a planning unit readying contingency plans and in coordinating the efforts of other state offices . The state 's National Guard began preliminary preparations for possible support efforts by reviewing the list of personnel able to be mobilized in the event of an emergency . Army and Air National Guard officials identified needed equipment in the event of an emergency , such as helicopters , generators , high @-@ axle vehicles , and communications equipment . State police officers established contingency plans for personnel and equipment to assist as needed . The State Office of Parks , Recreation and Historic Preservation ensured needed equipment were operational , and also secured buildings with sandbags to prevent flooding . Seven airlines allowed travelers potentially affected by the hurricane to reschedule their flights to a later date .

= Impact =

The pressure gradient between a ridge and Isabel produced strong northeast winds of at least tropical storm force across southeastern New York . Shinnecock Inlet recorded a peak gust of 52 mph (84 km / h) . A station at LaGuardia Airport recorded a wind gust of 51 mph (82 km / h) , where airplane flights averaged a 90 @-@ minute delay . The strongest winds occurred in the outer rainbands , during which many trees , tree limbs , and power lines fell across the region . In the New York metropolitan area , moderate winds downed 640 trees and 801 tree limbs . A man driving through Great Neck Estates was critically injured when a tree limb fell onto the car . Additionally , a falling tree branch hit a man in the head , resulting in a serious head injury . In and around New York City , about 1 @. @ 1 million customers were left without power , though most outages were fixed by the day after the hurricane passed through the region . Offshore of Long Beach , rough waves killed a man while bodysurfing . Further to the northwest the winds were not as severe , though in some places in the south @-@ central portion of the state the winds downed some trees . A falling tree hit and damaged a car in Cobleskill . The winds also knocked out power to about 3 @, @ 000

customers in the Schoharie and eastern Mohawk Valleys . In the northeast portion of the state , a few trees and power lines were blown down in Moriah , Westport , and Lewis . Precipitation was generally light in the state , with a few scattered locations reporting over 1 inch (25 mm) . In Livingston County , the rainfall overflowed the reservoir , causing moderate flood damage . Initially , gasoline futures on the New York Stock Exchange rose in anticipation of a threat from the hurricane , though later dropped when the storm failed to disrupt oil refining facilities . The hurricane brought unusual birds to the western portion of the state , including petrels and shearwaters normally found in salt @-@ water regions or over the open ocean . Most of the birds died within a few days due to the sudden change in habitat . In Cayuga County , downed power lines lit one building on fire , causing minor smoke and water damage though no injuries . Damage in the state totaled \$ 90 million (2003 USD , \$ 105 million 2008 USD) .

Rainfall reached 1 inch (25 mm) in portions of western Connecticut and Massachusetts . Strong surf from Isabel caused a man to drown after losing his footing along the beach near Narragansett , Rhode Island , and being swept out to sea . Officials in Connecticut contacted a water company in Watertown and a grocer in Cheshire for donations to assist the residents affected in North Carolina . A few days after Isabel moved ashore , the officials sent a tractor trailer truck with 2 @,@ 000 gallons (7570 l) of water and 25 @,@ 000 pounds (11 @,@ 340 kg) of ice to North Carolina . In Vermont , the strong pressure gradient produced a peak wind gust of 55 mph (89 km / h) in Pleasant Valley , causing sporadic downed trees and power lines throughout the state . In Richmond , trees fell on and damaged three trucks , and in Salisbury a falling tree damaged a car . Damage in the state totaled about \$ 100 @,@ 000 (2003 USD , \$ 117 @,@ 000 in 2008 USD) . Rainfall reached 1 inch (25 mm) in various portions of New Hampshire and Maine .