

AP SPOTLIGHT

Study: Hurricanes like Helene are deadly when they hit and keep killing for years after

SETH BORENSTEIN Associated Press 12 hrs ago 0



recent study has found he average storm hitting the U.S. contributes to the early deaths of 7,000 to 11,000 people over a 15-year period, dwarfing the average of 24 mediate and direct deaths that the U.S. government counts in a hurricane's aftermath.

Hurricanes in the United States end up hundreds of times deadlier than the government calculates, contributing to more American deaths than car accidents or all the nation's wars, a new study said.



A search and rescue dog and its handler look for victims in deep mud Tuesday in Swannanoa, N.C. in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene.

MIKE STEWART, ASSOCIATED PRESS

The average storm hitting the U.S. contributes to the early deaths of 7,000 to 11,000 people over a 15-year period, which dwarfs the average of 24 immediate and direct deaths that the government counts in a hurricane's aftermath, the study in Wednesday's journal *Nature* concluded. Study authors said even with Hurricane Helene's growing triple-digit direct death count, many more people will die in future years partly because of the storm.

"Watching what's happened here makes you think that this is going to be a decade of hardship on tap, not just what's happening over the next couple of weeks," said Stanford University climate economist Solomon Hsiang, a study co-author and a former White House science and technology official.

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"After each storm there is sort of this surge of additional mortality in a state that's been impacted that has not been previously documented or associated with hurricanes in any way," Hsiang said.

Hsiang and University of California Berkeley researcher Rachel Young looked at hurricane deaths in a different way than previous studies, opting for a more long-term public health and economics-oriented analysis of what's called excess mortality. They looked at states' death rates after 501 different storms that hit the United States between 1930 and 2015. They found there is a "bump" in death rates after each storm.



Debris and damage is spread across Asheville, N.C., on Monday in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene.

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It's a statistical signature that the researchers see over and over, Hsiang said. Similar analyses are done for heat waves and other health threats like pollution and disease, he said. Pre-storm periods are compared and adjusted for other factors that could be causing changes in death rates, he said. Complicating everything is that the same places keep getting hit by multiple storms, so there are death bumps upon death bumps.



SCIENCE

Shock of deadly floods is a reminder of Appalachia's risk from violent storms in a warming climate

By MICHAEL PHILLIS and BRITTANY PETERSON - Associated Press

Just how storms contribute to people's deaths after the immediate impact is something that needs further study, Hsiang said. But he theorized it includes the health effects of stress; changes in the environment, including toxins; people not being able to afford health care and other necessities because of storm costs; infrastructure damage; and government changes in spending.

"When someone dies a few years after a hurricane hit them, the cause will be recorded as a heart attack, stroke or respiratory failure," said Texas A&M University climate scientist Andrew Dessler, who wasn't part of the study but



has done similar studies on heat and cold deaths. "The doctor can't possibly know that a hurricane contributed/triggered the illness. You can only see it in a statistical analysis like this."

Initially, Hsiang and Young figured the storm death bump would go away in a matter of months, but they were surprised when they examined hundreds of bumps and found they stretch out over 15 years, Hsiang said.

It's "almost like a trickle of mortality, like each month we're talking about five to 10 individuals who are dying earlier than they would have otherwise," Hsiang said.



Search and rescue personnel working Tuesday in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene are briefed in Swannanoa, N.C.

MIKE STEWART, ASSOCIATED PRESS



People walk Tuesday by a pile of debris left in Marshall, N.C. by Hurricane Helene.

JEFF ROBERSON, ASSOCIATED PRESS

These people don't realize that 10 or 15 years later their health issues are associated with a storm in some way, but Hsiang said it shows up in the data: "They would not have died at those times had the storm not arrived. And so essentially, these storms are accelerating people's deaths."

The numbers were so high that the researchers kept looking for mistakes or complicating factors they had missed. "It took years for us to really fully accept that this was happening," Hsiang said.



SCIENCE



Grandparents found hugging each other after fallen tree killed them in their South Carolina home

By HANNAH FINGERHUT - Associated Press

How big are the numbers?

Storms are a factor in between 55,000 to 88,000 excess deaths a year, the study concluded. So for the 85 years studied, the team calculated between 3.6 million and 5.2 million people died from the effects of storms. That's more than the 2 million car accident deaths over that period, the study said.

Before now, the public looked at storms "as an inconvenience that is tragic for a small number of community members," Hsiang said. But they really are "a major threat to public health," he said.

Hsiang said he and Young saw a trend of increasing hurricane-connected deaths, predominantly because of population growth. Starting in 2000, there's been a big jump in the total volume of storms hitting large populations, he said.



The Faraway Inn Cottages and Motel in Cedar Key, Fla. is in shambles Sept. 27 in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene.

GERALD HERBERT, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Three scientists not connected with the study said the research made sense.

"It seems like what they're doing is reasonable," said University of Albany hurricane expert Kristen Corbosiero. "The numbers are really staggering."

Texas A&M's Dessler said study is important because it brings home the deadly nature of climate change and extreme weather. He said he and his fellow climate scientists have been accurate in their warnings of the physics of what climate change would mean, but failed to emphasize enough how it would hurt people.

"Reading this, it's clear that humanity is very vulnerable to weather shocks, even in an incredibly rich country like ours," Dessler said in an email.

What hurricane season was like the year you were born

What hurricane season was like the year you were born





The fast winds, rapid rainfall, and huge storm surges of hurricanes make this natural disaster responsible for hundreds of deaths and millions of dollars' worth of damage each year. **Hurricanes have wrecked more havoc** than any other natural disaster, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. They've caused more than \$1.3 trillion in damage since 1980, averaging \$22.8 billion per hurricane. Hurricanes have also resulted in the highest number of deaths in the U.S.—6,890 Americans have lost their lives in hurricanes between 1980 and 2023.

Hurricanes are large, wet storms with high winds that **form over warm water**. On average, about 10 tropical storms develop each year, and **six reach the strength of hurricanes**, according to NOAA. Hurricane season in the **Atlantic basin**—the Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of Mexico, and the Caribbean Sea—runs from June 1 to Nov. 30, though some hurricanes do form outside of this season.

Hurricanes are rated using the **Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale**. Category 1 hurricanes have the lowest wind speeds at 74-95 miles per hour, and Category 5 hurricanes have the strongest winds at 157 miles per hour or higher. Storms that are Category 3 and above (reaching at least 111 miles per hour) are considered major hurricanes.

Stronger hurricanes can trigger flash floods, mudslides, and tornadoes, but even weaker ones can cause extensive destruction to property, infrastructure, and crops. Some hurricanes remain at sea and never make landfall, limiting the destruction they cause. Advancements in technology, particularly satellite imaging, have greatly improved warnings and advisories that prompted live-saving evacuations.

Weather disasters like hurricanes have become more consistently destructive in recent years. In July 2024, Hurricane Beryl tore through southeast Texas, **causing at least 36 deaths**. It was the earliest **Category 5 storm** on record. As of August 2024, forecasts from **NOAA** warn that this season could bring up to 24 named storms with at least eight hurricanes.

To see how hurricane season has evolved over time, **Stacker** obtained hurricane data, updated in 2023, from the **NOAA's Atlantic Oceanic and Meteorological Laboratory**, dating back to 1924. A list of notable events from each year was compiled from news, scientific, and government reports. (Because hurricanes were not given official names until 1950, this article refers to storms through 1949 as "recorded storms" as opposed to "named storms".)

Read on to learn about the noteworthy tropical storms and hurricanes from the year you were born.

You may also like: [These 5 counties are most vulnerable to extreme winter weather](#)

Photo illustration by Michael Flocker // Stacker // Getty Images

1924: The first Category 5 on record





- Recorded storms: 11
- Hurricanes: 5
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 2

Hurricane records date back to 1842, and 1924 was a first for the record books: An unnamed Category 5 hurricane struck Cuba, becoming the [first Category 5 hurricane](#) ever recorded.

Maksmilian // Shutterstock

1925: A late-season hurricane strikes Florida



- Recorded storms: 4
- Hurricanes: 1
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 0

The 1925 hurricane season was a relatively quiet one, but it still made history. The season saw a hurricane make landfall in Florida on Dec. 1, one of the [latest hurricanes to hit the U.S.](#) on record.

Topical Press Agency // Getty Images

1926: A deadly hurricane hits Miami





- Recorded storms: 11
- Hurricanes: 8
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 6

The 1926 hurricane season is remembered for **one of the deadliest storms in U.S. history**. A Category 4 hurricane hit South Florida in September, **killing about 250 people** and leaving 25,000 residents **homeless**. According to PBS, the **September hurricane**, known as the Great Miami Hurricane, was the country's greatest natural disaster in two decades, since the deadly earthquake and fire that hit San Francisco in 1906. Today, the storm is still considered among the strongest, deadliest, and most costly in the country's history.

Bettmann // Getty Images

1927: New England gets flooded





- Recorded storms: 8
- Hurricanes: 4
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 1

No hurricanes struck the U.S. in 1927. However, that doesn't mean the country didn't feel the effects of those Atlantic basin storms anyway. In early November, a [hurricane moved up the Atlantic coast](#), leading to disastrous rainfall in New England, with some parts of Vermont receiving as much as 15 inches of rain, resulting in widespread flooding.

Canva

1928: Another deadly hurricane in southern Florida



- Recorded storms: 6
- Hurricanes: 4
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 1

Just two years after the Great Miami Hurricane sounded the alarm to southern Floridians about the area being storm-prone, the Okeechobee Hurricane of 1928 struck, cementing that fact. The hurricane [made landfall in Palm Beach County](#) on Sept. 16, [killing around 2,500](#), many of whom were migrant workers, and leaving [800,000 homeless](#). Before landing in Florida, the hurricane also hit Puerto Rico on Sept. 13, the feast day of Saint Philip. It was the [second hurricane](#) to strike Puerto Rico on that day of celebration.

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Keystone-France // Getty Images

1929: A slow-moving hurricane slams the Bahamas





- Recorded storms: 5
- Hurricanes: 3
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 1

The Great Bahamas Hurricane, also known as the Great Andros Island Hurricane, barely moved over the course of three days in September, hovering above Nassau and Andros in the Bahamas. The storm **killed 134 people**, with mariners and anglers making up a large majority of the fatalities.

Topical Press Agency // Getty Images

1931: Belize's deadliest hurricane



- Recorded storms: 13

- Hurricanes: 3

- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 1

In September 1931, a hurricane hit Belize, then known as British Honduras, and killed about 2,500 people. The colony's capital, Belize City, was submerged in about five feet of water, leaving nearly 70% of the city destroyed. As of August 2024, it is the **deadliest hurricane to hit Belize** in recorded history.

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1932: Category 4 hurricane strikes Cuba



- Recorded storms: 15

- Hurricanes: 6

- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 4

The Huracán de Santa Cruz del Sur, a Category 4 storm, **hit Cuba in November 1932** and caused 3,500 fatalities. Most of the deaths were due to a storm surge, a flash flood that rose to over 20 feet. The damage in the town of Santa Cruz del Sur was particularly catastrophic, hence the hurricane's unofficial name. According to the Associated Press, less than 10% of the town's residents were able to flee unscathed.

Keystone-France // Getty Images

1933: A record hurricane season in the Caribbean

- Recorded storms: 20
- Hurricanes: 11
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 6

The 1933 hurricane season was **one of the most active** in Atlantic basin history. Of the 11 hurricanes that season, eight were tracked through the Caribbean alone, which is the most ever recorded in that area, as of 2021.

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tuaindeed // Shutterstock

1934: Hurricane 'hunting' improves



- Recorded storms: 13
- Hurricanes: 7
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 1

Unlike the year that preceded it, the 1934 hurricane season was much less destructive, which was both a natural development and a technological one. The United States Weather Bureau's improved system for "**hunting**" hurricanes involved calling ships for weather updates, which allowed earlier warnings to residents to escape potential threats.

Bettmann // Getty Images

1935: Category 5 Labor Day Hurricane



- Recorded storms: 8
- Hurricanes: 5
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 3

At the time of its landfall, the 1935 Labor Day Hurricane was **one of the strongest storms** to touch down in the U.S. It was also the country's **first Category 5 hurricane** ever. More than 400 people died in the storm's path that made landfall in the Florida Keys, making it one of the 10 deadliest hurricanes in the country's history.

Keystone-France // Getty Images

1936: Texas takes a hit



- Recorded storms: 17
- Hurricanes: 7
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 1

Only **one major hurricane struck** the United States in 1936, and this time, it came for Texas. The storm made landfall on June 27 in Port Aransas, weakening as it made its way to Corpus Christi. Though the storm did damage boats and crops, there were no reported deaths or injuries.

ullstein bild Dtl. // Getty Images

1937: A short hurricane season



- Recorded storms: 11
- Hurricanes: 4
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 1

The first tropical disturbance of the **1937 hurricane season** was on July 29, and the last was on Oct. 4. The short season only had one major hurricane, near Barbuda in the Caribbean, but it never made landfall.

Oskari Porkka // Shutterstock

1938: The hurricane with the fastest forward speed



- Recorded storms: 9
- Hurricanes: 4
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 2

The Great New England Hurricane of 1938 recorded the **fastest forward speed of a hurricane**. The storm traversed 600 miles in 12 hours, moving at roughly 60 miles per hour. It earned the nickname "The Long Island Express" due to its trainlike high speeds.

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Bettmann // Getty Images

1939: Four hurricanes strike Southern California





- Recorded storms: 6
- Hurricanes: 3
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 1

In 1939, **four tropical cyclones hit Southern California** in September alone. The most destructive was El Cordonazo, which killed 93 people and was the only tropical storm to make landfall in the Golden State in the 20th century.

ullstein bild via Getty Images

1940: One of the wettest hurricanes in Louisiana history



- Recorded storms: 9

- Hurricanes: 6
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 0

An unnamed Category 1 hurricane in August 1940 became one of the wettest ever recorded in [Louisiana's history](#). Rainfall peaked in the city of Crowley with 33.71 inches.

CORBIS/Bettmann Archive // Getty Images

1941: A hurricane breaches the Texas seawall



- Recorded storms: 6
- Hurricanes: 4
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 3

A September 1941 [hurricane breached the seawall](#) in Texas near East Matagorda Bay. Water from the rising tide flooded residential and business areas, covering a local airport with up to three feet of water. In total, the hurricane caused \$7 million in damage, with \$5 million attributed to crop damage.

Bettmann // Getty Images

1943: Surprise hurricane during World War II





- Recorded storms: 10
- Hurricanes: 5
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 2

During World War II, [ship broadcasts in the Gulf of Mexico went silent](#) so the military could keep a lookout for German U-boats. That radio silence meant no transmissions on weather conditions, too, so the hurricane that hit the Houston-Galveston area of Texas in late July came without warning, earning its nickname of the "surprise" hurricane.

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Historical // Getty Images

1944: Hurricane sinks World War II ships



- Recorded storms: 14
- Hurricanes: 8
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 3

The [Great Atlantic Hurricane](#) made landfall on Long Island and Rhode Island in September 1944, causing 46 fatalities on land, and \$100 million in damage. The storm also [sank five World War II vessels](#), killing 334 additional people.

Bettmann // Getty Images

1945: Homestead Hurricane destroys blimp hangars



- Recorded storms: 11

- Hurricanes: 5

- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 2

In 1945, the [Homestead Hurricane's winds started a fire](#) at Naval Air Station Richmond in South Florida that burnt down three wooden hangars used during World War II to house blimps and planes. The storm and its resulting fire ultimately [destroyed](#) 25 blimps and 360 aircraft and [injured 200 people](#) at the naval base.

Bettmann // Getty Images

1946: No hurricane deaths in the US





- Recorded storms: 6
- Hurricanes: 3
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 1

The hurricane season of 1946 was a tame one. **No lives were lost to tropical storms** in the U.S. in 1946, and property damage stayed under \$10 million, compared to \$80 million in 1945 and \$150 million in 1944.

PA Images // Getty Images

1947: An attempt to weaken a hurricane



- Recorded storms: 9
- Hurricanes: 5
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 2

For the first time in 1947, the government **tried to weaken a hurricane** through a weather modification program called Project Cirrus. They used a method called cloud seeding, which involves releasing a substance into the air (in this case, dry ice) to modify the storm.

That same year, the Army Air Corps led a flight into a hurricane, marking the start of the **Air Force Reserve's Hurricane Hunters**, who measure storms by entering the eye of the hurricane.

Photo 12 // Getty Images

1948: Two hurricanes hit South Florida





- Recorded storms: 9
- Hurricanes: 6
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 4

Two [hurricanes](#) hit South Florida two weeks apart in September 1948 and October 1948, causing extensive flood damage. The first of the two was the most destructive, featuring wind gusts of 160 miles per hour and producing six feet of storm surge.

You may also like: [What to do after a winter storm](#)

Photo 12 // Universal Images Group via Getty Images

1949: Hurricane damages crops in Florida





- Recorded storms: 13
- Hurricanes: 7
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 3

A late August 1949 hurricane followed a similar path in South Florida as the Great Miami Hurricane of 1928 but caused **twice the damage**, particularly agriculturally. There was \$45 million worth of damage in Florida alone, according to NOAA, mainly affecting crops.

UPI/Bettmann Archive // Getty Images

1950: Hurricanes given names



- Named storms: 13
- Hurricanes: 11
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 8

The first year that hurricanes in the Atlantic were **given names** was 1950. The convention was to use names from the British–U.S. World War II spelling alphabet, starting with Hurricane Able. The fifth storm of the season, Hurricane Easy, didn't live up to its moniker—the Category 3 **hurricane devastated** the town of Cedar Key, Florida.

Evans // Getty Images

1951: Hurricane Charlie devastates Jamaica





- Named storms: 10
- Hurricanes: 8
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 5

No hurricanes made landfall in the U.S. in 1951. However, the **third hurricane of the season**, Hurricane Charlie, was one of the most destructive storms in Jamaica's history, killing more than 150 people, leaving 25,000 homeless, and causing \$50 million in damage.

University of Southern California // Getty Images

1952: A February tropical storm



- Named storms: 7

- Hurricanes: 6
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 3

In 1952, an unnamed **winter tropical storm** hit Florida on Feb. 2, Groundhog Day—well before the June start of the hurricane season. It's the only known February tropical storm ever in the Atlantic basin and it wasn't until 2015 that NOAA's National Hurricane Research Division classified the low-pressure system as a tropical storm.

Smith Collection/Gado // Getty Images

1953: Hurricane naming system changes again



- Named storms: 14
- Hurricanes: 6
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 4

In 1953, the U.S. **scrapped the military naming system** of 1950 and opted instead for a list of names traditionally used for women. While the new names were ready to go, the season was relatively tame, with **only two hurricanes reaching the U.S.** and they were not severe. There was one death and damage totaled about \$6 million.

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Dean Conger // Getty Images

1954: Sister storms wallop New England



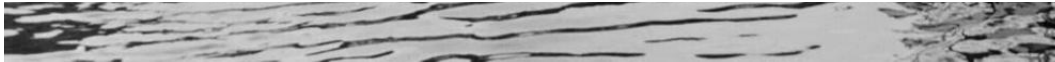
- Named storms: 11
- Hurricanes: 8
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 2

Until 1954, many people believed that hurricanes spared New England, but that changed when a duo of tropical cyclones hit the region in late August and early September of that year. The **Category 3 hurricanes**—known as "The Twins," Carol and Edna—came close to **destroying a few towns** in Rhode Island. Hurricane Carol caused more property damage than any other hurricane by that point in recorded history, a **record the storm would only hold** for one year. As a result, NOAA **retired the names Carol and Edna** from hurricane nomenclature due to the severity of the storm's destruction. (Carol was the first name to be retired in history.)

Bettmann // Getty Images

1955: Another set of sister storms sets records





- Named storms: 12
- Hurricanes: 9
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 6

Hurricanes Diane and Connie outdid the damage caused by Carol and Edna the previous year. The **two storms hit the coast of North Carolina** just five days apart, tracking up to Washington D.C., and eventually, **New England**. Hurricane Diane followed so soon after Hurricane Connie that their floods **caused more property damage than any hurricane in history** up until that point. It's estimated that Diane alone led to **200 total fatalities**. NOAA also retired the names Diane and Connie as a result.

Bettmann // Getty Images

1956: A mild hurricane season



- Named storms: 8
- Hurricanes: 4
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 2

The 1956 season featured only a few hurricanes, and those storms were of low intensity, especially compared to the hurricanes of the two previous seasons. **Hurricane Flossy** was the only storm to touch down in the contiguous U.S., causing heavy rainfall in Alabama and Florida.

ullstein bild Dtl. // Getty Images

1957: A destructive June hurricane



- Named storms: 8

- Hurricanes: 3

- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 2

The 1957 hurricane season came back with a bit of a vengeance, mainly thanks to [Hurricane Audrey](#), a June storm that caused an estimated 500 deaths. Audrey was also the likely [cause of several tornadoes](#) reported around its strike zone. The storm made landfall as a Category 3 hurricane in Louisiana, near the Louisiana-Texas border.

Shel Hershorn - HA/Inactive // Getty Images

1958: No hurricanes until August





- Named storms: 10
- Hurricanes: 7
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 5

The 1958 season **didn't have significant storm activity** over the Atlantic until mid-August. In late September, Hurricane Helene became one of the most intense and destructive of the season, **causing \$11 million in damage in North Carolina**, though it led to no fatalities.

You may also like: [As storm season approaches, is your county a target for hail damage in 2024?](#)

Portland Press Herald via Getty Images

1959: Hurricane warnings save lives



- Named storms: 11
- Hurricanes: 7
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 2

Several of 1959's hurricanes were weak, just barely achieving hurricane status. Hurricane Gracie, which occurred late in the season, was the **only major hurricane to reach the mainland** U.S. It was also one of the most intense, causing 22 out of the 24 fatalities that year. Accurate warnings enabled many people to evacuate before Gracie wreaked havoc, resulting in the low death count.

Donald Uhrbrock // Getty Images

1960: Hurricane Donna reaches far





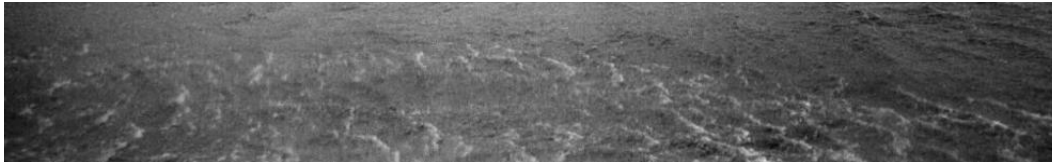
- Named storms: 7
- Hurricanes: 4
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 2

Once Hurricane Donna struck Florida in September 1960, it was reported that its **winds reached more U.S. coastline** than any other storm on record. It was also the most destructive hurricane in Florida's history at the time and it holds the record for **retaining major hurricane status longer** than any other storm in the Atlantic basin, lasting for a total of nine days.

H. Armstrong Roberts/ClassicStock // Getty Images

1961: Hurricane Carla forces evacuation





- Named storms: 11
- Hurricanes: 8
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 7

Hurricane Carla was a Category 5 storm until just before it **touched down in Texas as a Category 4** in mid-September 1961. Still, Carla was one of the largest and most intense hurricanes ever to strike the Gulf Coast. Fortunately, there were fewer than 50 fatalities, thanks to early warnings that allowed about 350,000 people to evacuate.

Flip Schulke Archives // Getty Images

1962: A quiet year for hurricanes



- Named storms: 5
- Hurricanes: 3
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 1

With significantly fewer storms than usual, 1962 was the **quietest hurricane season since 1939**. Even the storms that occurred were less intense than expected. The first hurricane of the season, Alma, barely reached hurricane status and only remained one for 12 hours.

Bettmann // Getty Images

1963: Hurricane Flora kills more than 7,000





- Named storms: 9
- Hurricanes: 7
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 2

The **1963 hurricane season started slow**, but there were only two days without tropical cyclones on weather charts from Sept. 10 to Oct. 30. Hurricane Flora was the one that went down in history, becoming one of the deadliest storms the Atlantic had ever experienced. It killed an estimated 7,186 people and **hit Haiti the hardest**, taking the lives of over 5,000 people in the country. Flora's agricultural damage—totaling a conservative estimate of \$528.6 million—particularly devastated Cuba's economy.

You may also like: [Despite hurricane risks, U.S. Gulf Coast remains major draw for renters](#)

Duke University Rubenstein Library/Gado // Getty Images

1964: Four hurricanes hit the US mainland



- Named storms: 12
- Hurricanes: 6
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 6

Four hurricanes hit the U.S. mainland in 1964, an occurrence that had only happened five other times since 1900. Though

none were major, **three of the four were severe**—Hurricane Cleo, Hurricane Dora, and Hurricane Hilda. The season resulted in \$515 million in damage and 266 deaths across the U.S. and other parts of the Atlantic basin.

Bettmann // Getty Images

1965: Official hurricane season is established



- Named storms: 6
- Hurricanes: 4
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 1

1965 marked the establishment of **an official hurricane season in the Atlantic**, running annually from June 1 to Nov. 30. Nearly all—97%—tropical cyclones occur between those dates, according to NOAA.

Also in 1965, Hurricane Betsy caused major damage, **knocking out 90% of power in New Orleans**. At the time, it was the **most destructive hurricane** on record.

Bettmann // Getty Images

1966: Alma and Inez break records





- Named storms: 11
- Hurricanes: 7
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 3

The first storm of the **1966 season**, Hurricane Alma, arrived earlier than any other hurricane since 1825. Hurricane Inez, another 1966 storm, had more advisories issued about it than any hurricane before it, with a total of 65. Inez was also the first single tropical cyclone to hit the West Indies, the Bahamas, Florida, and Mexico.

Photoshot // Getty Images

1967: A late, but active season



- Named storms: 8
- Hurricanes: 6
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 1

The 1967 season saw a [record number of hurricanes](#) for a season whose first storm didn't develop until the end of August. The season also saw three hurricanes—Beulah, Chloe, and Doria—existing at the same time, a rare phenomenon.

Bettmann // Getty Images

1968: Hurricane Gladys ends a drought



- Named storms: 8
- Hurricanes: 4
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 0

1968 had an unusually calm hurricane season until [Hurricane Gladys](#) came along in October. The storm brought rainfall that [ended North Carolina's worst drought](#) since 1932. Unfortunately, Gladys also killed five people and caused \$6.7 million in damage.

You may also like: [20 of the most destructive winter storms since 1980](#)

Boston Globe // Getty Images

1969: Hurricane Camille clobbers the US





- Named storms: 18
- Hurricanes: 12
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 5

The [hurricane season of 1969](#) was quite active, but one tropical cyclone, Hurricane Camille, has gone down in infamy. The [Category 5 storm](#) made landfall in Mississippi in mid-August 1969, with winds reaching an estimated 200 miles per hour. It's one of only four [Category 5 hurricanes to make landfall in the continental U.S.](#) and it's also one of the [most expensive hurricanes](#) in the country's history, costing \$1.4 billion in damages.

Bettmann // Getty Images

1970: Hurricane Celia destroys Texas



- Named storms: 10
- Hurricanes: 5

- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 2

The **only hurricane that significantly affected** the U.S. during the 1970 season was Hurricane Celia. The storm, which **made landfall near Corpus Christi, Texas**, in early August, caused \$453.8 million in **property and crop damage**. At the time, it was the costliest hurricane to ever hit Texas, outdoing the damage of Hurricane Carla nearly a decade earlier.

Denver Post // Getty Images

1971: Hurricane Ginger sets long-lasting record



- Named storms: 13

- Hurricanes: 6

- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 1

Hurricane Ginger broke records in 1971, becoming the **second-longest-running hurricane** in the Atlantic basin by lasting 27.25 days (20 of which it was classified as a hurricane). However, the **most destructive named storm of the year** was Tropical Storm Doria, which dumped heavy rains throughout New England. Of the eight storm-related fatalities in the U.S. in 1971, six were the result of Doria.

Spencer Grant // Getty Images

1972: Category 1 hurricane wreaks havoc



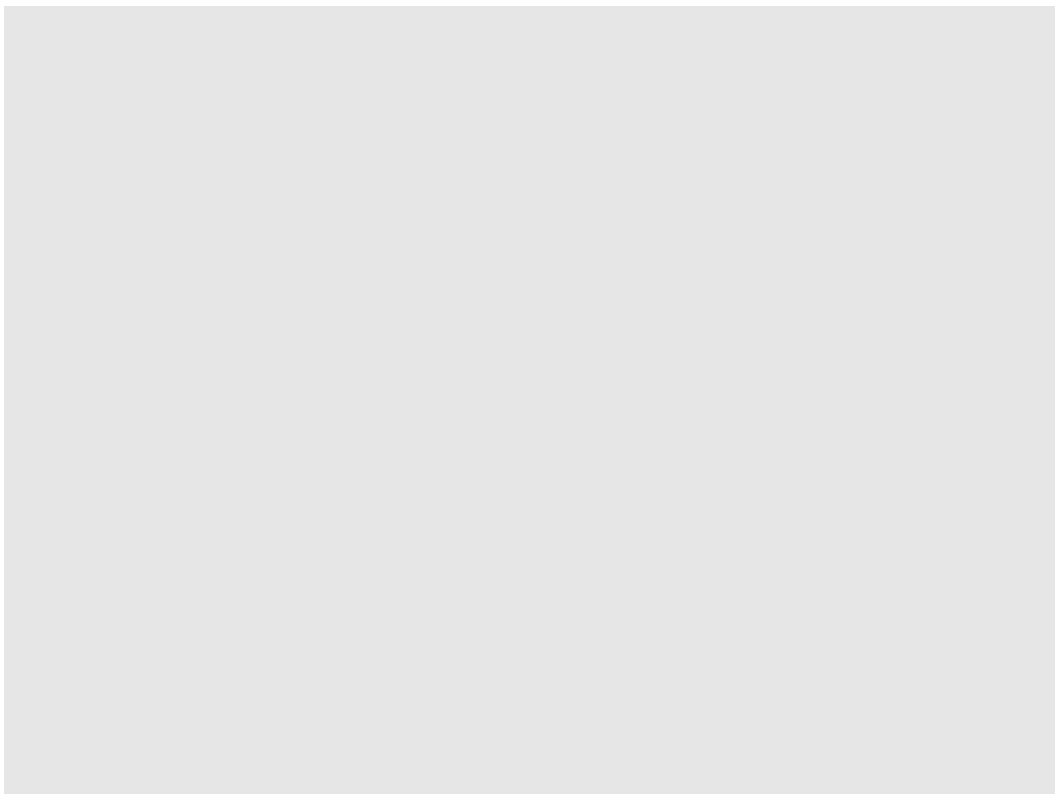


- Named storms: 7
- Hurricanes: 3
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 0

There were **fewer tropical storms and hurricanes in 1972** than any year since 1930, and most of the storms formed in temperate waters instead of the Tropics. The only storm that originated in tropical waters was Hurricane Agnes, which killed about 120 people and caused \$3.1 billion in property damage. It became the first Category 1 hurricane in the Atlantic to **have its name retired**.

The Washington Post // Getty Images

1973: One of the least damaging seasons



- Named storms: 8
- Hurricanes: 4
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 1

1973 was one of the **least damaging hurricane seasons**, with only 16 fatalities throughout the Atlantic, Caribbean, and Gulf of Mexico and less than \$20 million in damage. For the first time since 1962, no hurricanes crossed the U.S. coastline in 1973.

You may also like: [50 coldest cities in America on Christmas](#)

Dave Mathias/The Denver Post via Getty Images

1974: Hurricane Fifi strikes Honduras

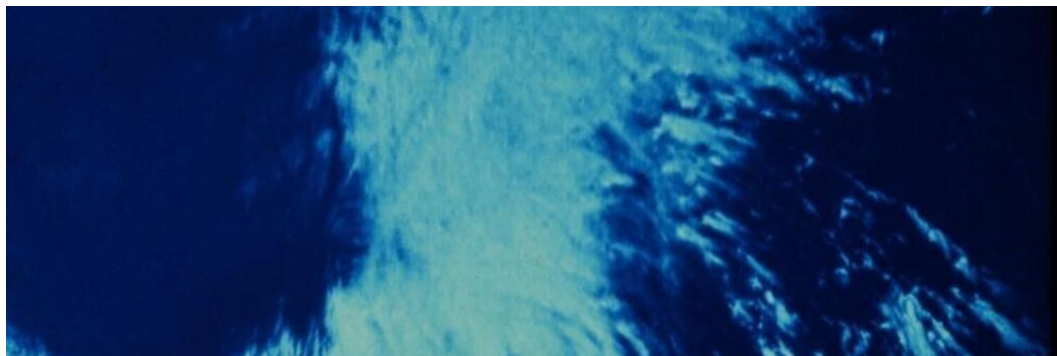


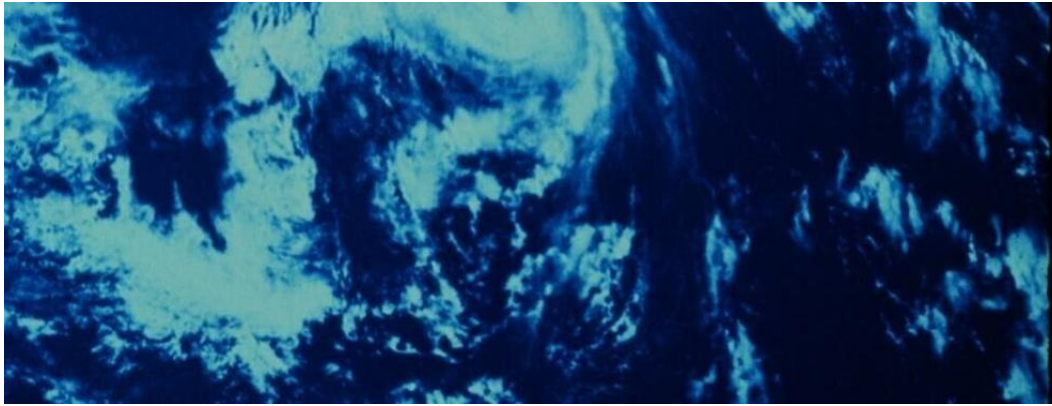
- Named storms: 11
- Hurricanes: 4
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 2

In mid-September 1974, Hurricane Fifi **grazed the coast of Honduras** and made landfall in Belize, though it caused much more damage to the former. In some regions, Fifi caused 24 inches of rain in 36 hours, triggering mudslides and flash floods that destroyed 182 towns and killed 8,000 people in Honduras alone.

Bettmann // Getty Images

1975: A return to hurricane normalcy





- Named storms: 9
- Hurricanes: 6
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 3

After five years of low hurricane activity in the Atlantic, **1975 marked a return to normalcy**. However, Hurricane Eloise was the only storm to make landfall in the U.S. that year. It was also the most destructive storm of the season, causing more than **\$100 million in agricultural losses** in Alabama alone.

Universal History Archive // Universal Images Group via Getty Images

1976: Hurricane Belle destroys Northeast crops



- Named storms: 10
- Hurricanes: 6
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 2

Hurricane Belle was one of **two named storms to hit the U.S. in 1976**, though the other was barely classified as a tropical storm. Belle significantly weakened the day before it hit Long Island, New York, on Aug. 10, yet the hurricane still caused \$100 million in damage in the U.S., primarily due to the crops it ruined in the Northeast.

David Cupp/The Denver Post via Getty Images

1977: A late-season storm comes for Mexico

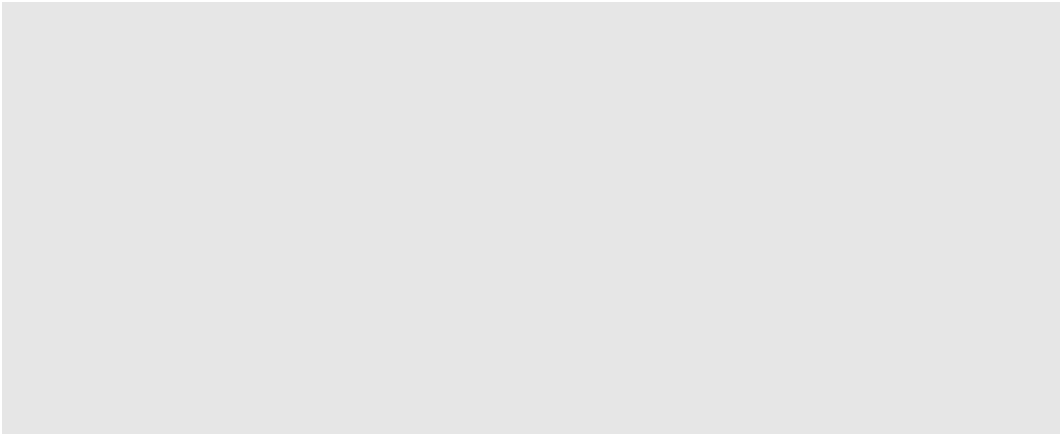
- Named storms: 6
- Hurricanes: 5
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 1

Anita, the first hurricane of 1977, didn't land until Aug. 29 and was **one of the most intense storms ever in the Gulf of Mexico**. Thanks to advance warnings, about 100,000 people evacuated from coastal areas before Hurricane Anita made landfall, including 35,000 in Mexico, where the storm hit as a **Category 4 hurricane** on Sept. 2.

ajicphotos // Shutterstock

1978: Another hurricane name change





- Named storms: 12
- Hurricanes: 5
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 2

1978 was the last year that Atlantic tropical storms were **solely given names traditionally used for women**. The following year included names traditionally given to men as well.

Also in 1978, **Hurricane Greta hit Central America** in late September, killing four people in Belize and one person in Honduras. There was an estimated \$25 million in damages to crops and utilities in Belize alone.

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Bettmann // Getty Images

1979: A new hurricane damages record

- Named storms: 9
- Hurricanes: 5
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 2

After a few years of relatively little damage to the U.S. during hurricane season, the tides turned in 1979. The season's tropical storms and cyclones led to a record \$3 billion in damages for the U.S., the **most destructive** of which was **Hurricane Frederic**. The September storm mainly struck Alabama and Mississippi and caused \$2.3 of destruction.

Bettmann // Getty Images

1980: Hurricane Allen prompts oil rig evacuations





- Named storms: 11
- Hurricanes: 9
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 2

Hurricane Allen was the most noteworthy storm of the 1980 season, a **Category 5 hurricane** that affected Haiti, Texas, and several Caribbean countries. Allen **destroyed two offshore oil rigs** in the Gulf of Mexico, and 13 people died in a helicopter crash in a rig evacuation.

Curtis McGee // Houston Chronicle via Getty Images

1981: Five hurricanes in September

- Named storms: 12
- Hurricanes: 7
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 3

There were **no named storms in the Gulf of Mexico** in 1981, an occurrence that had only happened two previous years, 1927 and 1962. The season also included five hurricanes in the month of September alone—only twice before had a single month seen that many tropical cyclones.

Mia2you // Shutterstock

1982: Least active hurricane season in 50 years

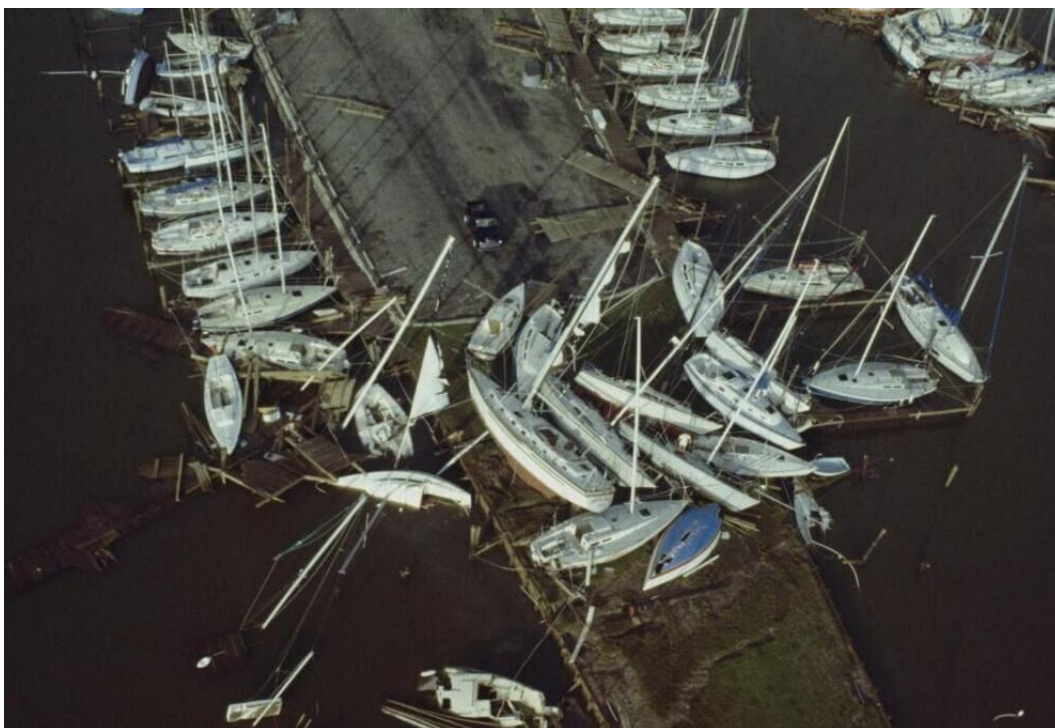


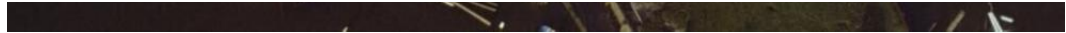
- Named storms: 6
- Hurricanes: 2
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 1

1982 was the **least active hurricane season in 50 years** based on both the total number of hurricanes and the number of days in which there were active hurricanes. Like the previous year, no hurricanes struck the contiguous U.S. in 1982, marking only the second time in the 20th century that the U.S. was spared two years in a row.

Joe Runci/The Boston Globe via Getty Images

1983: Alicia ends hurricane drought



- 
- Named storms: 4
 - Hurricanes: 3
 - Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 1

On Aug. 18, 1983, **Hurricane Alicia** brought an end to the longest period in the 20th century without a hurricane hitting the contiguous U.S. The **Category 3 storm**, which hit Southeast Texas, spawned 23 tornadoes, killed 21 people, and caused \$2 billion in damages.

You may also like: [How to help your business prepare for and recover from natural disasters](#)

Bettmann // Getty Images

1984: Hurricane Diana hits eastern US

- Named storms: 13
- Hurricanes: 5
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 1

Hurricane Diana was the first and strongest hurricane of the 1984 season and the most intense storm to hit the Eastern seaboard in three decades, since 1954's Hurricane Hazel. Diana's destruction totaled **\$65 million** in the U.S., \$26 million of which can be attributed to agricultural damage.

Ted Dully/The Boston Globe via Getty Images

1985: Worst season in 69 years



- Named storms: 11
- Hurricanes: 7
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 3

The **1985 hurricane season** was the worst in 69 years, causing \$4.45 billion in damages and prompting a million people to evacuate. Six hurricanes and two tropical storms **hit the contiguous U.S.** that year, the most since 1916. The storms of 1985—most notably Hurricane Gloria and Hurricane Juan—killed 100 people in Puerto Rico, 36 in the U.S., and 10 in Cuba. Bettmann // Getty Images

1986: Strongest hurricane doesn't make landfall



- Named storms: 6
- Hurricanes: 4
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 0

The **strongest hurricane of the 1986 season** was Earl, which was also the season's longest-lasting storm, persisting for seven days of hurricane-force winds. However, Earl never made landfall. Two hurricanes, Bonnie and Charley, did hit the U.S., causing \$2 million and \$15 million in damages, respectively.

Independent News and Media // Getty Images

1987: Hurricane Emily breaks Caribbean silence

- Named storms: 7
- Hurricanes: 3
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 1

In 1987, Hurricane Emily became the **first major hurricane to hit the Caribbean Islands** since 1981, an unusually long stretch for the region. At the end of September, the storm made landfall in the Dominican Republic, **killing three people** and causing \$75 million worth of destruction.

WALTER ASTRADA/AFP via Getty Images

1988: Most destructive in Jamaica's history





- Named storms: 12

- Hurricanes: 5

- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 3

Hurricane Gilbert hit Jamaica as a Category 3 storm in mid-September 1988, the country's first direct hit in 37 years. The hurricane damaged 95% of Jamaica's hospitals and destroyed half of the country's domestic water supply. In Jamaica alone, Gilbert cost \$4 million in damages and became the most destructive hurricane in the nation's history. Two days after the hit on Jamaica, Gilbert moved on to strike Mexico as a Category 5 hurricane. In total, it caused **\$5 billion of destruction globally**.

You may also like: [These US counties are most vulnerable to tornado damage](#)

Colin McConnell // Getty Images

1989: Hurricane Hugo wipes out bananas





- Named storms: 11
- Hurricanes: 7
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 2

In late September 1989, Hurricane Hugo, a Category 5 storm that was **downgraded to Category 4** right before landfall, touched down in the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and South and North Carolina. The storm **left 60,000 people homeless** and caused upward of **\$10 billion in property damages**, becoming the costliest hurricane in the country's history (at least, for the next few years).

HUM Images // Universal Images Group via Getty Images

1990: The strongest hurricane stays in the water

- Named storms: 14
- Hurricanes: 8
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 1

Hurricane Gustav was the **only Category 3 storm of the 1990 season**, but it never made landfall. Tropical Storm Marco, however, did touch down in the U.S., **causing seven deaths** and \$57 million in damages.

Gary Williams/Liaison // Getty Images

1991: Storms form in Bermuda hotspot





- Named storms: 8
- Hurricanes: 4
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 2

Most of the major tropical storms of the 1991 season originated in a [hot spot near Bermuda](#), but [Hurricane Bob](#) developed in the Bahamas. The storm hit New England in mid-August, taking down power for 2.1 million homes and causing \$1.5 billion in damages in the region.

Boston Globe // Getty Images

1992: Hurricane Andrew destroys weather instruments



- Named storms: 7
- Hurricanes: 4
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 1

Hurricane Andrew, a Category 5 storm that hit South Florida in 1992, is [one of the strongest and costliest hurricanes](#) on record. [Andrew's winds](#) flattened neighborhoods with speeds so high that they destroyed weather station instruments designed to track high wind speeds (though a privately owned instrument measured the storm's winds at 177 mph).

Joe Sohm/Visions of America // Getty Images

1993: Another Labor Day hurricane does less damage



- Named storms: 8
- Hurricanes: 4
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 1

Hurricane Emily was the only major hurricane of the 1993 season. The hurricane landed in North Carolina during Labor Day weekend, like the infamous storm of 1935. Emily **cost the tourism industry** about \$10 million, even though the Tar Heel state took many precautions. More than 160,000 people were evacuated, and there were only two casualties: a pair of swimmers who drowned in the town of Nags Head, North Carolina.

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LUKE FRAZZA // Getty Images

1994: A dry September and October

- Named storms: 7
- Hurricanes: 3
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 0

Although September and October are usually an active time for hurricanes, there were no storms during these months in 1994. But the season did see **two hurricanes develop in November** for the first time since 1980. The **earliest storm of the season**, Alberto, didn't make it to hurricane status but the July storm still produced massive rainfall and floods in Alabama, Georgia, and Florida, killing 33 people.

philippe giraud/Sygma via Getty Images

1995: A busy, costly hurricane season

- Named storms: 19
- Hurricanes: 11
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 5

An unusually active year, **1995 saw several hurricanes** that caused significant damage: Hurricane Opal generated \$3 billion in damages in the southeastern U.S. and Florida panhandle; Hurricane Luis cost the Leeward Islands in the Caribbean \$2.5 billion, and Hurricane Marilyn did another \$1.5 billion worth of damage in the Caribbean, mainly to the U.S. Virgin

Islands.

DOUG COLLIER // Getty Images

1996: Record-breaking hurricane numbers



- Named storms: 13

- Hurricanes: 9

- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 6

1995 and 1996 were both active seasons with a **combined total of 20 hurricanes**, the most for consecutive seasons since accurate reporting began in the 1940s. In 1996, six hurricanes passed over the Caribbean—the most since 1916—though they were all short-lived.

James P Reed // Getty Images

1997: El Niño causes inactive season

- Named storms: 8
- Hurricanes: 3
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 1

After a busy 1995 and 1996, 1997 had a **particularly quiet hurricane season**: Only one tropical storm developed between August and September (the average is six) and no hurricanes formed in August for the first time since 1961. There were fewer hurricanes than average due to El Niño, whose winds made it difficult for hurricanes to form. Hurricane Danny was the only hurricane to make landfall in 1997, killing five people.

ADALBERTO ROQUE/AFP via Getty Images

1998: Hurricane Mitch triggers extreme destruction



- Named storms: 14
- Hurricanes: 10
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 3

Tropical storms caused more than 9,000 fatalities during the **1998 hurricane season**, primarily because of Hurricane Mitch,

which caused massive flooding in Honduras and Nicaragua. Another 9,000 people went missing because of Hurricane Mitch, which became the second deadliest storm on record (behind the Great Hurricane of 1780).

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JOEL ROBINE // Getty Images

1999: A record number of Category 4 hurricanes



- Named storms: 12

- Hurricanes: 8

- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 5

The 1999 season saw **five Category 4 hurricanes**, the most in a single season since 1886. However, the deadliest storm that year was not a hurricane but a tropical depression. In early October, its heavy rains and flooding caused 400 fatalities in Mexico.

TOM MIHALEK // Getty Images

2000: Long-lasting Hurricane Alberto fails to make landfall





- Named storms: 15
- Hurricanes: 8
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 3

In August 2020, Hurricane Alberto became the **third longest-lasting hurricane on record** in the Atlantic basin, but it remained at sea for most of its existence. Two storms did make landfall in the U.S. that year: Hurricane Gordon and Tropical Storm Helene, both in September. They were not particularly destructive stateside, though the former did wreak havoc in Guatemala.

Robert King // Getty Images

2001: The costliest and deadliest tropical storm in history



- Named storms: 15
- Hurricanes: 9

- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 4

As of August 2024, Tropical Storm Allison is the **costliest tropical storm** in U.S. recorded history. It **killed 41 people** and caused \$15.1 billion in damages (adjusted to 2024 dollars). Allison is only one of two tropical storms to have had their **names retired**.

JAMES NIELSEN // Getty Images

2002: El Niño tampers hurricane season again

- Named storms: 12

- Hurricanes: 4

- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 2

Because of El Niño, there were **fewer hurricanes than average** during the 2002 season. Hurricane Lili was the **only hurricane to hit the U.S.** between 1999 and 2002, and it was the only storm to make landfall while still classified as a hurricane in 2002..

Joe Raedle // Getty Images

2003: Hurricane Isabel slams the mid-Atlantic

- Named storms: 16
- Hurricanes: 7
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 3

Hurricane Isabel was **one of the worst storms ever** to hit the mid-Atlantic region, particularly affecting the Chesapeake Bay. Isabel was also the **costliest and deadliest hurricane of the season**, leading to 17 direct deaths and \$3.3 billion in damages.

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Joe Raedle // Getty Images

2004: Hurricane Jeanne causes Haiti mudslides

- Named storms: 15
- Hurricanes: 9
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 6

The **2004 hurricane season** was a truly devastating one, claiming 3,100 lives (the second highest number in 30 years) and causing a record \$45 billion in property damage in the U.S. **Four hurricanes slammed Florida** within six weeks, leading the state to temporarily trade in its nickname of the Sunshine State for the Plywood State. The last of the foursome, Hurricane Jeanne, was particularly destructive, causing intense rainfalls and **deadly mudslides** in the mountains of Haiti.

STEPHEN JAFFE // Getty Images

2005: Hurricane Katrina devastates New Orleans

- Named storms: 28
- Hurricanes: 15
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 7

Hurricane Katrina is perhaps the most infamous hurricane in U.S. history. The Category 3 hurricane **displaced more than a million people** and damaged over a million homes around the Gulf Coast, but New Orleans bore the brunt of the devastation. As of August 2024, Katrina is the **costliest hurricane to hit the U.S.**, causing \$200 billion (in 2024 dollars) in damage and **killing 1,392 people** (a number NOAA adjusted in 2023).

Chris Graythen // Getty Images

2006: The calm following the storm

- Named storms: 10
- Hurricanes: 5
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 2

After two years of frequent tropical storms, 2006 was comparatively calm, with **no hurricanes making landfall in the U.S.** for the first time in five years. Three tropical storms managed to do so, however, but only one in late August, Ernesto, did meaningful damage (totalling \$500 million).

James P Reed/Corbis via Getty Images

2007: Two Category 5 hurricanes make landfall

- Named storms: 15
- Hurricanes: 6
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 2

2007 was the first hurricane season in which **two Category 5 storms made landfall**. Hurricane Dean was the first, slamming the Yucatán Peninsula in Mexico in late August. The second was **Hurricane Felix**, which struck northeastern Nicaragua in early September.

OMAR TORRES // Getty Images

2008: Hurricane Ike disrupts Montréal's subways

- Named storms: 16
- Hurricanes: 8
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 5

The **most memorable storm of 2008**, Hurricane Ike, mainly impacted Texas, Louisiana, and Arkansas, though its effects reached as far north as Canada. The storm caused high levels of humidity that sparked an **electrical malfunction**, which temporarily shut down part of Montréal's subway system.

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Smiley N. Pool-Pool // Getty Images

2009: A hurricane lull

- Named storms: 9
- Hurricanes: 3
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 2

The 2009 season had the **lowest number of named storms** in the Atlantic since 1997 and **no hurricanes made landfall** in the U.S. either. It was the 13th season with no hurricanes coming ashore in the States since 1943.

ELMER MARTINEZ/AFP via Getty Images

2010: High hurricane activity returns

- Named storms: 19
- Hurricanes: 12
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 5

After the quiet of 2009, the 2010 hurricane season emerged with a vengeance. The season saw the **second-highest number of hurricanes** (tying with 1969 and outdone only by 2005). However, it was also the only season to have more than nine hurricanes without a single one making landfall in the U.S.

Spencer Platt // Getty Images

2011: Another record hurricane season

- Named storms: 19
- Hurricanes: 7
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 4

Like the year prior, the **2011 hurricane season** also had 19 named storms; it tied with 1887, 1995, and 2010 as the third busiest tropical cyclone year in the Atlantic basin. Hurricane Irene also ended the lull the U.S. had been enjoying, marking the first time since Ike in 2008 that a hurricane made landfall in the States.

Brendan Hoffman // Getty Images

2012: Hurricane Sandy clobbers the East Coast

- Named storms: 19

- Hurricanes: 10

- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 2

2012 was the third year in a row that the **U.S. had 19 named storms**, but there's one in particular that stands out. Nearly half of all U.S. states—24, to be exact—felt the **effects of Hurricane Sandy** in late October, but the eastern seaboard (where it made landfall in New Jersey) was hit hardest. Totaling \$50 billion in damages (in 2012 dollars), it is among the costliest storms in U.S. history. Sandy also led to three feet of snowfall in West Virginia and North Carolina.

Mario Tama // Getty Images

2013: A quiet hurricane season

- Named storms: 14

- Hurricanes: 2

- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 0

For the first time since 1994, there were **no major hurricanes in 2013**. Tropical Storm Andrea was the only storm to make landfall in the U.S., touching down in Florida. The storm also **caused 11 tornadoes** across Florida and North Carolina, but was relatively tame in terms of its damage.

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Michele Eve Sandberg/Corbis via Getty Images

2014: North Carolina's earliest hurricane

- Named storms: 8
- Hurricanes: 6
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 2

Making landfall on July 3, 2014, Hurricane Arthur became the **earliest in-season hurricane** to touch down in North Carolina on record. The **storm caused no fatalities**, making it the strongest hurricane to come ashore in the contiguous U.S. without resulting in any direct deaths.

Mark Wilson // Getty Images

2015: Ana reveals wrecked schooner

- Named storms: 11
- Hurricanes: 4
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 2

Tropical Storm Ana became the **earliest tropical cyclone on record** to make landfall in the U.S. when it touched down near South Carolina on May 10. Along the beach in Surf City, North Carolina, Ana's winds revealed parts of a **sunken schooner that was wrecked** nearly 100 years earlier.

Ellis/Anadolu Agency // Getty Images

2016: A rare January hurricane

- Named storms: 15
- Hurricanes: 7
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 4

The Atlantic hurricane season started extremely early in 2016 with January's Hurricane Alex, the **first hurricane to form in January** since 1938. The storm hit the Azores, nine islands that are a part of Portugal, as a tropical storm. According to The Weather Channel, all prior hurricanes tracking near the Azores on record occurred in August or September.

LINO BORGES/AFP via Getty Images

2017: Three costly hurricanes make history

- Named storms: 17
- Hurricanes: 10
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 6

Within the harrowing month of September in 2017, Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria hit the U.S. **All three hurricanes were Category 4** and all three remain on the list of the 10 **costliest hurricanes** in U.S. history (when adjusted for 2024 dollars). Besides Katrina, Harvey is the most destructive hurricane in the nation's recorded history, doing **more than \$125 billion of damage**.

Win McNamee // Getty Images

2018: Hurricane Michael hits Florida Panhandle

- Named storms: 15
- Hurricanes: 8
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 2

With sustained winds reaching 161 miles per hour, [Hurricane Michael made landfall](#) in Florida on Oct. 10 and caused [at least 45 fatalities](#). It was one of the most devastating storms to touch down in the area, with then-Florida Gov. Rick Scott calling Hurricane Michael "the [worst storm](#) that the Florida Panhandle has ever seen."

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Joe Raedle // Getty Images

2019: Fourth year of frequent hurricanes

- Named storms: 18
- Hurricanes: 6
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 3

There were [more hurricanes than average](#) in the Atlantic during the 2019 season, the fourth year in a row that could be said. Only one other four-year period can claim that record: 1998 to 2001. There were [two Category 5 storms](#) in the 2019 season, only the second time in 12 years that happened. The first, Hurricane Dorian, did historic damage in the Bahamas, and the second, Hurricane Lorenzo, went for Ireland and the United Kingdom.

Anadolu Agency // Getty Images

2020: A record year for named storms

- Named storms: 30
- Hurricanes: 14
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 7

2020 featured a **record-breaking 30 named storms**, marking the fifth consecutive year with more hurricanes than average in the Atlantic. It was also the second time in recorded history that the Greek alphabet was used to name storms after the initial list of 21 names was exhausted. There were **12 named storms that came ashore** in the contiguous U.S., breaking 1916's previous record of nine.

Mario Tama // Getty Images

2021: Hurricane Ida devastates Louisiana again

- Named storms: 21
- Hurricanes: 7
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 4

The 2021 season started early and marked the seventh year in a row that a **named storm formed before hurricane season officially began** on June 1. The worst storm of all though, **Hurricane Ida**, hit southeastern Louisiana at Category 4 strength on Aug. 29, 16 years to the day after Hurricane Katrina slammed the same part of the state. **Ida then moved up north**, causing disastrous flooding and destructive tornadoes in the Northeast. With **96 deaths tied to the hurricane** and \$75 billion in damage, Ida was named the **deadliest and most destructive tropical cyclone** of the 2021 season.

Brandon Bell // Getty Images

2022: Hurricane Fiona slams Puerto Rico

- Named storms: 14
- Hurricanes: 8
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 2

Hurricane Fiona was one of the **worst storms of the 2022 season**. The Category 1 hurricane **wreaked havoc on Puerto Rico** in mid-September, leaving much of the island without power and running water for days. The damage came only five years after Hurricane Maria caused destruction throughout the U.S. territory. Fiona then hit the Dominican Republic, Turks and Caicos, Bermuda, and eventually, Nova Scotia, becoming the **costliest weather event to hit Atlantic Canada** on record at the time.

Erika Santelices // AFP via Getty Images

2023: Hurricane Idalia creates devastating storm surge

- Named storms: 20
- Hurricanes: 7
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 3

Fueled by record-warm surface temperatures in the Atlantic Ocean and an El Niño climate pattern, **20 named storms** formed in 2023. The title of worst hurricane of the year, though, went to **Hurricane Idalia**, which drove **storm surges** 7 to 12 feet above ground level in some places along the Gulf Coast. After making landfall in late August, Idalia left \$3.6 billion in damages in its wake and claimed 12 lives across the U.S.

Additional writing by Cu Fleshman. Story editing by Jaimie Etkin. Copy editing by Lois Hince. Photo selection by Michael Flocker.

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Joe Raedle // Getty Images

1930: A hurricane demolishes the Dominican Republic

- Recorded storms: 3
- Hurricanes: 2
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 2

Though 1930 was a quiet hurricane season overall, it also saw **one of the Atlantic Ocean's deadliest hurricanes**. The Dominican Republic Hurricane, also known as the San Zenón Hurricane, was a Category 4 storm that killed up to 8,000 people in the Dominican Republic.

Keystone-France // Getty Images

1942: Multiple hurricanes batter Texas

- Recorded storms: 11
- Hurricanes: 4
- Category 3 or higher hurricanes: 1

The 1942 season is only one of six in which **multiple hurricanes made landfall** in Texas. The worst of them hit **Matagorda Bay on Aug. 30**, causing eight fatalities, \$11.5 million in property damage, and \$15 million in crop damage.

Photo 12/Universal Images Group via Getty Images

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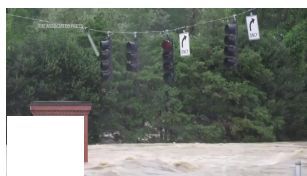
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