



Florida's Severe Weather Awareness Week takes place from February 5-9, 2024. Severe Weather Awareness Week is an opportunity for Floridians to learn about the various weather hazards that frequently impact the state and how families and businesses can prepare for these natural events.



Hurricane Ian – 2022

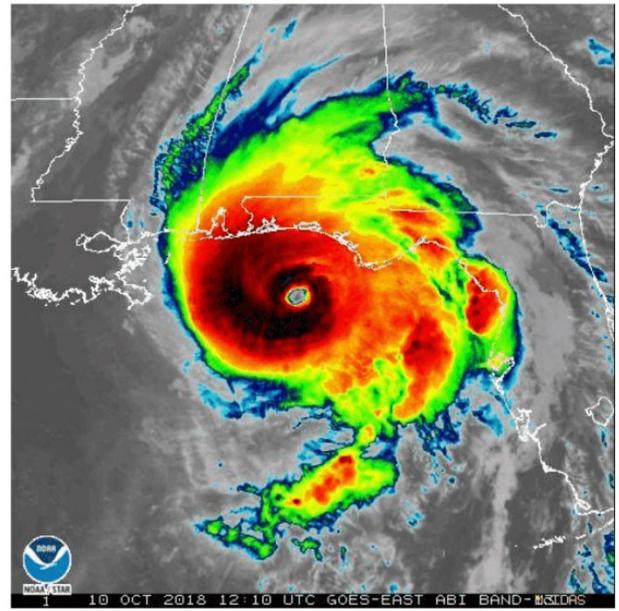
Each day focuses on a specific weather event. **Thursday's focus is on Hurricanes and Flooding.**

The most feared weather phenomenon throughout Florida during the summer and early fall is the tropical cyclone. Close to the tropics and surrounded on three sides by warm water, the unique location of Florida makes it particularly vulnerable to these systems as they develop across the Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean Sea. The relatively flat terrain of Florida can also make it susceptible to flooding.

Florida has a long history of hurricanes. Records indicate that 125 hurricanes and 157 tropical storms have impacted the State since 1851, with many more cited in history books prior to that year and before official records were maintained.

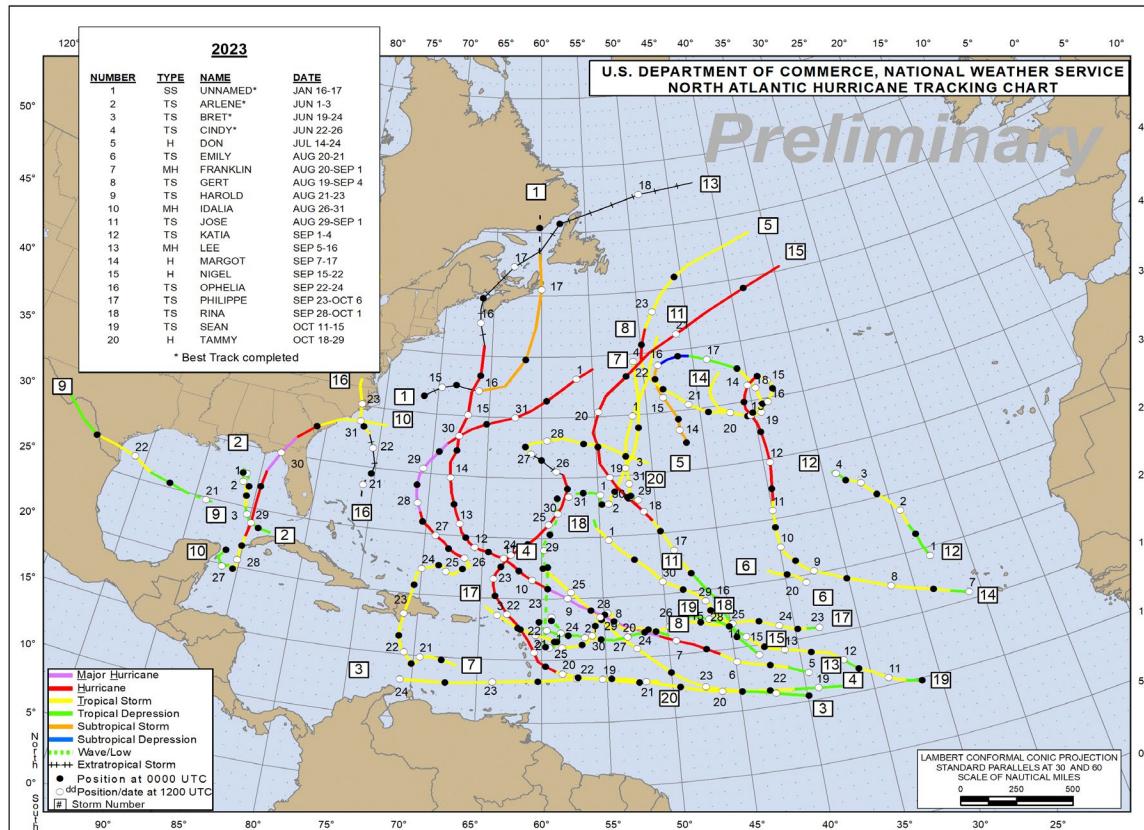
DID YOU KNOW??? No other state in the country has more hurricane landfalls per year on average than Florida does. Nearly 40% of all hurricanes that strike the United States make landfall in Florida.

The Atlantic Hurricane Season officially begins on June 1 and continues through November 30. However, tropical systems can still form outside of hurricane season as early as May and as late as December. Although the number of tropical storms and hurricanes typically peaks during August and September, it is important to remember that Florida can be impacted by tropical



Hurricane Michael – 2018

weather systems any time during the season. Residents and visitors need to plan ahead and remain ready for possible hurricane impacts.

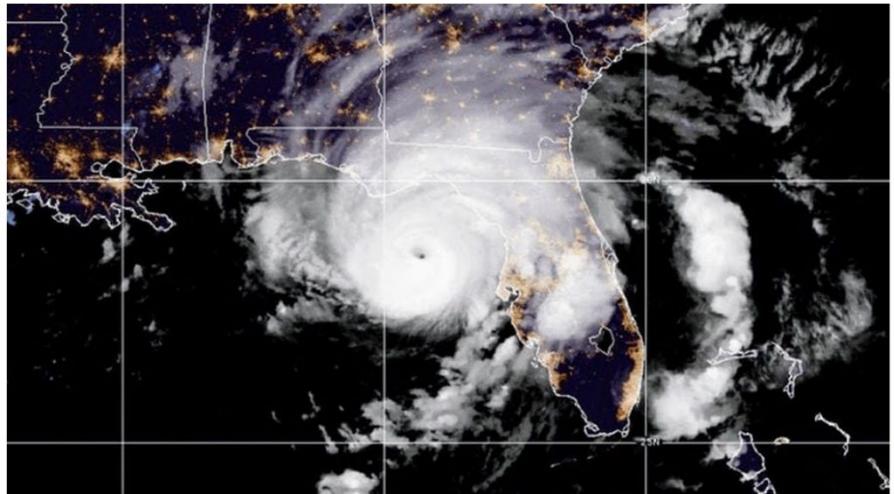


The Atlantic Basin saw 20 named storms in 2023, which ranks fourth for the most-named storms in a year since 1950. Out of the twenty (20) named storms, **seven (7)** strengthened into a hurricane and **three (3)** became major hurricanes (Category 3 or higher). This above-normal 2023 Hurricane Season was characterized by record-warm Atlantic sea surface temperatures and a strong El Nino, a feature that typically reduces Atlantic hurricane production. An average season has fourteen (14), seven (7) hurricanes, and three (3) major hurricanes.

The 2023 Atlantic Hurricane Season commenced early in the year when an unnamed subtropical storm formed off the Northeast Coast on January 16, 2023; no additional tropical or subtropical activity occurred in the Basin prior to the official start of the season on June 1, 2023. Tropical Storm Arlene formed as a tropical depression on the opening day in the Gulf of Mexico, and it became the season's first tropical storm on June 2, 2023. Later that month, Tropical Storms Bret and Cindy became two Atlantic tropical cyclones active simultaneously in June for the first time since 1968! This activity was followed by Subtropical Storm Don that formed over the central Atlantic on July 14, 2023; this long-lived system strengthened into the first hurricane of the season as it meandered over the open Atlantic waters.

Following a lull in activity, tropical development increased drastically in late August as four systems developed within a 39-hour span (August 20-22, 2023): Emily, Franklin, Gert, and Harold. This makes the fastest time four storms were named in the Atlantic Basin, surpassing the previous mark of 48 hours set in 1893 and matched in 1980. These four storms were closely followed by two more systems during the last week of the month: Idalia and Jose.

Hurricane Idalia made landfall near Keaton Beach, Florida (Taylor County) at 7:45 AM EDT on August 30, 2023, as a Category 3 Hurricane with maximum sustained winds around 125 mph. Idalia became the first major hurricane on record to make landfall in this portion of the Florida Big Bend. Idalia brought a devastating storm surge of 7-12' above normally dry ground to the immediate coastline of Levy, Dixie, and Taylor Counties. These storm surge values challenged and/or exceeded values observed in the 1993 "Storm of the Century" that impacted Florida's coastal Big Bend. Strong winds resulted in tree/structure damage and widespread power outages, with the greatest wind impacts felt across nearly all of Taylor, Madison, Lafayette Counties. More scattered/isolated wind-driven impacts were observed in eastern portions of Jefferson, Leon, and Wakulla Counties. Wind gusts of 80-90 mph were observed near and along Idalia's immediate path as the storm moved inland from the coast. Rainfall flooding from Idalia was not as widespread as experienced during other tropical systems, due to its relatively fast forward motion. However, Idalia produced rainfall amounts of 3-6" and instances of flash flooding from the coastline to the Suwannee



Hurricane Idalia – 2023

Valley. The greatest impacts from rain were generally felt along and southwest of the I-75 corridor in Madison County where rainfall totals of 6-8" were observed.

The quick pace of storm formation continued into September, the climatological peak of hurricane season. On September 1, 2023, Tropical Storm Katia formed northwest of Cabo Verde in the far eastern Atlantic, with Lee developing over the central tropical Atlantic on September 5, 2023. Hurricane Lee rapidly intensified to Category 5 strength northeast of the Leeward Islands, with its winds increasing by 85 mph during a 24-hour period. Tropical Storm Margot became the season's fifth hurricane on September 11, 2023. The active basin was joined by Hurricane Nigel and Tropical Storm Ophelia offshore of North Carolina. Tropical Storms Philippe and Rina formed in late September – only 620 miles apart, which was close enough to influence each other's movement and development.

After a brief reprieve in activity, Tropical Storm Sean formed on October 11, 2023, in the eastern tropical Atlantic, with Hurricane Tammy forming on October 18, 2023. The season effectively ended when Tammy dissipated on October 29, 2023. No tropical cyclones formed in the month of November, although a tropical disturbance over the Caribbean Sea was briefly designated as a Potential Tropical Cyclone (PTC).

DID YOU KNOW??? In the last 150 years, all of Florida's counties have been impacted by at least one hurricane.

The recent active hurricane seasons serves as a reminder to the State that back-to-back years with major hurricane landfalls are a real possibility, and all Floridians should take this possibility into account when packing their supply kit and making their emergency plan.

When a tropical system approaches the state, The National Hurricane Center will issue watches and warnings. Do you know the difference between a watch and warning? Watches are issued 48 hours in advance of the time dangerous winds or storm surge are possible within the specified area. Warnings are issued 36 hours prior to the time when damaging winds or storm surge are expected. A watch

should trigger your family's disaster plan, and protective measures should be initiated. Once a warning has been issued, your family should be in the process of completing protective actions and deciding the safest location to be during the storm.



Your main protection against hurricanes is to be prepared and have a plan. Hurricane force winds can easily destroy poorly constructed buildings and mobile homes. A hurricane plan does not have to be anything extremely complicated but should at least consist of the following two things.

1. **Determine whether you live in an evacuation zone** – this information can be obtained from your local emergency management office through links at <https://www.floridadisaster.org/know>. If you live in an evacuation zone, know when and where you will be going to pass the storm.
2. **Have a disaster supply kit ready** with non-perishable food, batteries for electronic devices such as your NOAA Weather Radio, and enough supplies to last 7 days. Assess your property to ensure that landscaping and trees do not become a wind hazard.



While hurricanes are known and feared for their ferocious winds, historically it is the water that causes most of the deaths in hurricanes. About 90% of all hurricane fatalities occur from drowning in either storm surge or freshwater flooding. Life-threatening storm surge and historic freshwater flooding from Hurricane Ian in 2022 was a somber reminder of the true power of water. Regardless of the system's intensity, the widespread flooding caused by Tropical Storm Fay in 2008 serves as a reminder that tropical

storms can cause as much or greater devastation than hurricanes with freshwater flooding.

Even outside of tropical systems, flooding is a serious concern in Florida since it can happen anywhere and at any time. Effects from flooding can be localized, impacting just a few streets in a neighborhood or community, or very large, affecting multiple cities, counties, and even whole states. Flooding is caused by the amount of rainfall and what happens to the rain after it hits the ground.

As our state's population increases, buildings and pavement replace the natural land. This creates more water runoff and can increase flood problems. Most deaths due to flooding in the United States are from people driving their cars into flooded areas. Once a vehicle begins to float, the situation becomes dangerous and often deadly. Residents should be aware of their location with respect to flood-prone areas and know evacuation routes. People are also urged to be extremely cautious when driving in heavy rains, especially when water covers the road. Because it is difficult to determine the depth of water or the condition of the road under the water, if you come to a flooded road, remember the phrase "Turn Around, Don't Drown".

KNOW YOUR ZONE, KNOW YOUR HOME



KNOW IF YOU NEED TO EVACUATE WHEN A DISASTER STRIKES

FLORIDADISASTER.ORG/KNOW



Meteorologists at the National Weather Service watch the weather to try to warn people well in advance of the flooding so they can save lives and property. Flood Watches and Warnings, along with Flash Flood Warnings, are issued for a specific area when flooding conditions are likely or are already occurring. The National Hurricane Center will also issue [Storm Surge Watches and Warnings](#) for areas of the United States that have the potential for damaging storm surge from a tropical cyclone.

National Flood Safety Awareness Week is March 4-8, 2024, and National Hurricane Preparedness Week is May 1-7, 2024. More information about hurricanes and flooding and what you can do to protect yourself and others can be found at <https://www.ready.gov/hurricanes>, <https://www.weather.gov/safety/flood>, <https://www.floridadisaster.org/hazards/hurricanes/>, and <https://www.floridadisaster.org/hazards/floods/>.

Friday's topic will be Temperature Extremes and Wildfires.



Be Prepared. Be StormReady.

