

Hurricane Outlook

// Storms Developing at a Rapid Pace

Key Points:

Total ACE of 23 points, above-normal, but lower than 2005

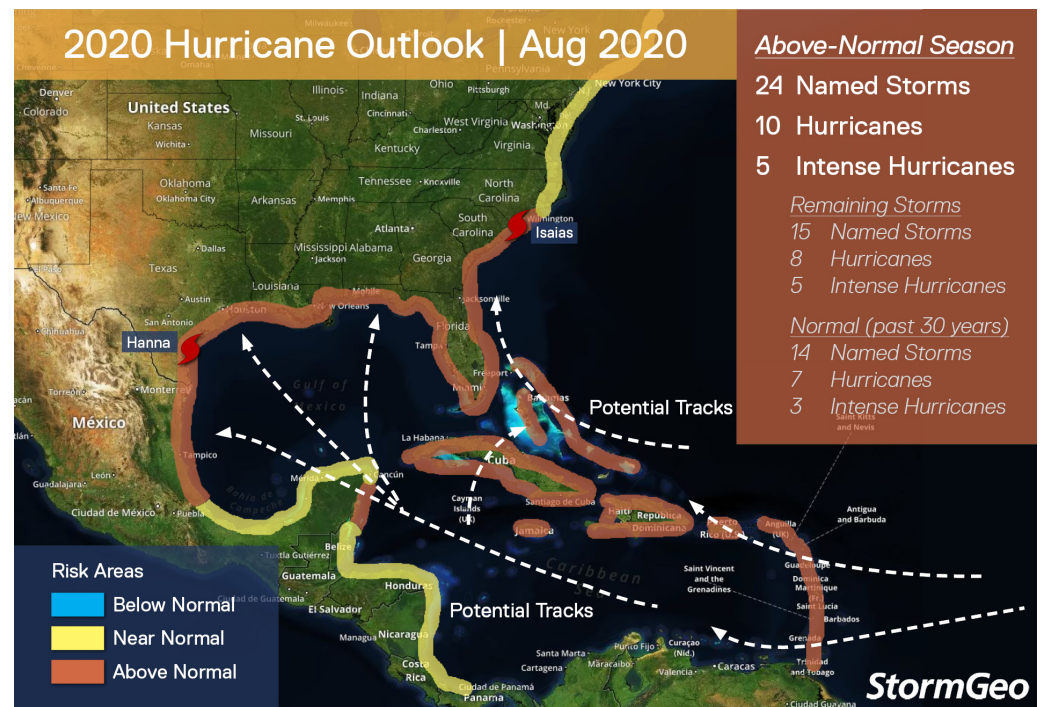
Increased total number of predicted storms

Possible hyper-active period from late August through September

The fast start to the 2020 hurricane season continued through July, with the formation of five additional named storms:

- Tropical Storm Edouard briefly formed northeast of Bermuda,
- Short-lived and weak, Tropical Storm Fay moved into southern New England,
- Small and weak, Tropical Storm Gonzalo dissipating as it reached the eastern Caribbean,
- The first hurricane of the season, Hanna, developed in the Gulf and moved into the lower Texas coast with max sustained winds of 90 mph, and
- Hurricane Isaias formed late in July and moved into North Carolina late on August 3rd with max sustained wind of 85 mph.

There has been talk of this season being ahead of the hyperactive 2005 season that had a total of 28 named storms. While it is true that numbers-wise, 2020 is ahead of the 2005 pace, four of the nine storms that have formed this season were very weak and lasted less than 48 hours. A better measure of seasonal activity is Accumulated Cyclone Energy (ACE). This is a measure of a storm's intensity and duration. By late July 2005,



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the total ACE had reached 68 points, including two Category 5 hurricanes (Dennis & Emily). Normal ACE for a whole season is about 104 points. The ACE total so far for the 2020 season is only 23, which is above-normal but considerably lower than in 2005.

// El Niño/La Niña

One important signal that we closely monitor prior to the start of and during the hurricane season is sea surface temperatures across the Tropical Pacific. Warming waters there would suggest the formation of an El Niño, a pattern that would enhance hurricane development in the East and Central Pacific, but would inhibit development in the Atlantic Basin. A La Niña would result in fewer hurricanes in the East and Central Pacific and enhanced hurricane activity across the Atlantic. Latest data indicate that a La Niña is becoming more likely. Water temperatures across the Eastern Pacific have continued to cool. Only a single hurricane has formed in the East Pacific so far this season. Hurricane Douglas threatened the Hawaiian Islands late in July. Generally, when the East Pacific Basin is less active than normal, as it has been this season, the Atlantic Basin is more active.

// Atlantic Water Temperatures

Water temperatures across most of the Atlantic Basin remain above-normal. In addition, oceanic heat content across the Caribbean Sea and the southern Gulf of Mexico is the highest of the last 3-4 seasons. Since hurricanes require a deep layer of warm water to become strong, the increased oceanic heat content will provide the necessary energy for strong hurricanes in the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico this season.

// Analog Seasons

An analog season is a season in the past with a similar setup of ocean temperatures and atmospheric flow patterns to what we are seeing now. The general thinking is that if the current state of the tropics closely matches a year in the past, then activity this season could be somewhat similar to the activity in an analog season. Our updated analog seasons for August are 1995, 2008, 2011, 2013, 2016, and 2017. On average, these analog seasons produced 17 named storms, 8 hurricanes and 4 major hurricanes. So far, this season is ahead of all of the analog seasons.

// Updated Forecast

Given that the pace of development is ahead of our earlier predictions of 19 named storms, 9 hurricanes, and 5 major hurricanes, we are increasing the total number of named storms to 24 and the number of hurricanes to 10. This means that we are predicting another 15 named storms, 8 hurricanes, and 5 major hurricanes will form between the second week of August and the end of November. Analog seasons point to an above-normal risk of a significant hurricane impact across all of the Caribbean Islands, the Yucatan Peninsula, the Bahamas, northeast Mexico, and the U.S. Coast from Virginia to south Texas.

No matter the forecast, StormGeo urges all with tropical concerns to always prepare for the one storm that may affect you or impact your location.

Find our Hurricane Preparation resources at StormGeo.com/Hurricane

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