

# Triple-I: 2020's Atlantic Hurricane Season Was One for the History Books

November 30, 2020

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**SAINT JOHNS, Fla., Nov. 30, 2020** – The 2020 Atlantic hurricane season officially ends today with a record 30 named storms, including a near-record 13 hurricanes. Six were major hurricanes, achieving at least a Category 3 rating on the [Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale](#), according to the [Insurance Information Institute](#) (Triple-I).

Of the 30 named storms, which broke the record of 28 established during the 2005 season, 12 made landfall in the continental United States, breaking the record of nine set in 1916. This season featured six U.S. landfalling hurricanes (Hanna, Isaias, Laura, Sally, Delta and Zeta) – tying the 1886 and 1985 seasons that had six each – as well as six U.S. landfalling tropical storms (Bertha, Cristobal, Fay, Marco, Beta and Eta). Due to the high amount of tropical activity, the National Hurricane Center used Greek letters to name storms for only the second time ever.

“During this extremely active hurricane season, we experienced storms that generated significant wind and water damage, especially throughout the Gulf Coast,” said Triple-I CEO Sean Kevelighan. “In fulfilling its traditional role as the nation’s financial first responders, U.S. property/casualty insurers have been at the center of disaster recovery for impacted communities. Given the amount of flood-caused property damage we’ve seen this year, the

Insurance Information Institute will continue to stress the importance of having flood insurance in coastal and inland areas. To that end, consumers should now be aware that because of recent regulatory updates, there are more private flood insurance offerings available. It is important to reach out to your insurance professional to understand the best options.”

The strongest hurricane to strike the U.S. in 2020 was [Hurricane Laura](#), a Category 4 storm with maximum sustained winds of 150 mph when it made landfall at Cameron Parish, La., on Aug. 27 and caused catastrophic damage in Lake Charles. Six weeks later, [Hurricane Delta](#) struck only 13 miles east of where Laura came ashore. [Hurricane Zeta](#) and tropical storms Cristobal and Marco also made landfall in Louisiana this year, the most storms to ever strike the state in a single season.

Another significant Gulf Coast weather event was [Hurricane Sally](#). It made landfall near Gulf Shores, Ala., on Sept. 16 as a Category 2 storm with maximum sustained winds of 105 mph. Sally caused extensive damage in Alabama and Florida. [Hurricane Isaias](#), which made landfall near Ocean Island Beach, N.C. on Aug. 4 as a Category 1 (85 mph) storm, was the most significant storm to impact the East Coast.

“As we anticipated, the 2020 Atlantic hurricane season had an anomalously warm tropical Atlantic as well as La Niña conditions, which [helped fuel the extremely active season that occurred](#),” said [Triple-I non-resident scholar Phil Klotzbach, PhD](#), a research scientist in the Department of Atmospheric Science at Colorado State University (CSU).

A typical Atlantic hurricane season, which starts on June 1 and ends on Nov. 30, sees 12 named storms, six hurricanes and three major hurricanes. The CSU team had predicted an “above-normal level of activity” its [initial April 2020 forecast](#) and projected sustained above-average activity in [subsequent forecasts](#) as atmospheric conditions remained favorable for hurricane development.

The 2020 hurricane season established other milestones, according to Klotzbach.

“Twenty-seven of the 30 named storms broke the record for earliest formation by storm number,” Klotzbach said. “And we had two Category 4 hurricanes (Eta and Iota) strike Nicaragua in November. Prior to 2020, no hurricane stronger than a Category 3 had made landfall in Nicaragua in November. Iota also became the latest calendar year Category 5 hurricane in the Atlantic on record.” Iota was the strongest Atlantic hurricane of 2020, reaching maximum sustained winds of 160 mph.

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