CHAPTER 36

TROPICAL CYCLONES

CAUSES AND DESCRIPTION OF TROPICAL CYCLONES

3600. Introduction

A **tropical cyclone** is a cyclone originating in the tropics or subtropics. Although it generally resembles the extratropical cyclone of higher latitudes, there are important differences, the principal one being the concentration of a large amount of energy into a relatively small area. Tropical cyclones are infrequent in comparison with middle and high latitude storms, but they have a record of destruction far exceeding that of any other type of storm. Because of their fury, and because they are predominantly oceanic, they merit special attention by mariners.

A tropical storm has a deceptively small size, and beautiful weather may be experienced only a few hundred miles from the center. The rapidity with which the weather can deteriorate with approach of the storm, and the violence of the fully developed tropical cyclone, are difficult to imagine if they have not been experienced.

On his second voyage to the New World, Columbus encountered a tropical storm. Although his vessels suffered no damage, this experience proved valuable during his fourth voyage when his ships were threatened by a fully developed hurricane. Columbus read the signs of an approaching storm from the appearance of a southeasterly swell, the direction of the high cirrus clouds, and the hazy appearance of the atmosphere. He directed his vessels to shelter. The commander of another group, who did not heed the signs, lost most of his ships and more than 500 men perished.

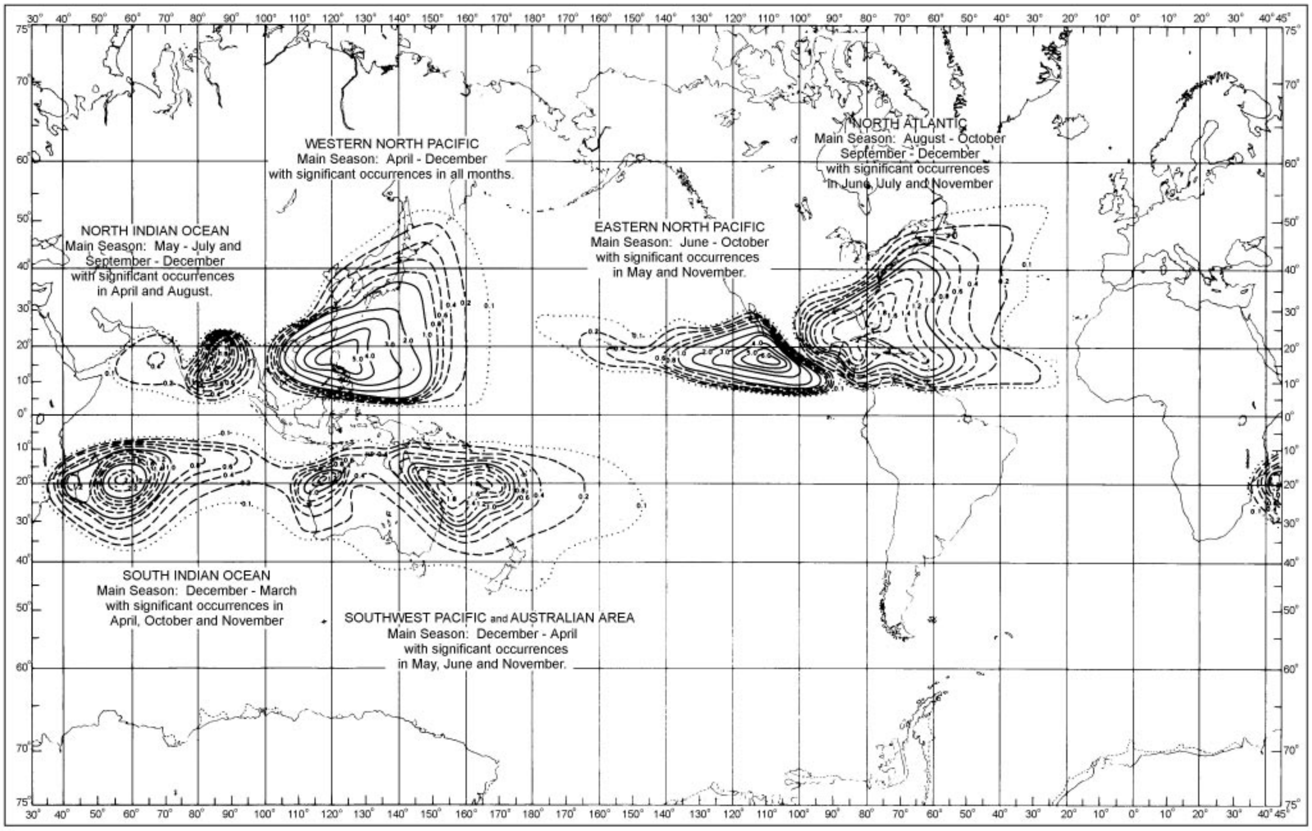

Figure 3602. Areas in which tropical cyclones occur. The average number of tropical cyclones per 5˚ square has been analyzed for this figure. The main season for intense tropical storm activity is also shown for each major basin.

3601. Definitions

"Tropical cyclone" is the term for cyclones originating in the tropics or subtropics. These cyclones are classified by form and intensity as they increase in size.

A **tropical disturbance** is a discrete system of apparently organized convection, generally 100 to 300 miles in diameter, having a nonfrontal migratory character, and having maintained its identity for 24 hours or more. It may or may not be associated with a detectable disturbance of the wind field. It has no strong winds and no closed isobars i.e., isobars that completely enclose the low.

At its next stage of development it becomes a **tropical depression**. A tropical depression has one or more closed isobars and some rotary circulation at the surface. The highest sustained (1-minute mean) surface wind speed is 33 knots.

The next stage is **tropical storm**. A tropical storm has closed isobars and a distinct rotary circulation. The highest sustained (1-minute mean) surface wind speed is 34 to 63 knots.

When fully developed, a **hurricane** or **typhoon** has closed isobars, a strong and very pronounced rotary circulation, and a sustained (1-minute mean) surface wind speed of 64 knots or higher.

3602. Areas Of Occurrence

Tropical cyclones occur almost entirely in six distinct areas, four in the Northern Hemisphere and two in the Southern Hemisphere as shown in Figure 3602. The name by which the tropical cyclone is commonly known varies somewhat with the locality.

1. North Atlantic. A tropical cyclone with winds of 64 knots or greater is called a **hurricane**.
2. Eastern North Pacific. The name **hurricane** is used as in the North Atlantic.
3. Western North Pacific. A fully developed storm with winds of 64 knots or greater is called a **typhoon** or, locally in the Philippines, a **baguio**.
4. North Indian Ocean. A tropical cyclone with winds of 34 knots or greater is called a **cyclonic storm**.
5. South Indian Ocean. A tropical cyclone with winds of 34 knots or greater is called a **cyclone**.
6. Southwest Pacific and Australian Area. The name **cyclone** is used as in the South Indian Ocean. A severe tropical cyclone originating in the Timor Sea and moving southwest and then southeast across the interior of northwestern Australia is called a **willy-willy**.

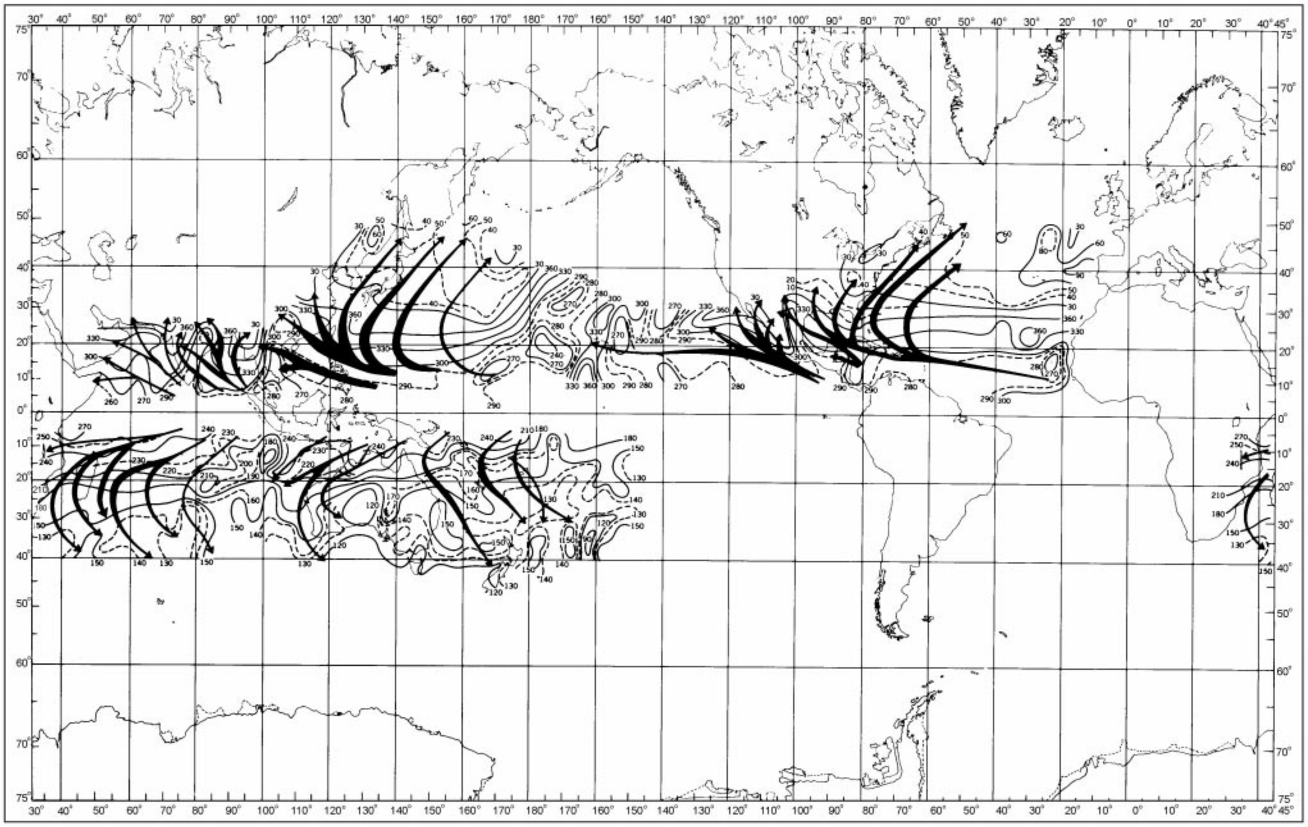

Figure 3603a. Storm tracks.The width of the arrow indicates the approximate frequency of storms; the wider the arrow the higher the frequency. Isolines on the base map show the resultant direction toward which storms moved. Data for the entire year has been summarized for this figure.

Tropical cyclones have not been observed in the South Atlantic or in the South Pacific east of 140°W.

3603. Origin, Season And Frequency

See Figures 3603a and 3603b. Origin, season, and frequency of occurrence of the tropical cyclones in the six areas are as follows:

North Atlantic: Tropical cyclones can affect the entire North Atlantic Ocean in any month. However, they are mostly a threat south of about 35°N from June through November; August, September, and October are the months of highest incidence. See Figure 3603b. About 9 or 10 tropical cyclones (tropical storms and hurricanes) form each season; 5 or 6 reach hurricane intensity (winds of 64 knots and higher). A few hurricanes have generated winds estimated as high as 200 knots. Early and late season storms usually develop west of 50°W; during August and September, this spawning ground extends to the Cape Verde Islands. These storms usually move westward or west northwestward at speeds of less than 15 knots in the lower latitudes. After moving into the northern Caribbean or Greater Antilles regions, they usually either move toward the Gulf of Mexico or recurve and accelerate in the North Atlantic. Some will recurve after reaching the Gulf of Mexico, while others will continue westward to a landfall in Texas or Mexico.

Eastern North Pacific: The season is from June through October, although a storm can form in any month. An average of 15 tropical cyclones form each year with about 6 reaching hurricane strength. The most intense storms are often the early- and late-season ones; these form close to the coast and far south. Mid season storms form anywhere in a wide band from the Mexican-Central American coast to the Hawaiian Islands. August and September are the months of highest incidence. These storms differ from their North Atlantic counterparts in that they are usually smaller in size. However, they can be just as intense.

Western North Pacific: More tropical cyclones form in the tropical western North Pacific than anywhere else in the world. More than 25 tropical storms develop each year, and about 18 become typhoons. These typhoons are the largest and most intense tropical cyclones in the world. Each year an average of five generate maximum winds over 130 knots; circulations covering more than 600 miles in diameter are not uncommon. Most of these storms form east

AREA AND STAGE	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	ANNUAL
NORTH ATLANTIC													
TROPICAL STORMS	*	*	*	*	0.1	0.4	0.3	1.0	1.5	1.2	0.4	*	4.2
HURRICANES	*	*	*	*	*	0.3	0.4	1.5	2.7	1.3	0.3	*	5.2
TROPICAL STORMS AND HURRICANES	*	*	*	*	*0.2*	*0.7*	*0.8*	*2.5*	*4.3*	*2.5*	*0.7*	*0.1*	*9.4*
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	ANNUAL
EASTERN NORTH PACIFIC													
TROPICAL STORMS	*	*	*	*	*	1.5	2.8	2.3	2.3	1.2	0.3	*	9.3
HURRICANES	*	*	*	*	0.3	0.6	0.9	2.0	1.8	1.0	*	*	5.8
TROPICAL STORMS AND HURRICANES	*	*	*	*	*0.3*	*2.0*	*3.6*	*4.5*	*4.1*	*2.2*	*0.3*	*	*15.2*
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	ANNUAL
WESTERN NORTH PACIFIC													
TROPICAL STORMS	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.5	1.2	1.8	1.5	1.0	0.8	0.6	7.5
TYPHOONS	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.7	0.9	1.2	2.7	4.0	4.1	3.3	2.1	0.7	17.8
TROPICAL STORMS AND TYPHOONS	*0.4*	*0.4*	*0.5*	*0.9*	*1.3*	*1.8*	*3.9*	*5.8*	*5.6*	*4.3*	*2.9*	*1.3*	*25.3*
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	ANNUAL
SOUTHWEST PACIFIC AND AUSTRALIAN AREA													
TROPICAL STORMS	2.7	2.8	2.4	1.3	0.3	0.2	*	*	*	0.1	0.4	1.5	10.9
HURRICANES	0.7	1.1	1.3	0.3	*	*	0.1	0.1	*	*	0.3	0.5	3.8
TROPICAL STORMS AND HURRICANES	*3.4*	*4.1*	*3.7*	*1.7*	*0.3*	*0.2*	*0.1*	*0.1*	*	*0.1*	*0.7*	*2.0*	*14.8*
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	ANNUAL
SOUTHWEST INDIAN OCEAN													
TROPICAL STORMS	2.0	2.2	1.7	0.6	0.2	*	*	*	*	0.3	0.3	0.8	7.4
HURRICANES	1.3	1.1	0.8	0.4	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	0.5	3.8
TROPICAL STORMS AND HURRICANES	*3.2*	*3.3*	*2.5*	*1.1*	*0.2*	*	*	*	*	*0.3*	*0.4*	*1.4*	*11.2*
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	ANNUAL
NORTH INDIAN OCEAN													
TROPICAL STORMS	0.1	*	*	0.1	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.5	0.3	3.5
CYCLONES[1]	*	*	*	0.1	0.5	0.2	0.1	*	0.1	0.4	0.6	0.2	2.2
TROPICAL STORMS AND CYCLONES[1]	*0.1*	*	*0.1*	*0.3*	*0.7*	*0.7*	0.6	*0.4*	*0.5*	*1.0*	*1.1*	*0.5*	*5.7*

* Less than .05

[1] Winds ≥ 48 Kts.

Monthly values cannot be combined because single storms overlapping two months were counted once in each month and once in the annual.

Figure 3603b. Monthly and annual average number of storms per year for each area.

of the Philippines, and move across the Pacific toward the Philippines, Japan, and China; a few storms form in the South China Sea. The season extends from April through December. However, tropical cyclones are more common in the off-season months in this area than anywhere else. The peak of the season is July through October, when nearly 70 percent of all typhoons develop. There is a noticeable seasonal shift in storm tracks in this region. From July through September, storms move north of the Philippines and recurve, while early- and late-season typhoons move on a more westerly track through the Philippines before recurving.

North Indian Ocean—Tropical cyclones develop in the Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea during the spring and fall. Tropical cyclones in this area form between latitudes 8°N and 15°N, except from June through September, when the little activity that does occur is confined north of about 15°N. These storms are usually short-lived and weak; however, winds of 130 knots have been encountered. They often develop as disturbances along the Intertropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ); this inhibits summertime development, since the ITCZ is usually over land during this monsoon season. However, it is sometimes displaced southward, and when this occurs, storms will form over the monsoon-flooded plains of Bengal. On the average, six cyclonic storms form each year. These include two storms that generate winds of 48 knots or greater. Another 10 tropical cyclones never develop beyond tropical depressions. The Bay of Bengal is the area of highest incidence. However, it is not unusual for a storm to move across southern India and reintensify in the Arabian Sea. This is particularly true during October, the month of highest incidence during the tropical cyclone season. It is also during this period that torrential rains from these storms, dumped over already rain-soaked areas, cause disastrous floods.

South Indian Ocean—Over the waters west of 100°E, to the east African coast, an average of 11 tropical cyclones (tropical storms and hurricanes) form each season, and about 4 reach hurricane intensity. The season is from December through March, although it is possible for a storm to form in any month. Tropical cyclones in this region usually form south of 10°S. The latitude of recurvature usually migrates from about 20°S in January to around 15°S in April. After crossing 30°S, these storms sometimes become intense extratropical lows.

Southwest Pacific and Australian Area—These tropical waters spawn an annual average of 15 tropical cyclones 4 of which reach hurricane intensity. The season extends from about December through April, although storms can form in any month. Activity is widespread in January and February, and it is in these months that tropical cyclones are most likely to affect Fiji, Samoa, and the other eastern islands. Tropical cyclones usually form in the waters from 105°E to 160°W, between 5° and 20°S. Storms affecting northern and western Australia often develop in the Timor or Arafura Sea, while those that affect the east coast form in the Coral Sea. These storms are often small, but can develop winds in excess of 130 knots. New Zealand is sometimes reached by decaying Coral Sea storms, and occasionally by an intense hurricane. In general, tropical cyclones in this region move southwestward and then recurve southeastward.

ANATOMY OF TROPICAL CYCLONES

3604. Formation

Hurricane formation was once believed to result from an intensification of convective forces which produce the towering cumulonimbus clouds of the doldrums. This view of hurricane generation held that surface heating caused warm moist air to ascend convectively to levels where condensation produced cumulonimbus clouds, which, after an inexplicable drop in atmospheric pressure, coalesced and were spun into a cyclonic motion by Coriolis force.

This hypothesis left much unexplained. Although some hurricanes develop from disturbances beginning in the doldrums, very few reach maturity in that region. Also, the high incidence of seemingly ideal convective situations does not match the low incidence of Atlantic hurricanes. Finally, the hypothesis did not explain the drop in atmospheric pressure, so essential to development of hurricane-force winds.

There is still no exact understanding of the triggering mechanism involved in hurricane generation, the balance of conditions needed to generate hurricane circulation, and the relationships between large- and small-scale atmospheric processes. But scientists today, treating the hurricane system as an atmospheric heat engine, present a more comprehensive and convincing view.

They begin with a starter mechanism in which either internal or external forces intensify the initial disturbance. The initial disturbance becomes a region into which low-level air from the surrounding area begins to flow, accelerating the convection already occurring inside the disturbance. The vertical circulation becomes increasingly well organized as water vapor in the ascending moist layer is condensed (releasing large amounts of heat energy to drive the wind system), and as the system is swept into a counterclockwise cyclonic spiral. But this incipient hurricane would soon fill up because of inflow at lower levels, unless the chimney in which converging air surges upward is provided the exhaust mechanism of high-altitude winds.

These high-altitude winds pump ascending air out of

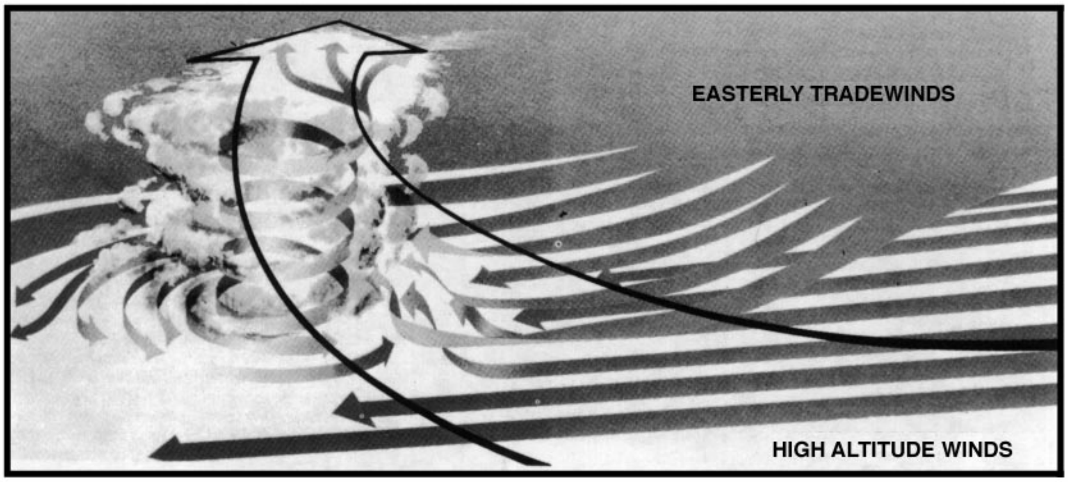

Figure 3604. Pumping action of high-altitude winds.

the cyclonic system, into a high-altitude anticyclone, which transports the air well away from the disturbance, before sinking occurs. Thus, a large scale vertical circulation is set up, in which low-level air is spiraled up the cyclonic twisting of the disturbance, and, after a trajectory over the sea, returned to lower altitudes some distance from the storm. This pumping action-and the heat released by the ascending air may account for the sudden drop of atmospheric pressure at the surface, which produces the steep pressure gradient along which winds reach hurricane proportions.

It is believed that the interaction of low-level and high-altitude wind systems determines the intensity the hurricane will attain. If less air is pumped out than converges at low levels, the system will fill and die out. If more is pumped out than flows in, the circulation will be sustained and will intensify.

Scientists have found that any process which increases the rate of low-level inflow is favorable for hurricane development, provided the inflowing air carries sufficient heat and moisture to fuel the hurricane’s power system. It has also been shown that air above the developing disturbance, at altitudes between 20,000 and 40,000 feet, increases 1° to 3° in temperature about 24 hours before the disturbance develops into a hurricane. But it is not known whether low-level inflow and high-level warming cause hurricanes. They could very well be measurable symptoms of another effect which actually triggers the storm’s increase to hurricane intensity.

The view of hurricanes as atmospheric engines is necessarily a general one. The exact role of each contributor is not completely understood. The engine seems to be both inefficient and unreliable; a myriad of delicate conditions must be satisfied for the atmosphere to produce a hurricane. Their relative infrequency indicates that many potential hurricanes dissipate before developing into storms.

3605. Portrait Of A Hurricane

In the early life of the hurricane, the spiral covers an area averaging 100 miles in diameter with winds of 64 knots and greater, and spreads gale-force winds over a 400-mile diameter. The cyclonic spiral is marked by heavy cloud bands from which torrential rains fall, separated by areas of light rain or no rain at all. These spiral bands ascend in decks of cumulus and cumulonimbus clouds to the convective limit of cloud formation, where condensing water vapor is swept off as ice-crystal wisps of cirrus clouds. Thunderstorm electrical activity is observed in these bands, both as lightning and as tiny electrostatic discharges.

In the lower few thousand feet, air flows in through the cyclone, and is drawn upward through ascending columns of air near the center. The size and intensity decrease with altitude, the cyclonic circulation being gradually replaced above 40,000 feet by an anticyclonic circulation centered hundreds of miles away, which is the exhaust system of the hurricane heat engine.

At lower levels, where the hurricane is more intense, winds on the rim of the storm follow a wide pattern, like the slower currents around the edge of a whirlpool; and, like those currents, these winds accelerate as they approach the center of the vortex. The outer band has light winds at the rim of the storm, perhaps no more than 25 knots; within 30 miles of the center, winds may have velocities exceeding 130 knots. The inner band is the region of maximum wind velocity, where the storm’s worst winds are felt, and where ascending air is chimneyed upward, releasing heat to drive the storm. In most hurricanes, these winds reach 85 knots, and more than 170 knots in severe storms.

In the hurricane, winds flow toward the low pressure in the warm, comparatively calm core. There, converging air is whirled upward by convection, the mechanical thrusting of other converging air, and the pumping action of high-altitude circulations. This spiral is marked by the thick cloud walls curling inward toward the storm center, releasing heavy precipitation and enormous quantities of heat energy. At the center, surrounded by a band in which this strong vertical circulation is greatest, is the **eye** of the hurricane.

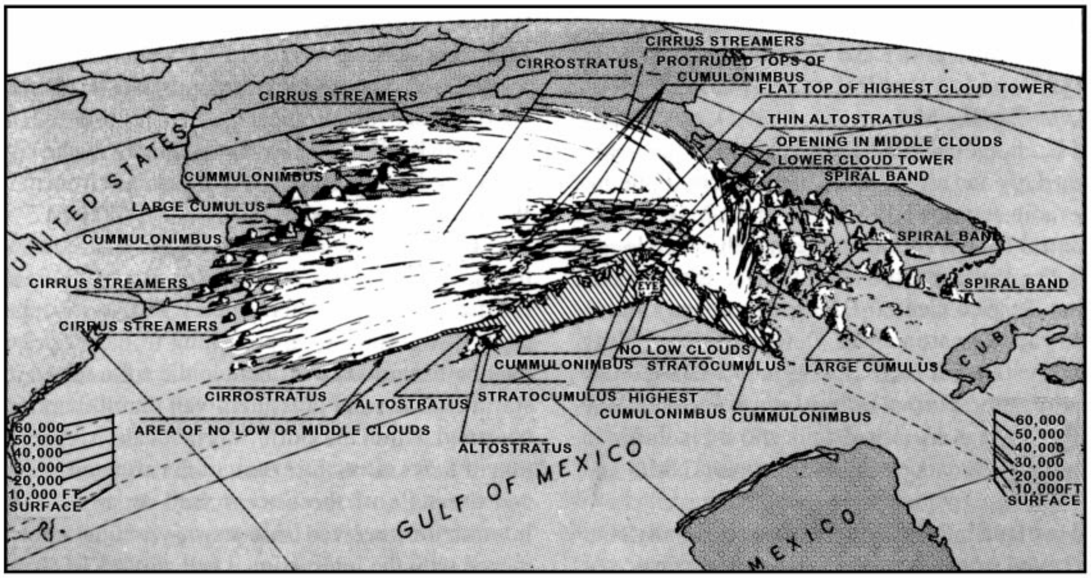

Figure 3605. Cutaway view of a hurricane greatly exaggerated in vertical dimension. Actual hurricanes are less than 50,000 feet high and may have a diameter of several hundred miles.

On the average, eye diameter is about 14 miles, although diameters of 25 miles are not unusual. From the heated tower of maximum winds and cumulonimbus clouds, winds diminish rapidly to something less than 15 miles per hour in the eye; at the opposite wall, winds increase again, but come from the opposite direction because of the cyclonic circulation of the storm. This sudden transformation of storm into comparative calm, and from calm into violence from another quarter is spectacular. The eye's abrupt existence in the midst of opaque rain squalls and hurricane winds, the intermittent bursts of blue sky and sunlight through light clouds in the core of the cyclone, and the galleried walls of cumulus and cumulonimbus clouds are unforgettable.

Every hurricane is individual, and the more or less orderly circulation described here omits the extreme variability and instability within the storm system. Pressure and temperature gradients fluctuate wildly across the storm as the hurricane maintains its erratic life. If it is an August storm, its average life expectancy is 12 days; if a July or November storm, it lives an average of 8 days.

3606. Life Of A Tropical Cyclone

Reports from ships in the vicinity of an **easterly wave** (a westward-moving trough of low pressure embedded in deep easterlies) may indicate that the atmospheric pressure in the region has fallen more than 5 millibars in the past 24 hours. This is cause for alarm, because in the Tropics pressure varies little; the normal diurnal pressure change is only about 3 millibars. Satellite pictures may indicate thickening middle and high clouds. Squalls are reported ahead of the easterly wave, and wind reports indicate a cyclonic circulation is forming. The former easterly wave, now classified a tropical disturbance, is moving westward at 10 knots under the canopy of a large high-pressure system aloft. Sea surface temperatures in the vicinity are in the 28°-30°C range.

Within 48 hours winds increase to 25 knots near the center of definite circulation, and central pressure has dropped below 1000 millibars. The disturbance is now classified as a tropical depression. Soon the circulation extends out to 100 miles and upward to 20,000 feet. Winds near the center increase to gale force, central pressure falls below 990 millibars, and towering cumulonimbus clouds shield a developing eye; a tropical storm has developed.

Satellite photographs now reveal a tightly organized tropical cyclone, and reconnaissance reports indicate maximum winds of 80 knots around a central pressure of 980 millibars; a hurricane has developed. A ship to the right (left in the Southern Hemisphere) of the hurricane's center (looking toward the direction of storm movement) reports 30-foot seas. The hurricane is rapidly maturing as it continues westward.

A few days later the hurricane reaches its peak. The satellite photographs show a textbook picture, as 120-knot winds roar around a 940-millibar pressure center; hurricane-force winds extend 50 miles in all directions, and seas are reported up to 40 feet. There is no further deepening now, but the hurricane begins to expand. In 2 days, gales extend out to 200 miles, and hurricane winds out to 75 miles. Then the hurricane slows and begins to recurve; this turning marks the beginning of its final phase.

The hurricane accelerates, and, upon reaching temperate latitudes, it begins to lose its tropical characteristics. The circulation continues to expand, but now cold air is intruding (cold air, cold water, dry air aloft, and land, aid in the decay of a tropical cyclone). The winds gradually abate as the concentrated storm disintegrates. The warm core survives for a few more days before the transformation to a large extratropical low-pressure system is complete.

Not all tropical cyclones follow this average pattern. Most falter in the early stages, some dissipate over land, and others remain potent for several weeks.

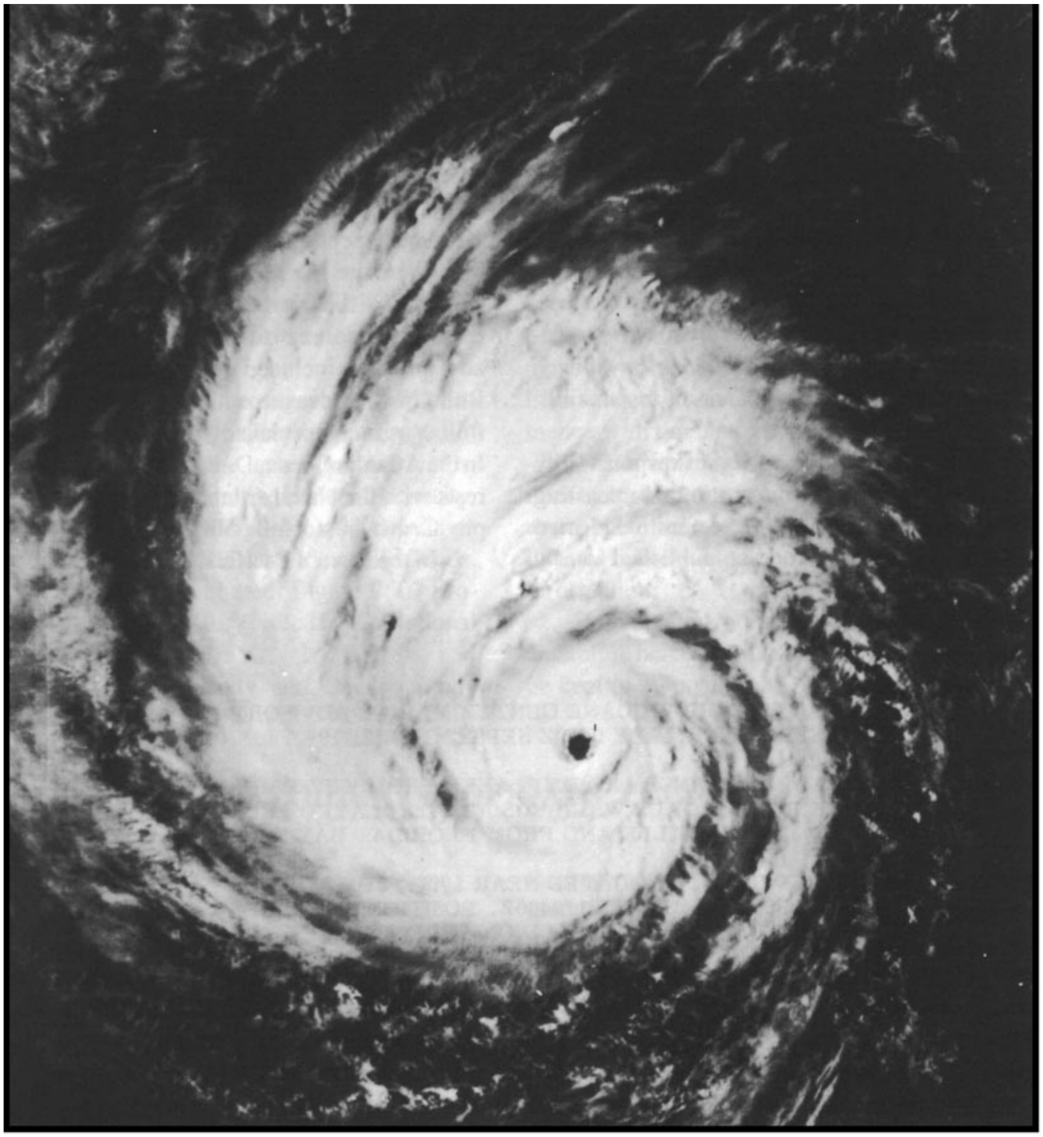

Figure 3606. Satellite photograph of a hurricane.

FORECASTING AND PREDICTING TROPICAL CYCLONES

3607. Weather Broadcasts And Radiofacsimile

The marine weather broadcast and radiofacsimile weather maps are the most important tools for avoiding tropical cyclones. These broadcasts, covering all tropical areas, provide information about the tropical cyclone’s location, maximum winds and seas, and future conditions expected.

The U S. Navy, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the U.S. Air Force have developed a highly effective surveillance system for the tropical cyclone-prone areas of the world. Routine and special weather reports (from land stations, ships at sea, aircraft; weather satellite imagery; radar reports from land stations; special reports from ships at sea; and the specially instrumented weather reconnaissance aircraft of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the U.S. Air Force) enable accurate detection, location, and tracking of tropical cyclones. International cooperation is effective. Data buoys, both moored and drifting, provide another source of information.

The tropical warning services have three principal functions:

1. The collection and analysis of the necessary observational data.
2. The preparation of timely and accurate forecasts and warnings.
3. The rapid and efficient distribution of advisories, warnings, and all other pertinent information.

To provide timely and accurate information and warnings regarding tropical cyclones, the oceans have been divided into overlapping geographical areas of responsibility.

For detailed information on the areas of responsibility of the countries participating in the international forecasting and warning program, and radio aids, refer to Selected Worldwide Marine Weather Broadcasts, published jointly by the Naval Meteorology and Oceanography Command and the National Weather Service.

Although the areas of forecasting responsibility are fairly well defined for the Department of Defense, the international and domestic civilian system provides many overlaps and is dependent upon qualitative factors. For example, when a tropical storm or hurricane is traveling westward and crosses 35°W longitude, the continued issuance of forecasts and warnings to the general public, shipping interests, etc., becomes the responsibility of the National Hurricane Center of the National Weather Service at Miami, Florida. When a tropical storm or hurricane crosses 35°W longitude traveling from west to east, the National Hurricane Center ceases to issue formal public advisories, but will issue marine bulletins on any dangerous tropical cyclone in the North Atlantic, if it is of importance or constitutes a threat to shipping and other interests. These advisories are included in National Weather Service Marine Bulletins broadcast to ships over radio station NAM Norfolk, Virginia. Special advisories may be issued at any time. In the Atlantic Ocean, Department of Defense responsibility rests with the Naval Atlantic Meteorology and Oceanography Center in Norfolk, Virginia.

In the eastern Pacific east of longitude 140°W, respon-

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NOAA/NATIONAL HURRICANE CENTER MARINE ADVISORY NUM-
BER 13 HURRICANE LADY 0400Z SEPTEMBER 21 19--.

HURRICANE WARNINGS ARE DISPLAYED FROM KEY LARGO TO
CAPE KENNEDY. GALE WARNINGS ARE DISPLAYED FROM KEY
WEST TO JACKSONVILLE AND FROM FLORIDA BAY TO CEDAR KEY.

HURRICANE CENTER LOCATED NEAR LATITUDE 25.5 NORTH
LONGITUDE 78.5 WEST AT 21/0400Z. POSITION EXCELLENT AC-
CURATE WITHIN 10 MILES BASED ON AIR FORCE RECONNAISSANCE
AND SYNOPTIC REPORTS.

PRESENT MOVEMENT TOWARD THE WEST NORTHWEST OR 285
DEGREES AT 10 KT. MAX SUSTAINED WINDS OF 100 KT NEAR
CENTER WITH GUSTS TO 160 KT.
MAX WINDS OVER INLAND AREAS 35 KT.
RAD OF 65 KT WINDS 90 NE 60 SE 80 SW 90 NW QUAD.
RAD OF 50 KT WINDS 120 NE 70 SE 90 SW 120 NW QUAD.
RAD OF 30 KT WINDS 210 NE 210 SE 210 SW 210 NW QUAD.
REPEAT CENTER LOCATED 25.5N 78.3W AT 21/0400Z.

12 HOUR FORECAST VALID 21/1600Z LATITUDE 26.0N LONGI-
TUDE 80.5W.
MAX WINDS OF 100 KT NEAR CENTER WITH GUSTS TO 160 KT.
MAX WINDS OVER INLAND AREAS 65 KT.
RADIUS OF 50 KT WINDS 120 NE 70 SE 90 SW 120 NW QUAD.
24 HOUR FORECAST VALID 22/0400Z LATITUDE 26.0N
LONGITUDE 83.0W.
MAX WINDS OF 75 KT NEAR CENTER WITH GUSTS TO 120 KT.
MAX WINDS OVER INLAND AREAS 45 KT.
RADIUS OF 50 KT WINDS 120 NE 120 SE 120 SW 120 NW QUAD.

STORM TIDE OF 9 TO 12 FT SOUTHEAST FLA COAST GREATER
MIAMI AREA TO THE PALM BEACHES.

NEXT ADVISORY AT 21/1000Z.
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Figure 3607. Example of marine advisory issued by National Hurricane Center.

sibility for the issuance of tropical storm and hurricane advisories and warnings for the general public, merchant shipping, and other interests rests with the National Weather Service Eastern Pacific Hurricane Center, San Francisco, California. The Department of Defense responsibility rests with the Naval Pacific Meteorology and Oceanography Center, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Formal advisories and warnings are issued daily and are included in the marine bulletins broadcast by radio stations KFS, NMC, and NMQ.

In the central Pacific (between the meridian and longitude 140°W), the civilian responsibility rests with the National Weather Service Central Pacific Hurricane Center, Honolulu, Hawaii. Department of Defense responsibility rests with the Naval Pacific Meteorology and Oceanography Center in Pearl Harbor. Formal tropical storm and hurricane advisories and warnings are issued daily and are included in the marine bulletins broadcast by radio station NMO and NRV.

Tropical cyclone information messages generally contain position of the storm, intensity, direction and speed of movement, and a description of the area of strong winds. Also included is a forecast of future movement and intensity. When the storm is likely to affect any land area, details on when and where it will be felt, and data on tides, rain, floods, and maximum winds are also included. Figure 3607 provides an example of a marine advisory issued by the National Hurricane Center.

The Naval Pacific Meteorology and Oceanography Center Center-West/Joint Typhoon Warning Center (NPMOC-W/JTWC) in Guam is responsible for all U.S. tropical storm and typhoon advisories and warnings from the 180th meridian westward to the mainland of Asia. A secondary area of responsibility extends westward to longitude 90°E. Whenever a tropical cyclone is observed in the western North Pacific area, serially numbered warnings, bearing an “immediate” precedence are broadcast from the NPMOC-W/JTWC at 0000, 0600, 1200, and 1800 GMT.

The responsibility for issuing gale and storm warnings for the Indian Ocean, Arabian Sea, Bay of Bengal, Western Pacific, and South Pacific rests with many countries. In general, warnings of approaching tropical cyclones which may be hazardous will include the following information: storm type, central pressure given in millibars, wind speed observed within the storm, storm location, speed and direction of movement, the extent of the affected area, visibility, and the state of the sea, as well as any other pertinent information received. All storm warning messages commence with the international call sign “TTT.”

These warnings are broadcast on specified radio frequency bands immediately upon receipt of the information and at specific intervals thereafter. Generally, the broadcast interval is every 6 to 8 hours, depending upon receipt of new information.

Bulletins and forecasts are excellent guides to the present and future behavior of the tropical cyclone, and a plot should be kept of all positions.

AVOIDING TROPICAL CYCLONES

3608. Approach And Passage Of A Tropical Cyclone

An early indication of the approach of a tropical cyclone is the presence of a long swell. In the absence of a tropical cyclone, the crests of swell in the deep waters of the Atlantic pass at the rate of perhaps eight per minute. Swell generated by a hurricane is about twice as long, the crests passing at the rate of perhaps four per minute. Swell may be observed several days before arrival of the storm.

When the storm center is 500 to 1,000 miles away, the barometer usually rises a little, and the skies are relatively clear. Cumulus clouds, if present at all, are few in number and their vertical development appears suppressed. The barometer usually appears restless, pumping up and down a few hundredths of an inch.

As the tropical cyclone comes nearer, a cloud sequence begins which resembles that associated with the approach of a warm front in middle latitudes. Snow-white, fibrous “mare’s tails” (cirrus) appear when the storm is about 300 to 600 miles away. Usually these seem to converge, more or less, in the direction from which the storm is approaching. This convergence is particularly apparent at about the time of sunrise and sunset.

Shortly after the cirrus appears, but sometimes before, the barometer starts a long, slow fall. At first the fall is so gradual that it only appears to alter somewhat the normal daily cycle (two maxima and two minima in the Tropics). As the rate of fall increases, the daily pattern is completely lost in the more or less steady fall.

The cirrus becomes more confused and tangled, and then gradually gives way to a continuous veil of cirrostratus. Below this veil, altostratus forms, and then stratocumulus. These clouds gradually become more dense, and as they do so, the weather becomes unsettled. A fine, mist-like rain begins to fall, interrupted from time to time by rain showers. The barometer has fallen perhaps a tenth of an inch.

As the fall becomes more rapid, the wind increases in gustiness, and its speed becomes greater, reaching perhaps 22 to 40 knots (Beaufort 6-8). On the horizon appears a dark wall of heavy cumulonimbus, called the **bar** of the storm. This is the heavy bank of clouds comprising the main mass of the cyclone. Portions of this heavy cloud become detached from time to time, and drift across the sky, accompanied by rain squalls and wind of increasing speed. Between squalls, the cirrostratus can be seen through breaks in the stratocumulus.

As the bar approaches, the barometer falls more rapidly and wind speed increases. The seas, which have been gradu-

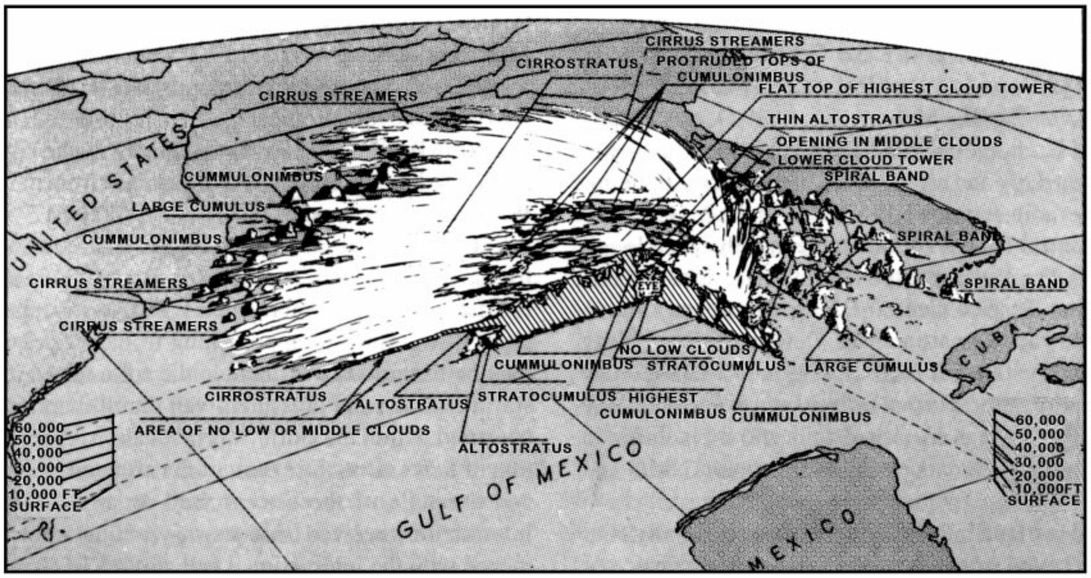

Figure 3608. Typical hurricane cloud formations.

ally mounting, become tempestuous. Squall lines, one after the other, sweep past in ever increasing number and intensity.

With the arrival of the bar, the day becomes very dark, squalls become virtually continuous, and the barometer falls precipitously, with a rapid increase in wind speed. The center may still be 100 to 200 miles away in a fully developed tropical cyclone. As the center of the storm comes closer, the ever-stronger wind shrieks through the rigging, and about the superstructure of the vessel. As the center approaches, rain falls in torrents. The wind fury increases. The seas become mountainous. The tops of huge waves are blown off to mingle with the rain and fill the air with water. Visibility is virtually zero in blinding rain and spray. Even the largest and most seaworthy vessels become virtually unmanageable, and may sustain heavy damage. Less sturdy vessels may not survive. Navigation virtually stops as safety of the vessel becomes the only consideration. The awesome fury of this condition can only be experienced. Words are inadequate to describe it.

If the eye of the storm passes over the vessel, the winds suddenly drop to a breeze as the wall of the eye passes. The rain stops, and the skies clear sufficiently to permit the sun or stars to shine through holes in the comparatively thin cloud cover. Visibility improves. Mountainous seas approach from all sides in complete confusion. The barometer reaches its lowest point, which may be $1\ ^1/_2$ or 2 inches below normal in fully developed tropical cyclones. As the wall on the opposite side of the eye arrives, the full fury of the wind strikes as suddenly as it ceased, but from the opposite direction. The sequence of conditions that occurred during approach of the storm is reversed, and passes more quickly, as the various parts of the storm are not as wide in the rear of a storm as on its forward side.

Typical cloud formations associated with a hurricane are shown in Figure 3608.

3609. Locating The Center Of A Tropical Cyclone

If intelligent action is to be taken to avoid the full fury of a tropical cyclone, early determination of its location and direction of travel relative to the vessel is essential. The bulletins and forecasts are an excellent general guide, but they are not infallible, and may be sufficiently in error to induce a mariner in a critical position to alter course so as to unwittingly increase the danger to his vessel. Often it is possible, using only those observations made aboard ship, to obtain a sufficiently close approximation to enable the vessel to maneuver to the best advantage.

The presence of an exceptionally long swell is usually the first visible indication of the existence of a tropical cyclone. In deep water it approaches from the general direction of origin (the position of the storm center when the swell was generated). However, in shoaling water this is a less reliable indication because the direction is changed by refraction, the crests being more nearly parallel to the bottom contours.

When the cirrus clouds appear, their point of convergence provides an indication of the direction of the storm center. If the storm is to pass well to one side of the observer, the point of convergence shifts slowly in the direction of storm movement. If the storm center will pass near the observer, this point remains steady. When the bar becomes visible, it appears to rest upon the horizon for several hours. The darkest part of this cloud is in the direction of the storm center. If the storm is to pass to one side, the bar appears to drift slowly along the horizon. If the storm is heading directly toward the observer, the position of the bar remains fixed. Once within the area of the dense, low clouds, one should observe their direction of movement, which is almost exactly along the isobars, with the center of the storm being 90° from the direction of cloud movement (left of direction of movement in the Northern Hemisphere, and right in the Southern Hemisphere).

The winds are probably the best guide to the direction of the center of a tropical cyclone. The circulation is cyclonic, but because of the steep pressure gradient near the center, the winds there blow with greater violence and are more nearly circular than in extratropical cyclones.

According to **Buys Ballot's law**, an observer whose back is to the wind has the the low pressure on his left in the Northern Hemisphere, and on his right in the Southern Hemisphere. If the wind followed circular isobars exactly, the center would be exactly 90° from behind when facing away from the wind. However, the track of the wind is usually inclined somewhat toward the center, so that the angle from dead astern varies between perhaps 90° to 135°. The inclination varies in different parts of the same storm. It is least in front of the storm, and greatest in the rear, since the actual wind is the vector sum of the pressure gradient and the motion of the storm along the track. A good average is perhaps 110° in front, and 120-135° in the rear. These values apply when the storm center is still several hundred miles away. Closer to the center, the wind blows more nearly along the isobars, the inclination being reduced by one or two points at the wall of the eye. Since wind direction usually shifts temporarily during a squall, its direction at this time should not be used for determining the position of the center. The approximate relationship of wind to isobars and storm center in the Northern Hemisphere is shown in Figure 3609a.

When the center is within radar range, it will probably be visible on the scope. However, since the radar return is predominantly from the rain, results can be deceptive, and other indications should not be neglected. Figure 3609b shows a radar PPI presentation of a tropical cyclone. If the eye is out of range, the spiral bands (Figure 3609b) may indicate its direction from the vessel. Tracking the eye or upwind portion of the spiral bands enables determining the direction and speed of movement; this should be done for at

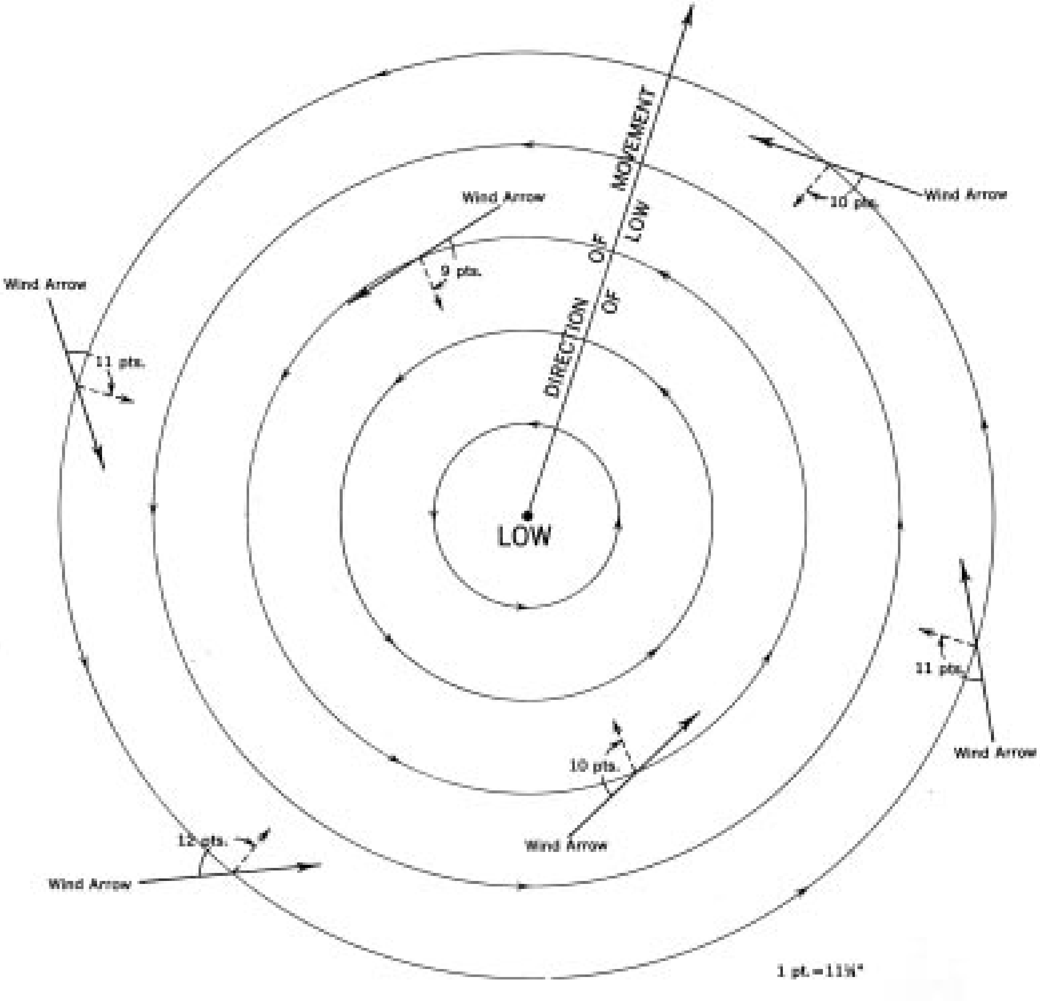

Figure 3609a. Approximate relationship of wind to isobars and storm center in the Northern Hemisphere.

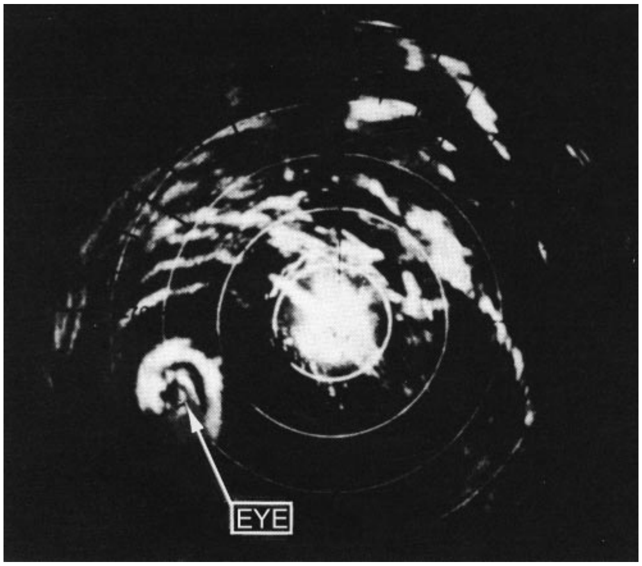

Figure 3609b. Radar PPI presentation of a tropical cyclone.

least 1 hour because the eye tends to oscillate. The tracking of individual cells, which tend to move tangentially around the eye, for 15 minutes or more, either at the end of the band or between bands, will provide an indication of the wind speed in that area of the storm.

Distance from the storm center is more difficult to determine than direction. Radar is perhaps the best guide. However, the rate of fall of the barometer is some indication.

3610. Statistical Analysis Of Barometric Pressure

The lowest-sea-level pressure ever recorded was 877 millibars in typhoon Ida, on September 24, 1958. The observation was taken by a reconnaissance aircraft dropsonde, some 750 miles east of Luzon, Philippines. This observation was obtained again in typhoon Nora on October 6, 1973. The lowest barometric reading of record for the United States is 892.3 millibars, obtained during a hurricane at Lower Matecumbe Key, Florida, in September 1935. In hurricane Camille in 1969, a 905 millibar pressure was measured by reconnaissance aircraft. During a 1927 typhoon, the S.S. Sapoeroea recorded a pressure of 886.6 millibars, the lowest sea-level pressure reported from a ship. Pressure has been observed to drop more than 33 millibars per hour, with a pressure gradient amounting to a change of 3.7 millibars per mile.

A method for alerting the mariner to possible tropical cyclone formation involves a statistical comparison of observed weather parameters with the climatology (30 year averaged conditions) for those parameters. Significant fluctuations away from these average conditions could mean the onset of severe weather. One such statistical method involves a comparison of mean surface pressure in the tropics with the standard deviation (s.d.) of surface pressure. Any significant deviation from the norm could indicate proximity to a tropical cyclone. Analysis shows that surface pressure can be expected to be lower than the mean minus 1 s.d. less than 16% of the time, lower than the mean minus 1.5 s.d. less than 7% of the time, and lower than the mean minus 2 s.d. less than 3% of the time. Comparison of the observed pressure with the mean will indicate how “unusual” the present conditions are.

As an example, assume the mean surface pressure in the South China Sea to be about 1005 mb during August with a s.d. of about 2 mb. Therefore, surface pressure can be expected to fall below 1003 mb about 16% of the time and below 1000 mb about 7% of the time. Ambient pressure any lower than that would alert the mariner to the possible onset of heavy weather. Charts showing the mean surface pressure and the s.d. of surface pressure for various global regions can be found in the U.S. Navy Marine Climatic Atlas of the World.

3611. Maneuvering To Avoid The Storm Center

The safest procedure with respect to tropical cyclones is to avoid them. If action is taken sufficiently early, this is simply a matter of setting a course that will take the vessel well to one side of the probable track of the storm, and then continuing to plot the positions of the storm center as given in the weather bulletins, revising the course as needed.

However, this is not always possible. If the ship is found to be within the storm area, the proper action to take depends in part upon its position relative to the storm center and its direction of travel. It is customary to divide the circular area of the storm into two parts.

In the Northern Hemisphere, that part to the right of the storm track (facing in the direction toward which the storm is moving) is called the **dangerous semicircle**. It is considered dangerous because (1) the actual wind speed is greater than that due to the pressure gradient alone, since it is augmented by the forward motion of the storm, and (2) the direction of the wind and sea is such as to carry a vessel into the path of the storm (in the forward part of the semicircle).

The part to the left of the storm track is called the **less dangerous semicircle**, or **navigable semicircle**. In this part, the wind is decreased by the forward motion of the storm, and the wind blows vessels away from the storm track (in the forward part). Because of the greater wind speed in the dangerous semicircle, the seas are higher than in the less dangerous semicircle. In the Southern Hemisphere, the dangerous semicircle is to the left of the storm track, and the less dangerous semicircle is to the right of the storm track.

A plot of successive positions of the storm center should indicate the semicircle in which a vessel is located. However, if this is based upon weather bulletins, it may not be a reliable guide because of the lag between the observations upon which the bulletin is based and the time of reception of the bulletin, with the ever-present possibility of a change in the direction of the storm. The use of radar eliminates this lag at short range, but the return may not be a true indication of the center. Perhaps the most reliable guide is the wind. Within the cyclonic circulation, a wind shifting to the right in the northern hemisphere and to the left in the southern hemisphere indicates the vessel is probably in the dangerous semicircle. A steady wind shift opposite to this indicates the vessel is probably in the less dangerous semicircle.

However, if a vessel is underway, its own motion should be considered. If it is outrunning the storm or pulling rapidly toward one side (which is not difficult during the early stages of a storm, when its speed is low), the opposite effect occurs. This should usually be accompanied by a rise in atmospheric pressure, but if motion of the vessel is nearly along an isobar, this may not be a reliable indication. If in doubt, the safest action is usually to stop long enough to define the proper semicircle. The loss in time may be more than offset by the minimizing of the possibility of taking the wrong action, increasing the danger to the vessel. If the wind direction remains steady (for a vessel which is stopped), with increasing speed and falling barometer, the vessel is in or near the path of the storm. If it remains steady with decreasing speed and rising barometer, the vessel is near the storm track, behind the center.

The first action to take if the ship is within the cyclonic circulation is to determine the position of his vessel with respect to the storm center. While the vessel can still make considerable way through the water, a course should be selected to take it as far as possible from the center. If the vessel can move faster than the storm, it is a relatively simple matter to outrun the storm if sea room permits. But when the storm is faster, the solution is not as simple. In this case, the vessel, if ahead of the storm, will approach nearer to the center. The problem is to select a course that will produce the greatest possible minimum distance. This is best determined by means of a relative movement plot, as shown in the following example solved on a maneuvering board.

Example: *A tropical cyclone is estimated to be moving in direction 320° at 19 knots. Its center bears 170°, at an estimated distance of 200 miles from a vessel which has a maximum speed of 12 knots.*

Required:

(1) *The course to steer at 12 knots to produce the greatest possible minimum distance between the vessel and the storm center.*

(2) *The distance to the center at nearest approach.*

(3) *Elapsed time until nearest approach.*

Solution: *(Figure 3611) Consider the vessel remaining at the center of the plot throughout the solution, as on a radar PPI.*

(1) To locate the position of the storm center relative to the vessel, plot point C at a distance of 200 miles (scale 20:1) in direction 170° from the center of the diagram. From the center of the diagram, draw RA, the speed vector of the storm center, in direction 320°, speed 19 knots (scale 2:1). From A draw a line tangent to the 12-knot speed circle (labeled 6 at scale 2:1) on the side opposite the storm center. From the center of the diagram, draw a perpendicular to this tangent line, locating point B. The line RB is the required speed vector for the vessel. Its direction, 011°, is the required course.

(2) The path of the storm center relative to the vessel will be along a line from C in the direction BA, if both storm and vessel maintain course and speed. The point of nearest approach will be at D, the foot of a perpendicular from the center of the diagram. This distance, at scale 20:1, is 187 miles.

(3) The length of the vector BA (14.8 knots) is the speed of the storm with respect to the vessel. Mark this on the lowest scale of the nomogram at the bottom of the diagram. The relative distance CD is 72 miles, by measurement. Mark this (scale 10:1) on the middle scale at the bottom of the diagram. Draw a line between the two points and extend it to intersect the top scale at 29.2 (292 at 10:1 scale). The elapsed time is therefore 292 minutes, or 4 hours 52 minutes.

Answers: *(1) C 011°, (2) D 187 mi., (3) $4^h\ 52^m$.*
The storm center will be dead astern at its nearest approach.

As a general rule, for a vessel in the Northern Hemisphere, safety lies in placing the wind on the starboard bow in the dangerous semicircle and on the starboard quarter in the less dangerous semicircle. If on the storm track ahead of the storm, the wind should be put about 160° on the starboard quarter until the vessel is well within the less dangerous semicircle, and the rule for that semicircle then followed. In the Southern Hemisphere the same rules hold, but with respect to the port side. With a faster than average vessel, the wind can be brought a little farther aft in each case. However, as the speed of the storm increases along its track, the wind should be brought farther forward. If land interferes with what would otherwise be the best maneuver, the solution should be altered to fit the circumstances.

If the vessel is faster than the storm, it is possible to overtake it. In this case, the only action usually needed is to slow enough to let the storm pull ahead.

In all cases, one should be alert to changes in the direction of movement of the storm center, particularly in the area where the track normally curves toward the pole. If the storm maintains its direction and speed, the ship's course should be maintained as the wind shifts.

If it becomes necessary for a vessel to heave to, the characteristics of the vessel should be considered. A power vessel is concerned primarily with damage by direct action of the sea. A good general rule is to heave to with head to the sea in the dangerous semicircle, or stern to the sea in the less dangerous semicircle. This will result in greatest amount of headway away from the storm center, and least amount of leeway toward it. If a vessel handles better with the sea astern or on the quarter, it may be placed in this position in the less dangerous semicircle or in the rear half of the dangerous semicircle, but never in the forward half of the dangerous semicircle. It has been reported that when the wind reaches hurricane speed and the seas become confused, some ships ride out the storm best if the engines are stopped, and the vessel is left to seek its own position, or lie ahull. In this way, it is said, the ship rides with the storm instead of fighting against it.

In a sailing vessel attempting to avoid a storm center, one should steer courses as near as possible to those prescribed above for power vessels. However, if it becomes necessary for such a vessel to heave to, the wind is of greater concern than the sea. A good general rule always is to heave to on whichever tack permits the shifting wind to draw aft. In the Northern Hemisphere, this is the starboard tack in the dangerous semicircle, and the port tack in the less dangerous semicircle. In the Southern Hemisphere these are reversed.

While each storm requires its own analysis, and frequent or continual resurvey of the situation, the general rules for a steamer may be summarized as follows:

Northern Hemisphere

Right or dangerous semicircle: Bring the wind on the starboard bow (045˚ relative), hold course and make as much way as possible. If necessary, heave to with head to the sea.

Left or less dangerous semicircle: Bring the wind on the starboard quarter (135° relative), hold course and make as much way as possible. If necessary, heave to with stern to the sea.

On storm track, ahead of center: Bring the wind 2 points on the starboard quarter (about 160° relative), hold course and make as much way as possible. When well within the less dangerous semicircle, maneuver as indicated above.

On storm track, behind center: Avoid the center by the best practicable course, keeping in mind the tendency of tropical cyclones to curve northward and eastward.

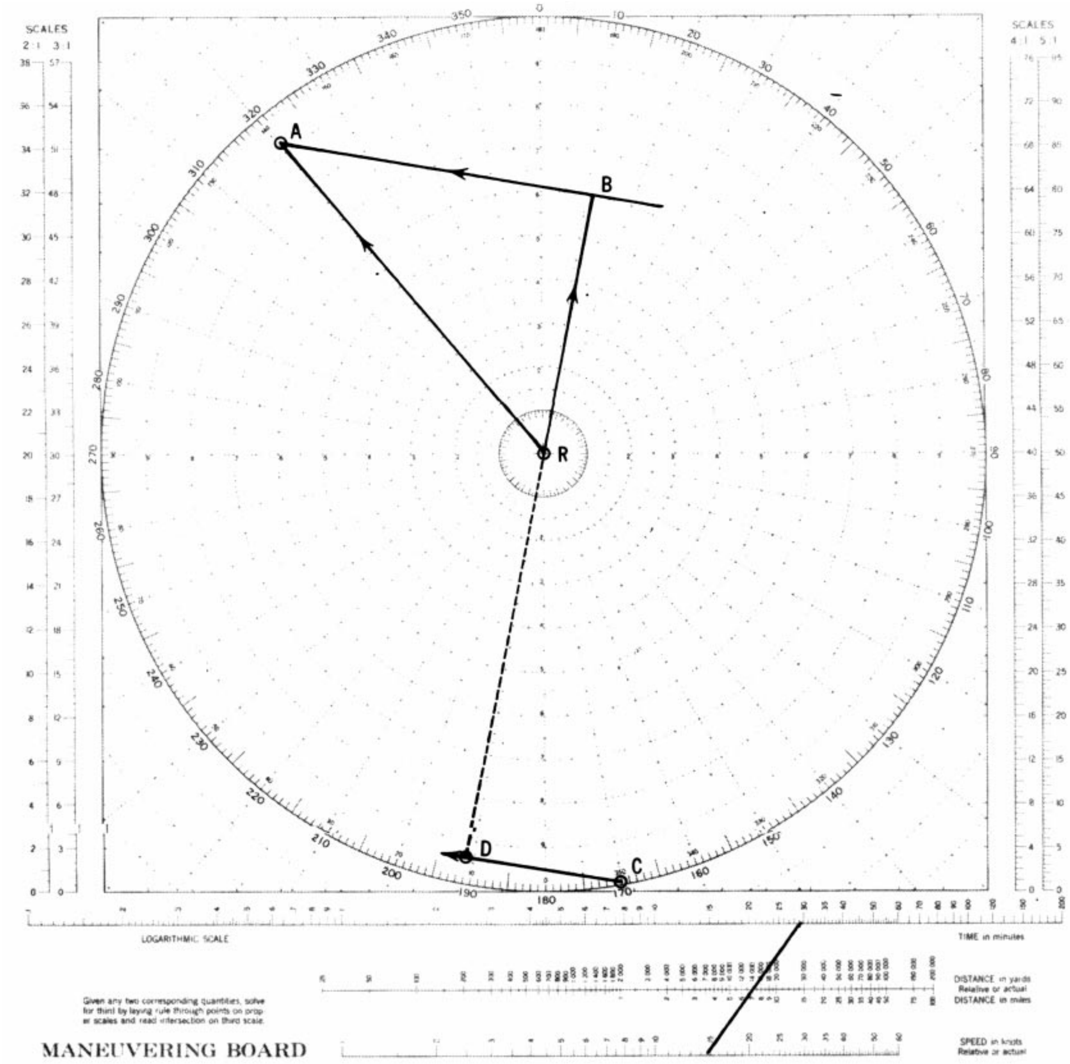

Figure 3611. Determining the course to avoid the storm center.

Southern Hemisphere

Left or dangerous semicircle: Bring the wind on the port bow (315° relative), hold course and make as much way as possible. If necessary, heave to with head to the sea.

Right or less dangerous semicircle: Bring the wind on the port quarter (225° relative), hold course and make as much way as possible. If necessary, heave to with stern to the sea.

On storm track, ahead of center: Bring the wind about 200° relative, hold course and make as much way as possible. When well within the less dangerous semicircle, maneuver as indicated above.

On storm track, behind center: Avoid the center by the best practicable course, keeping in mind the tendency of tropical cyclones to curve southward and eastward.

It is possible, particularly in temperate latitudes after the storm has recurved, that the dangerous semicircle is the left one in the Northern Hemisphere (right one in the Southern Hemisphere). This can occur if a large high lies north of the storm and causes a tightening of the pressure gradient in the region.

The *Typhoon Havens Handbook* for the Western Pacific and Indian Oceans is published by the Naval Oceanographic and Atmospheric Research Lab (NOARL) Monterey, California, as an aid to captains and commanding officers of ships in evaluating a typhoon situation, and to assist them in deciding whether to sortie, to evade, to remain in port, or to head for the shelter of a specific harbor.

CONSEQUENCES OF TROPICAL CYCLONES

3612. High Winds And Flooding

The high winds of a tropical cyclone inflict widespread damage when such a storm leaves the ocean and crosses land. Aids to navigation may be blown out of position or destroyed. Craft in harbors, often lifted by the storm surge, break moorings or drag anchor and are blown ashore and against obstructions. Ashore, trees are blown over, houses are damaged, power lines are blown down, etc. The greatest damage usually occurs in the dangerous semicircle a short distance from the center, where the strongest winds occur. As the storm continues on across land, its fury subsides faster than it would if it had remained over water.

Wind instruments are usually incapable of measuring the 175 to 200 knot winds of the more intense hurricanes; if the instrument holds up, often the supporting structure gives way. Doppler radar may be effective in determining wind speeds, but may also be blown away.

Wind gusts, which are usually 30 to 50 percent higher than sustained winds, add significantly to the destructiveness of the tropical cyclone. Many tropical cyclones that reach hurricane intensity develop winds of more than 90 knots sometime during their lives, but few develop winds of more than 130 knots.

Tropical cyclones have produced some of the world's heaviest rainfalls. While average amounts range from 6 to 10 inches, totals near 100 inches over a 4-day period have been observed. A 24-hour world's record of 73.62 inches fell at Reunion Island during a tropical cyclone in 1952. Forward movement of the storm and land topography have a considerable influence on rainfall totals. Torrential rains can occur when a storm moves against a mountain range; this is common in the Philippines and Japan, where even weak tropical depressions produce considerable rainfall. A 24-hour total of 46 inches was recorded in the Philippines during a typhoon in 1911. As hurricane Camille crossed southern Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains in August of 1969, there was nearly 30 inches of rain in about 8 hours. This caused some of the most disastrous floods in the state's history.

Flooding is an extremely destructive by-product of the tropical cyclone's torrential rains. Whether an area will be flooded depends on the physical characteristics of the drainage basin, rate and accumulation of precipitation, and river stages at the time the rains begin. When heavy rains fall over flat terrain, the countryside may lie under water for a month or so, and while buildings, furnishings, and underground power lines may be damaged, there are usually few fatalities. In mountainous or hill country, disastrous floods develop rapidly and can cause a great loss of life.

There have been occasional reports in tropical cyclones of waves greater than 40 feet in height, and numerous reports in the 30- to 40-foot category. However, in tropical cyclones, strong winds rarely persist for a sufficiently long time or over a large enough area to permit enormous wave heights to develop. The direction and speed of the wind changes more rapidly in tropical cyclones than in extratropical storms. Thus, the maximum duration and fetch for any wind condition is often less in tropical cyclones than in extratropical storms, and the waves accompanying any given local wind conditions are generally not so high as those expected, with similar local wind conditions, in the high-latitude storms. In hurricane Camille, significant waves of 43 feet were recorded; an extreme wave height reached 72 feet.

Exceptional conditions may arise when waves of certain dimensions travel within the storm at a speed equal to the storm's speed, thus, in effect, extending the duration and fetch of the wave and significantly increasing its height. This occurs most often to the right of the track in the Northern Hemisphere (left of the track in the Southern Hemisphere). Another condition that may give rise to exceptional wave heights is the intersection of waves from two or more distinct directions. This may lead to a zone of confused seas in which the heights of some waves will equal the sums of each individual wave train. This process can occur in any quadrant of the storm, so it should not be assumed that the highest waves will always be encountered to the right of the storm track in the Northern Hemisphere (left of the track in the Southern Hemisphere).

When these waves move beyond the influence of the generating winds, they become known as **swell**. They are recognized by their smooth, undulating form, in contrast to the steep, ragged crests of wind waves. This swell, particularly that generated by the right side of the storm, can travel a thousand miles or more and may produce tides 3 or 4 feet above normal along several hundred miles of coastline. It may also produce tremendous surf over offshore reefs which normally are calm.

When a tropical cyclone moves close to a coast, wind often causes a rapid rise in water level, and along with the falling pressure may produce a **storm surge**. This surge is usually confined to the right of the track in the Northern Hemisphere (left of the track in the Southern Hemisphere) and to a relatively small section of the coastline. It most often occurs with the approach of the storm, but in some cases, where a surge moves into a long channel, the effect may be delayed. Occasionally, the greatest rise in water is observed on the opposite side of the track, when northerly winds funnel into a partially landlocked harbor. The surge could be 3 feet or less, or it could be 20 feet or more, depending on the combination of factors involved.

There have been reports of a “hurricane wave,” described as a “wall of water,” which moves rapidly toward the coastline. Authenticated cases are rare, but some of the world’s greatest natural disasters have occurred as a result of this wave, which may be a rapidly rising and abnormally high storm surge. In India, such a disaster occurred in 1876, between Calcutta and Chittagong, and drowned more than 100,000 persons.

Along the coast, greater damage may be inflicted by water than by the wind. There are at least four sources of water damage. First, the unusually high seas generated by the storm winds pound against shore installations and craft in their way. Second, the continued blowing of the wind toward land causes the water level to increase perhaps 3 to 10 feet above its normal level. This **storm tide**, which may begin when the storm center is 500 miles or even farther from the shore, gradually increases until the storm passes. The highest storm tides are caused by a slow-moving tropical cyclone of large diameter, because both of these effects result in greater duration of wind in the same direction. The effect is greatest in a partly enclosed body of water, such as the Gulf of Mexico, where the concave coastline does not readily permit the escape of water. It is least on small islands, which present little obstruction to the flow of water. Third, the furious winds which blow around the wall of the eye create a ridge of water called a **storm wave**, which strikes the coast and often inflicts heavy damage. The effect is similar to that of a seismic sea wave, caused by an earthquake in the ocean floor. Both of these waves are popularly called **tidal waves**. Storm waves of 20 feet or more have occurred. About 3 or 4 feet of this wave is due to the decrease of atmospheric pressure, and the rest to winds. Like the damage caused by wind, damage due to high seas, the storm surge and tide, and the storm wave is greatest in the dangerous semicircle, near the center. The fourth source of water damage is the heavy rain that accompanies a tropical cyclone. This causes floods that add to the damage caused in other ways.

There have been many instances of tornadoes occurring within the circulation of tropical cyclones. Most of these have been associated with tropical cyclones of the North Atlantic Ocean and have occurred in the West Indies and along the gulf and Atlantic coasts of the United States. They are usually observed in the forward semicircle or along the advancing periphery of the storm. These tornadoes are usually short-lived and less intense than those that occur in the midwestern United States.

When proceeding along a shore recently visited by a tropical cyclone, a navigator should remember that time is required to restore aids to navigation which have been blown out of position or destroyed. In some instances the aid may remain but its light, sound apparatus, or radiobeacon may be inoperative. Landmarks may have been damaged or destroyed, and in some instances the coastline and hydrography may be changed.