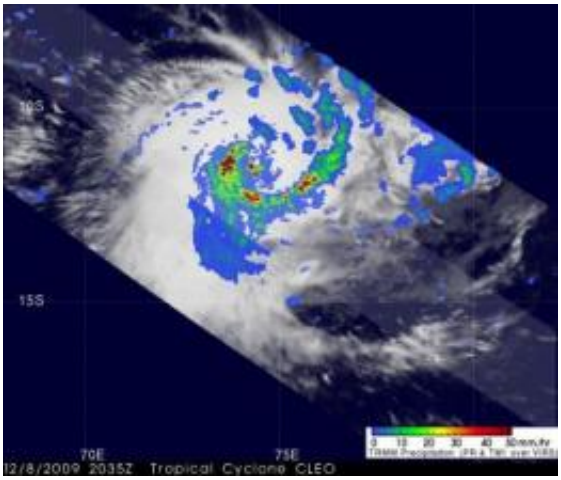
Cyclone Cleo has reached its maximum wind speed

December 9 2009



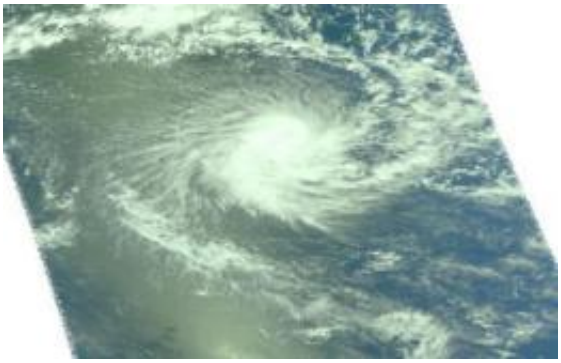
This Tropical Rainfall Measuring Mission satellite image of Cleo's rainfall was captured on Dec. 8 at 2035 UTC. The red areas in the image depict heavy rainfall at almost 2 inches per hour. Credit: NASA/SSAI, Hal Pierce

NASA Satellites noticed that Tropical Cyclone Cleo had reached its maximum strength, and was now moving into areas that will weaken it. Cleo's maximum sustained winds were near 115 mph (100 knots), with gusts to (138 mph) 120 knots today, December 9, 2009.

Two NASA satellites, Aqua and the Tropical Rainfall Measuring Mission or TRMM satellite captured three different views of Cleo earlier today. The Atmospheric Infrared Sounder (AIRS) instrument on Aqua captured an infrared and visible image of Cleo, while TRMM was

able to see the rate of rainfall within the storm.

At 4 a.m. today, Cyclone Cleo was located about 275 miles south of Diego Garcia, near 11.9 South latitude and 73.3 East longitude. It was moving west-southwest near 8 mph. Tropical storm-force winds extend out to 115 miles from its center, so the storm is larger than 230 miles in diameter. Hurricane-force winds of more than 74 mph extend as far as 45 miles from the center.



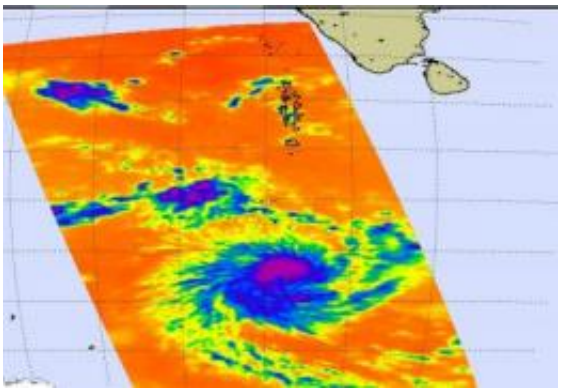
NASA's Aqua satellite captured this visible image of Cyclone Cleo on Dec. 9 at 0853 UTC, in a classic hurricane-style pinwheel shape. However, the eye is not clearly visible. Credit: NASA JPL, Ed Olsen

The AIRS instrument on NASA's Aqua satellite captured an infrared image of high, cold thunderstorm cloud tops around the center of Cleo's circulation on December 9. Those cloud tops were as cold as -63F and are the strongest areas of convection. Once the storm starts to weaken, however, the cloud top heights will drop and AIRS will notice that those cloud tops will be warmer than they are today.

The TRMM satellite confirmed those areas of strongest convection with its rainfall mapping capabilities. On December 8 at 2035 UTC (3:35

p.m. ET) TRMM noticed heavy rainfall in those same areas of strong convection, where rain was falling at almost 2 inches per hour.

Cleo isn't threatening any landmasses, but it is churning up 30-foot high waves in the Southern Indian Ocean.



NASA's Aqua satellite captured high, cold (purple) thunderstorm cloud tops of Cleo (bottom center) in this infrared image Dec. 9. Those cloud tops are as cold as -63 degrees Fahrenheit. Southern India and the island of Sri Lanka are pictured here to the northeast of Cleo. Credit: NASA JPL, Ed Olsen

Source: NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center (news : web)