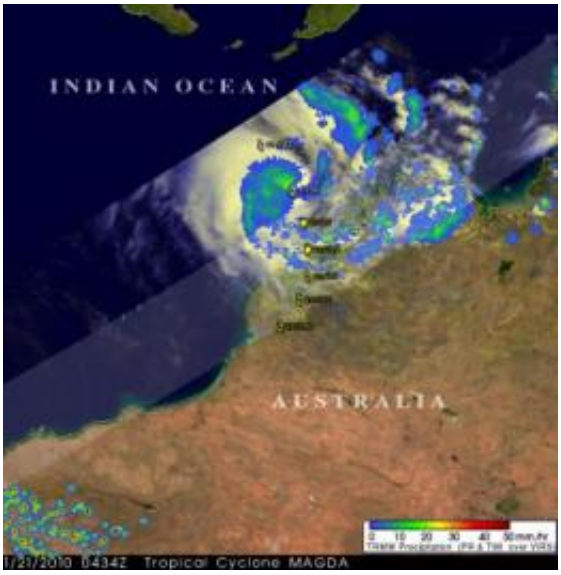
Tropical Storm Magda puts North Western Australian on alert

January 21 2010



The Tropical Rainfall Measuring Mission (TRMM) satellite captured Magda's rainfall rates on Jan. 21. The yellow and green areas indicate moderate rainfall between .78 to 1.57 inches per hour and outer rainbands are already affecting the Australian coast. Credit: NASA/SSAI, Hal Pierce

An area of low pressure in the Southern Indian Ocean, located close to Australia's northwestern coast was being watched for development yesterday. This morning it exploded into Tropical Storm Madga. NASA's Tropical Rainfall Measuring Mission, or TRMM satellite noticed that Magda's outer rainbands were already affecting land today..

The Australian Government Bureau of Meteorology (AGBM) for Western Australia has posted a Cyclone Warning for coastal areas from Mitchell Plateau to Beagle Bay. A Cyclone Watch is current for coastal areas from Beagle Bay to Bidyadanga, and extends to remaining inland parts of the West Kimberley..

The AGBM expects gusty winds to 93 mph/150 kph close to the Magda's center Friday morning when the storm is expected to be near the coast between Kuri Bay and Mitchell Plateau. Heavy rainfall is also expected as Magda continues to strengthen as it nears the coast. .

Higher than normal tides are expected Friday between Mitchell Plateau and Cockatoo Island, and low lying areas may flood. For the latest Australian Watches and Warnings, http://www.bom.gov.au/weather/cyclone/.

Madga currently has maximum sustained winds near 69 mph (60 knots/111 kph), and is located near near 14.5 South and 123.4 East, still in open waters of the Southern Indian Ocean. Magda is moving southward near 6 mph (5 knots/9 kph).

TRMM captured Magda's rainfall rates on January 21 at 0434 UTC (11:34 p.m. ET January 20/ 4:04 p.m. January 21 local Australia time). TRMM revealed moderate rainfall between .78 to 1.57 inches per hour, mostly offshore. Some of Magda's outer bands were already affecting northern coastal areas.

Satellite imagery shows that convection (rapidly rising air that forms thunderstorms that power the tropical storm) around Magda's center has consolidated and strengthened over the last 12 hours. That is a sign that Madga is getting stronger, and the forecasters at the Joint Typhoon Warning Center are calling for further intensification. Madga does not have strong wind shear to deal with, which is allowing it to strengthen. It

is also in an area of warm sea surface temperatures helping the storm to power up. .

Magda is currently passing through the Bonaparte Archipelago and approaching Cape Leveque, Western Australia. It is expected to make landfall on January 22 at 1 p.m. ET (3:30 a.m. January 23, local time, Australia) then cross King Sound and make another landfall, passing near the towns of Derby and Broome on its track to the southwest, toward Port Hedland. It's still about 445 nautical miles northeast of Port Hedland.

Once inland, it is expected to dissipate as a significant tropical cyclone in the Great Sandy Desert.

More information: For more information about TRMM, visit: http://www.trmm.gsfc.nasa.gov/.

Provided by NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center