

# Hurricane Kenneth becomes late-season record-breaking major hurricane

November 22 2011

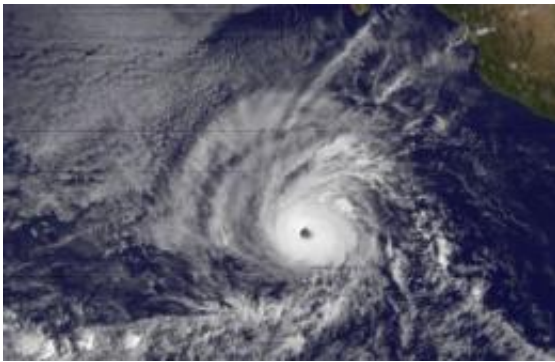
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NASA's Terra satellite flew over Hurricane Kenneth on Nov. 21 at 1:20 p.m. EST and the MODIS instrument captured this visible image. Although infrared imagery showed a ragged eye developing, it was obscured by clouds in this image. Kenneth was off the western Mexico coastline at this time. Credit: NASA Goddard MODIS Rapid Response, Jeff Schmaltz

NASA satellites have been watching hurricane Kenneth in the eastern Pacific, and today, Nov, 22, Kenneth became a late-season major hurricane. In fact, Kenneth sets a record for the latest season major hurricane in the eastern Pacific Ocean.

A major hurricane is one that reaches category three status or greater on the Saffir-Simpson scale that measures hurricane strength. At 10 a.m. EST, Kenneth's [maximum sustained winds](#) were near 145 mph (230 kmh)! Kenneth's center was far away from land areas and about 750 miles (1210 km) south-southwest of the southern tip of Baja California, Mexico. That puts Kenneth's center near 12.7 North and 113.9 West. Kenneth was moving to the west near 13 mph (20 kmh) and had a minimum central pressure of 943 millibars.



This image from NOAA's GOES-13 satellite at 10:00 a.m. EST on Nov. 22 clearly shows the eye in major Hurricane Kenneth. Credit: NASA/NOAA GOES Project

NASA's [Terra satellite](#) flew over Hurricane Kenneth on Nov. 21 at 1:20 p.m. EST and the Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer (MODIS) instrument captured a visible image where the storm's eye was obscured by [high clouds](#). Today, the eye has become cloud-free on NOAA's GOES-13 satellite imagery. [Infrared satellite imagery](#) today shows that the cloud top temperatures of the thunderstorms surrounding the eye were as cold as -94 Fahrenheit (-70 Celsius) indicating very high, powerful thunderstorms.

The storm is more than 300 miles in diameter, as tropical-storm force winds extend 150 miles from the center (240 km). Hurricane-force winds cover a smaller area, out 40 miles (65 km) from the center.

The National Hurricane Center expects a lot of changes out of Kenneth in the next couple of days. First, Kenneth is expected to make a turn to the west-northwest late tomorrow, Nov. 23. Kenneth is also going to run into cooler [sea surface temperatures](#) and increasing west to northwesterly wind shear which will weaken the hurricane beginning late Wednesday.

Provided by NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center

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