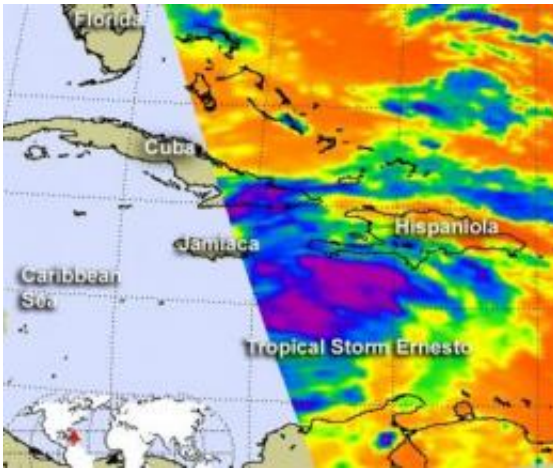


NASA sees a strengthening Tropical Storm Ernesto

August 6 2012



NASA's Aqua satellite passed over Tropical Storm Ernesto on Aug. 5 at 1753 UTC (1:53 p.m. EDT). The AIRS instrument captured an infrared image of the eastern half of the storm where cloud temperatures exceeded -63 Fahrenheit (-52 Celsius) indicating strong thunderstorms with heavy rainfall (purple). Credit: NASA JPL, Ed Olsen

Tropical Storm Ernesto continues to track through the Caribbean and satellite data and NOAA hurricane hunter aircraft revealed a strengthening storm mid-day on Monday, August 6. NASA infrared data revealed strong thunderstorms on August 5 that indicated a strengthening storm, and the GOES-13 satellite showed a well-organized tropical storm 24 hours later.

NOAA's Hurricane hunter aircraft investigated Tropical Storm Ernesto on the morning of August 6 and found deep convection (rising air that forms the thunderstorms that make up a tropical cyclone) and that the center was actually located northeast of where previously thought.



This visible image of Tropical Storm Ernesto was captured by NOAA's GOES-13 satellite on Aug. 6 at 11:45 a.m. EDT. Ernesto was located south of central Cuba at that time. Credit: NASA GOES Project

[NASA](#)'s Aqua satellite passed over Tropical Storm Ernesto on August 5 at 1753 UTC (1:53 p.m. EDT) when the storm's maximum sustained winds were near 50 mph (85 kmh). The Atmospheric Infrared Sounder (AIRS) instrument captured an [infrared image](#) of the eastern half of the storm where cloud temperatures exceeded -63 Fahrenheit (-52 Celsius) indicating strong thunderstorms with heavy rainfall. Ernesto continued to strengthen after Aqua passed by.

NOAA's GOES-13 satellite has been continuously providing imagery of Ernesto. A [visible image](#) of Tropical Storm Ernesto from GOES-13 on August 6 at 11:45 a.m. EDT showed an organized, rounded storm with strong convection (rising air that forms the thunderstorms that make up a

tropical cyclone).

At 11 a.m. EDT (1500 UTC) Tropical Storm Ernesto's [maximum sustained winds](#) were near 65 mph (100 kmh). The National Hurricane Center (NHC) expects Ernesto to strengthen into a hurricane later in the day. The center was only 190 miles (205 km) east-northeast of Cabo Gracias A Dios on the Nicaragua/Honduras border, near latitude 15.8 north and longitude 80.5 west. Ernesto is moving toward the west-northwest near 9 mph (15 kmh) and that general motion is expected to continue for the next two days. Because Ernesto has continued moving west, the Cayman Islands discontinued their tropical storm watch for Grand Cayman. The NHC noted that "Ernesto's center will be passing north of the coast of Honduras tonight and Tuesday and approach the east coast of the Yucatan peninsula early Wednesday."

The NHC summarized the watches and warnings in effect today, August 6, 2012: The government of Mexico has issued a hurricane warning for the east coast of the Yucatan peninsula from Chetumal northward to Punta Allen and has issued a tropical storm warning from north of Punta Allen to Tulum. The government of Mexico has also issued a Tropical Storm Watch from north of Tulum to Chetumal. In Belize, there's a hurricane watch for the entire coast.

Ernesto is expected to strengthen to hurricane status by the end of the day on Monday, August 6.

Provided by NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center

Citation: NASA sees a strengthening Tropical Storm Ernesto (2012, August 6) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-08-nasa-tropical-storm-ernesto.html>

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