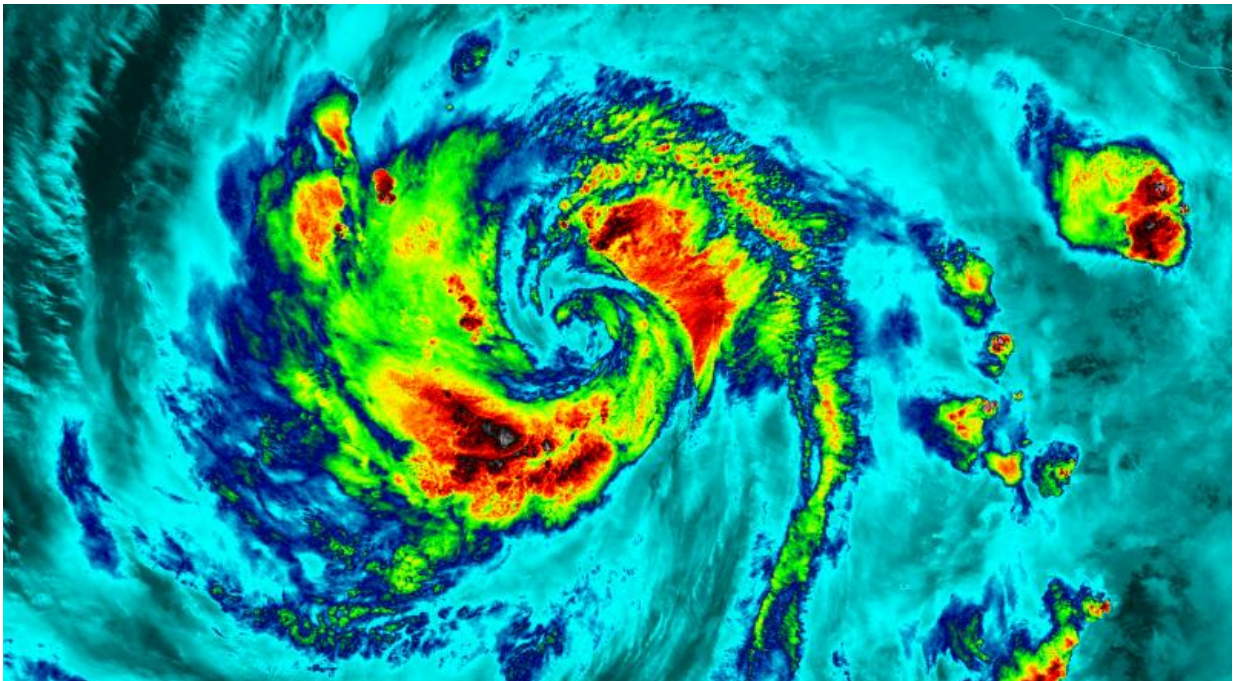


NASA-NOAA's Suomi NPP satellite gets colorful look at Hurricane Blanca

June 5 2015, by Rob Gutro



The VIIRS instrument aboard NASA-NOAA's Suomi satellite captured this infrared night-time picture of Hurricane Blanca early on June 5. Red indicates coldest cloud tops. Credit: UW-CIMSS/NASA/NOAA

NASA-NOAA's Suomi NPP satellite flew over Hurricane Blanca in the Eastern Pacific Ocean and gathered infrared data on the storm that was false-colored to show locations of the strongest thunderstorms within the storm.

The Visible Infrared Imaging Radiometer Suite or VIIRS instrument aboard the satellite gathered [infrared data](#) of the storm that was made into an image at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The image was false-colored to show temperature. Coldest cloud top temperatures indicate higher, stronger, thunderstorms within a tropical cyclone. Those are typically the strongest storms with potential for heavy rainfall.

VIIRS is a scanning radiometer that collects visible and infrared imagery and "radiometric" measurements. Basically it means that VIIRS data is used to measure cloud and aerosol properties, ocean color, sea and [land surface temperature](#), ice motion and temperature, fires, and Earth's albedo (reflected light).

The VIIRS image from June 5 at 8:11 UTC (4:11 a.m. EDT) showed two areas of coldest cloud top temperatures and strongest storms were west-southwest and east-northeast of the center of Blanca's circulation center.

On June 5 at 5 a.m. EDT (0900 UTC) Blanca's maximum sustained winds were near 105 mph (165 kph) with higher gusts. The National Hurricane Center (NHC) forecast expects some strengthening during the next day or so. Weakening is forecast to begin by late Saturday.

At that time, NHC placed the center of Hurricane Blanca near latitude 14.3 North, longitude 106.2 West. That puts the center about 350 miles (560 km) south-southwest of Manzanillo, Mexico and about 640 miles (1,030 km) south-southeast of Cabo San Lucas, Mexico. The estimated minimum central pressure is 968 millibars (28.59 inches).

Blanca is moving toward the northwest near 10 mph (17 kph). A northwestward to north-northwestward motion at a similar forward speed is expected to continue through Saturday night.

Blanca has been stirring up surf along the coast of southwestern Mexico

and will reach the Pacific coast of the Baja California peninsula and the southern Gulf of California later today, June 5. These swells are likely to cause life-threatening surf and rip current conditions.

On the forecast track, the center of Blanca will approach the southern Baja California peninsula on Sunday. NHC cautions that "Interests in the southern Baja California peninsula should monitor the progress of Blanca. A tropical storm or hurricane watch will likely be required for a portion of Baja California Sur later today."

The NHC forecast track shows Blanca making landfall in the southeastern tip of Baja California on Sunday, June 7 and tracking north-northeast along the Baja California peninsula, for several days following.

Provided by NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center

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