

Dorian becomes a Category 4 monster powering toward Florida

August 31 2019, by Adriana Gomez Licon And Ellis Rua



Lisa Vance helps her husband Stephan go up the mast of their sailboat to do a repair in preparation for Hurricane Dorian, Friday, Aug. 30, 2019, at the Vero Beach City Marina in Vero Beach, Fla. The National Hurricane Center says Dorian could hit the Florida coast as a major hurricane early next week. (AP Photo/Lynne Sladky)

Hurricane Dorian powered toward Florida with increasing fury Friday, becoming an "extremely dangerous" Category 4 storm but leaving forecasters uncertain whether it would make a direct hit on the state's east coast or inflict a glancing blow.

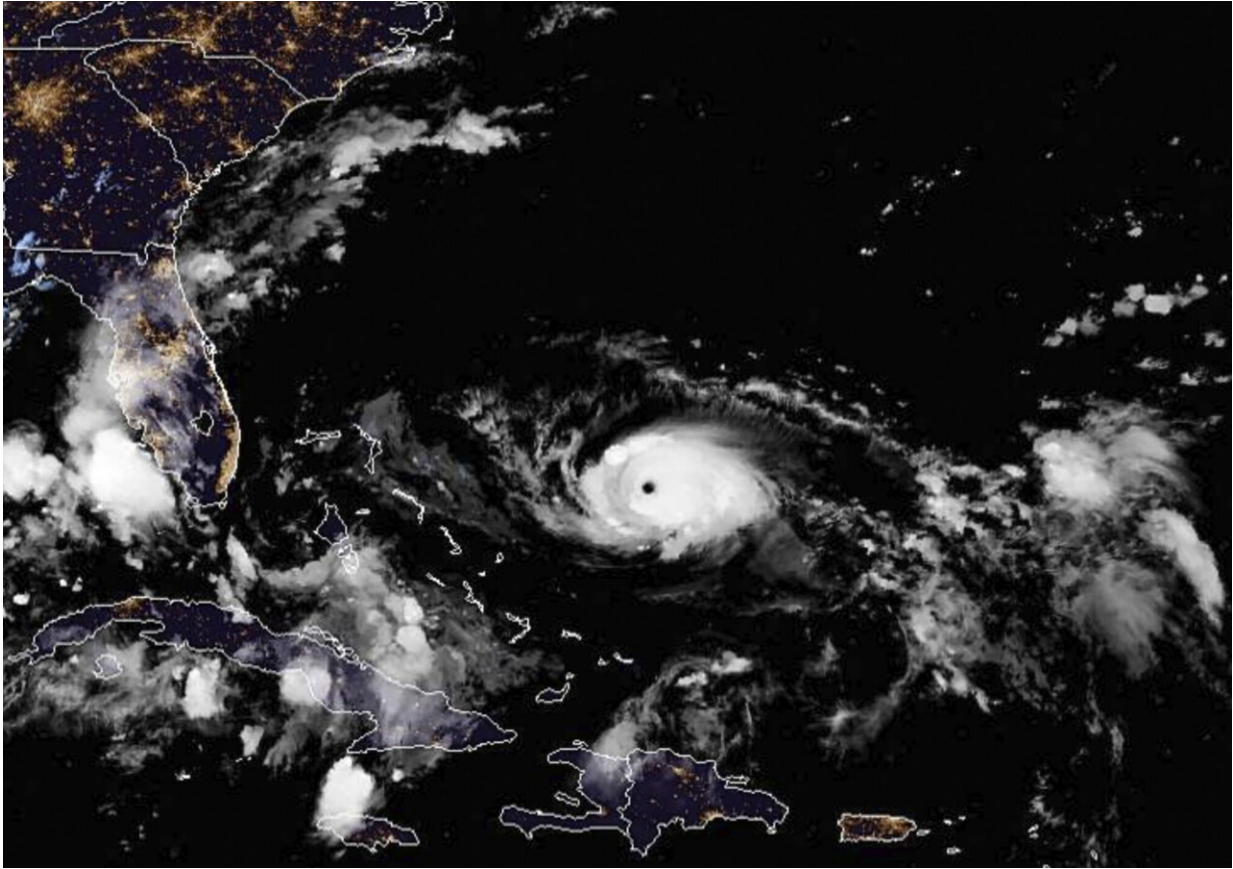
The storm's winds rose to 130 mph (215 kph) and then, hours later, to a howling 140 mph (225 kph) as Dorian gained strength while crossing warm Atlantic waters. The hurricane could wallop the state with even higher winds and [torrential rains](#) late Monday or early Tuesday, with millions of people in the crosshairs, along with Walt Disney World and President Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort.

Though Dorian is growing in intensity, some of the more reliable computer models predicted a late turn northward that would have Dorian hug the coast, the National Hurricane Center said.

"There is hope," Weather Underground meteorology director Jeff Masters said.

The faint hope came on a day in which Dorian seemed to get scarier with each forecast update, growing from a dangerous Category 3 hurricane to an even more menacing Category 4 storm. And there were fears it could prove to be the most powerful hurricane to hit Florida's east coast in nearly 30 years.

Late Friday, the National Hurricane Center's projected new track showed Dorian hitting near Fort Pierce, some 70 miles (115 kilometers) north of Mar-a-Lago, then running along the coastline as it moved north. But forecasters cautioned that the storm's track was still highly uncertain and even a small deviation could put Dorian offshore or well inland.



This photo provided by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration shows a satellite view of Hurricane Dorian taken at 10:00 p.m. EDT, Friday, Aug. 30, 2019. (NOAA via AP)

Trump declared a state of emergency in Florida and authorized the Federal Emergency Management Agency to coordinate disaster-relief efforts. He told reporters that "Mar-a-Lago can handle itself" and is more worried about Florida.

"This is big and is growing, and it still has some time to get worse," Julio Vasquez said at a Miami fast-food joint next to a gas station that had run out of fuel. "No one knows what can really happen. This is serious."

As Dorian closed in, it upended people's Labor Day weekend plans. Major airlines began allowing travelers to change their reservations without a fee. The big cruise lines began rerouting their ships. Disney World and the other resorts in Orlando found themselves in the storm's projected path.

Jessica Armesto and her 1-year-old daughter, Mila, had planned to have breakfast with Minnie Mouse, Donald Duck and Goofy at Disney World. Instead, Armesto decided to take shelter at her mother's hurricane-resistant house in Miami with its kitchen full of nonperishable foods.



Colin Johnson holds back tears as he prepares to board a window at his father's home in preparation for Hurricane Dorian, Friday, Aug. 30, 2019, in Vero Beach, Fla. Johnson's father, Larry, unexpectedly died Thursday. (Matias J. Ochner/Miami Herald via AP)

"It felt like it was better to be safe than sorry, so we canceled our plans," she said.

Still, with Dorian days away and its track uncertain, Disney and other major resorts held off announcing any closings, and Florida authorities ordered no immediate mass evacuations.

"Sometimes if you evacuate too soon, you may evacuate into the path of the storm if it changes," Gov. Ron DeSantis said.

Homeowners and businesses rushed to cover their windows with plywood. Supermarkets ran out of bottled water, and long lines formed at gas stations, with fuel shortages reported in places. The governor said the Florida Highway Patrol would begin escorting fuel trucks to help them get past the lines of waiting motorists and replenish gas stations.



Georgia Bernard, right, and Ana Perez are among residents filling sandbags to take home in preparation for Hurricane Dorian, Friday, Aug. 30, 2019, in Hallandale Beach, Fla., as the town allowed residents to fill up sandbags until they ran out. All of Florida is under a state of emergency and authorities are urging residents to stockpile a week's worth of food and supplies as Hurricane Dorian gathers strength and aims to slam the state as soon as Monday as a Category 4 storm. (AP Photo/Wilfredo Lee)



Isaiah Elie, 11, helps tie sandbags as his family fills them in preparation for Hurricane Dorian, Friday, Aug. 30, 2019, in Hallandale Beach, Fla., as the town allowed residents to fill up sandbags until they ran out. All of Florida is under a state of emergency and authorities are urging residents to stockpile a week's worth of food and supplies as Hurricane Dorian gathers strength and aims to slam the state as soon as Monday as a Category 4 storm. (AP Photo/Wilfredo Lee)



Lyle Fidgeon boards windows at the Ocean Grill in preparation for Hurricane Dorian, Friday, Aug. 30, 2019, in Vero Beach, Fla. The National Hurricane Center says Dorian could hit the Florida coast as a major hurricane. (AP Photo/Lynne Sladky)



Empty shelves where water is sold at a grocery store are shown, Friday, Aug. 30, 2019, in North Miami, Fla. All of Florida is under a state of emergency and authorities are urging residents to stockpile a week's worth of food and supplies as Hurricane Dorian gathers strength and aims to slam the state as soon as Monday as a Category 4 storm. (AP Photo/Wilfredo Lee)



A shopper is grateful to get two cases of bottled water —the limit per customer—at a Costco store in Altamonte Springs, Fla., Friday, Aug. 30, 2019, as central Florida residents prepare for a possible strike by Hurricane Dorian. (Joe Burbank/Orlando Sentinel via AP)



Residents of Flagler Beach, Fla., fill sandbags Friday, Aug. 30, 2019, to help protect their homes in preparation for Hurricane Dorian Friday, Aug. 30, 2019. (AP Photo/John Raoux)



In this Thursday, Aug. 29, 2019 photo, Jessica Armesto holds her one-year-old daughter, Mila's, at their home in Miami. Jessica was hoping that Mila could meet a real-life Minnie Mouse at Disney World before Hurricane Dorian derailed her plans. The U.S. National Hurricane Center says Hurricane Dorian could hit the Florida coast over the weekend as a major hurricane. (AP Photo/Marcus Lim)



Workers cover stained glass windows with plywood sections at the Santa Maria del Mar Catholic Church in preparation for Hurricane Dorian, Friday, Aug. 30, 2019, in Flagler Beach, Fla. (AP Photo/John Raoux)



Rich DiGiulio removes an awning from the Mulligans Beach House Bar & Grill in preparation for Hurricane Dorian, Friday, Aug. 30, 2019, in Vero Beach, Fla. The National Hurricane Center says Dorian could hit the Florida coast as a major hurricane. (AP Photo/Lynne Sladky)



Tourist Loren Fantasia from Baltimore, swings on the beach before the arrival of Hurricane Dorian, in Freeport, Bahamas, Friday, Aug. 30, 2019. Forecasters said the hurricane is expected to keep on strengthening and become a Category 3 later in the day. (AP Photo / Ramon Espinosa)



President Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort is shown, Friday, Aug. 30, 2019, in Palm Beach, Fla. The resort is potentially sitting directly in the path of Hurricane Dorian, which is forecast to become an extremely destructive storm. (AP Photo/Lynne Sladky)



Colin Johnson drills plywood as he prepares to board a window at his father's home in preparation for Hurricane Dorian, Friday, Aug. 30, 2019, in Vero Beach, Fla. Johnson's father, Larry, unexpectedly died Thursday. (Matias J. Ochner/Miami Herald via AP)



Shoppers wait in line to get two cases of bottled water —the limit per customer—at the Costco store in Altamonte Springs, Fla., Friday, Aug. 30, 2019, as central Florida residents prepare for a possible strike by Hurricane Dorian. (Joe Burbank/Orlando Sentinel via AP)



A sea turtle nest is cordoned off on the edge of the beach as bands of rain come in on South Beach, Friday, Aug. 30, 2019, on Miami Beach, Fla. All of Florida is under a state of emergency and authorities are urging residents to stockpile a week's worth of food and supplies as Hurricane Dorian gathers strength and aims to slam the state as soon as Monday as a Category 4 storm. (AP Photo/Wilfredo Lee)



Matt Rohrer loads sandbags in the back of his vehicle for his home in preparation for Hurricane Dorian Friday, Aug. 30, 2019, in Flagler Beach, Fla. (AP Photo/John Raoux)



A container ship heads out to sea into bands of rain as a kitesurfer enjoys the winds off South Beach, Friday, Aug. 30, 2019, on Miami Beach, Fla. All of Florida is under a state of emergency and authorities are urging residents to stockpile a week's worth of food and supplies as Hurricane Dorian gathers strength and aims to slam the state as soon as Monday as a Category 4 storm. (AP Photo/Wilfredo Lee)



Beachgoers on South Beach check out one of the iconic lifeguard stands as bands of rain fall in the distance, Friday, Aug. 30, 2019, on Miami Beach, Fla. All of Florida is under a state of emergency and authorities are urging residents to stockpile a week's worth of food and supplies as Hurricane Dorian gathers strength and aims to slam the state as soon as Monday as a Category 4 storm. (AP Photo/Wilfredo Lee)



Opa Locka, Fla. city workers fill sandbags Friday, Aug. 30, 2019. Hurricane Dorian was muscling a chaotic path toward Florida, with officials and residents bracing for the possibility it would unleash its full fury early next week but clinging to the glimmer of hope that the strengthening storm could simply skirt the coastline. (Charles Trainor, Jr./Miami Herald via AP)



Mariano Lopez, foreground, plays Footvolley, a sport which combines aspects of beach volleyball and association football, on South Beach, Friday, Aug. 30, 2019, on Miami Beach, Fla. All of Florida is under a state of emergency and authorities are urging residents to stockpile a week's worth of food and supplies as Hurricane Dorian gathers strength and aims to slam the state as soon as Monday as a Category 4 storm. (AP Photo/Wilfredo Lee)



Workers board up a shop's window front as they make preparations for the arrival of Hurricane Dorian, in Freeport, Bahamas, Friday, Aug. 30, 2019. Forecasters said the hurricane is expected to keep on strengthening and become a Category 3 later in the day. (AP Photo/Ramon Espinosa)



Opa Locka, Fla. city workers put sandbags in a car, Friday, Aug. 30, 2019. Hurricane Dorian was muscling a chaotic path toward Florida, with officials and residents bracing for the possibility it would unleash its full fury early next week but clinging to the glimmer of hope that the strengthening storm could simply skirt the coastline. (Charles Trainor, Jr./Miami Herald via AP)



Residents fill up gas cans at a gas station on Biscayne Boulevard, Friday, Aug. 30, 2019 in Aventura, Fla as they prepare for Hurricane Dorian. Hurricane Dorian was muscling a chaotic path toward Florida, with officials and residents bracing for the possibility it would unleash its full fury early next week but clinging to the glimmer of hope that the strengthening storm could simply skirt the coastline. (David Santiago/Miami Herald via AP)



Midnight Express Powerboats employee Ray Vazquez pulls out his boat from the Haulover Marine Center Friday, Aug. 30, 2019 in Miami Beach, Fla. Hurricane Dorian was muscling a chaotic path toward Florida, with officials and residents bracing for the possibility it would unleash its full fury early next week but clinging to the glimmer of hope that the strengthening storm could simply skirt the coastline. (David Santiago/Miami Herald via AP)



Renan Fuentes, left, Kevin Fuentes, right, and his girlfriend Alexia Mikhalides pull out his boat from the Haulover Marine Center, Friday, Aug. 30, 2019 in Miami Beach, Fla. Hurricane Dorian was muscling a chaotic path toward Florida, with officials and residents bracing for the possibility it would unleash its full fury early next week but clinging to the glimmer of hope that the strengthening storm could simply skirt the coastline. (David Santiago/Miami Herald via AP)



Danny Marcello, from Fort Pierce, loads bags of sand in preparation for Hurricane Dorian at Jaycee Park on Hutchinson Island, Friday, Aug. 30, 2019. (Matias J. Ocner/Miami Herald via AP)



Farah y Max Cicardini fill sandbags at the parking of the Big Easy Casino, Friday, Aug. 30, 2019 in Hallandale Beach, Fla. Hurricane Dorian was muscling a chaotic path toward Florida, with officials and residents bracing for the possibility it would unleash its full fury early next week but clinging to the glimmer of hope that the strengthening storm could simply skirt the coastline. (David Santiago/Miami Herald via AP)



People fill sandbags at the parking of the Big Easy Casino, Friday, Aug. 30, 2019 in Hallandale Beach, Fla. Hurricane Dorian was muscling a chaotic path toward Florida, with officials and residents bracing for the possibility it would unleash its full fury early next week but clinging to the glimmer of hope that the strengthening storm could simply skirt the coastline. (David Santiago/Miami Herald via AP)



Suni Sweeney fills up her car at a Marathon gas station on Biscayne Boulevard, Friday, Aug. 30, 2019, in Aventura, Fla., as residents prepare for Hurricane Dorian. (David Santiago/Miami Herald via AP)



Shoppers race to their cars in the rain after shopping at Costco as they prepare for Hurricane Dorian, Friday, Aug. 30, 2019 in Davie, Fla. Hurricane Dorian was muscling a chaotic path toward Florida, with officials and residents bracing for the possibility it would unleash its full fury early next week but clinging to the glimmer of hope that the strengthening storm could simply skirt the coastline. (Charles Trainor, Jr./Miami Herald via AP)



Danny Marcello, from Fort Pierce, loads bags of sand in preparation for Hurricane Dorian at Jaycee Park on Hutchinson Island, Friday, Aug. 30, 2019. (Matias J. Ocner/Miami Herald via AP)



Shoppers race to their cars in the rain after shopping at Costco as they prepare for Hurricane Dorian, Friday, Aug. 30, 2019 in Davie, Fla. Hurricane Dorian was muscling a chaotic path toward Florida, with officials and residents bracing for the possibility it would unleash its full fury early next week but clinging to the glimmer of hope that the strengthening storm could simply skirt the coastline. (Charles Trainor, Jr./Miami Herald via AP)



Shoppers race to their cars in the rain after shopping at Costco as they prepare for Hurricane Dorian, Friday, Aug. 30, 2019 in Davie, Fla. Hurricane Dorian was muscling a chaotic path toward Florida, with officials and residents bracing for the possibility it would unleash its full fury early next week but clinging to the glimmer of hope that the strengthening storm could simply skirt the coastline. (Charles Trainor, Jr./Miami Herald via AP)



Colin Johnson carries plywood as he prepares to board a window at his father's home in preparation for Hurricane Dorian, Friday, Aug. 30, 2019, in Vero Beach, Fla. Johnson's father, Larry, unexpectedly died Thursday. (Matias J. Ochner/Miami Herald via AP)



Shoppers race to their cars in the rain after shopping at Costco as they prepare for Hurricane Dorian, Friday, Aug. 30, 2019 in Davie, Fla. Hurricane Dorian was muscling a chaotic path toward Florida, with officials and residents bracing for the possibility it would unleash its full fury early next week but clinging to the glimmer of hope that the strengthening storm could simply skirt the coastline. (Charles Trainor, Jr./Miami Herald via AP)



Colin Johnson drills plywood as he prepares to board a window at his father's home in preparation for Hurricane Dorian, Friday, Aug. 30, 2019, in Vero Beach, Fla. Johnson's father, Larry, unexpectedly died Thursday. (Matias J. Ochner/Miami Herald via AP)



Shoppers race to their cars in the rain after shopping at Costco as they prepare for Hurricane Dorian, Friday, Aug. 30, 2019 in Davie, Fla. Hurricane Dorian was muscling a chaotic path toward Florida, with officials and residents bracing for the possibility it would unleash its full fury early next week but clinging to the glimmer of hope that the strengthening storm could simply skirt the coastline. (Charles Trainor, Jr./Miami Herald via AP)



Residents fill up sandbags with the last bits of sand available in preparation for Hurricane Dorian, Friday, Aug. 30, 2019, in Hallandale Beach, Fla., as the town allowed residents to fill up sandbags until they ran out. All of Florida is under a state of emergency and authorities are urging residents to stockpile a week's worth of food and supplies as Hurricane Dorian gathers strength and aims to slam the state as soon as Monday as a Category 4 storm. (AP Photo/Wilfredo Lee)



Colin Johnson carries plywood as he prepares to board a window at his father's home in preparation for Hurricane Dorian, Friday, Aug. 30, 2019, in Vero Beach, Fla. Johnson's father, Larry, unexpectedly died Thursday. (Matias J. Ochner/Miami Herald via AP)

At a Publix supermarket in Cocoa Beach, Ed Ciecirski of the customer service department said the pharmacy was extra busy with people rushing to fill prescriptions. The grocery was rationing bottled water and had run out of dry ice.

"It's hairy," he said.

As of 11 p.m. EDT, Dorian was centered about 375 miles (605 kilometers) east of the northwestern Bahamas. That was also about 545

miles (880 kilometers) east of West Palm Beach with the storm packing sustained winds of 140 mph (225 kph). It was moving west-northwest at 10 mph (17 kph). Forecasters warned that its slow movement could subject Florida to a prolonged and destructive pummeling from wind, storm surge and heavy rain.

Coastal areas could get 6 to 12 inches (15 to 30 centimeters) of rain, with 18 inches (46 centimeters) in some places, triggering life-threatening flash floods, the hurricane center said. FEMA official Jeff Byard said Dorian is likely to "create a lot of havoc" for roads, power and other infrastructure.



Beachgoers on South Beach enjoy the turbulent waters as a container ship heads out to sea, Friday, Aug. 30, 2019, on Miami Beach, Fla. All of Florida is under a state of emergency and authorities are urging residents to stockpile a week's

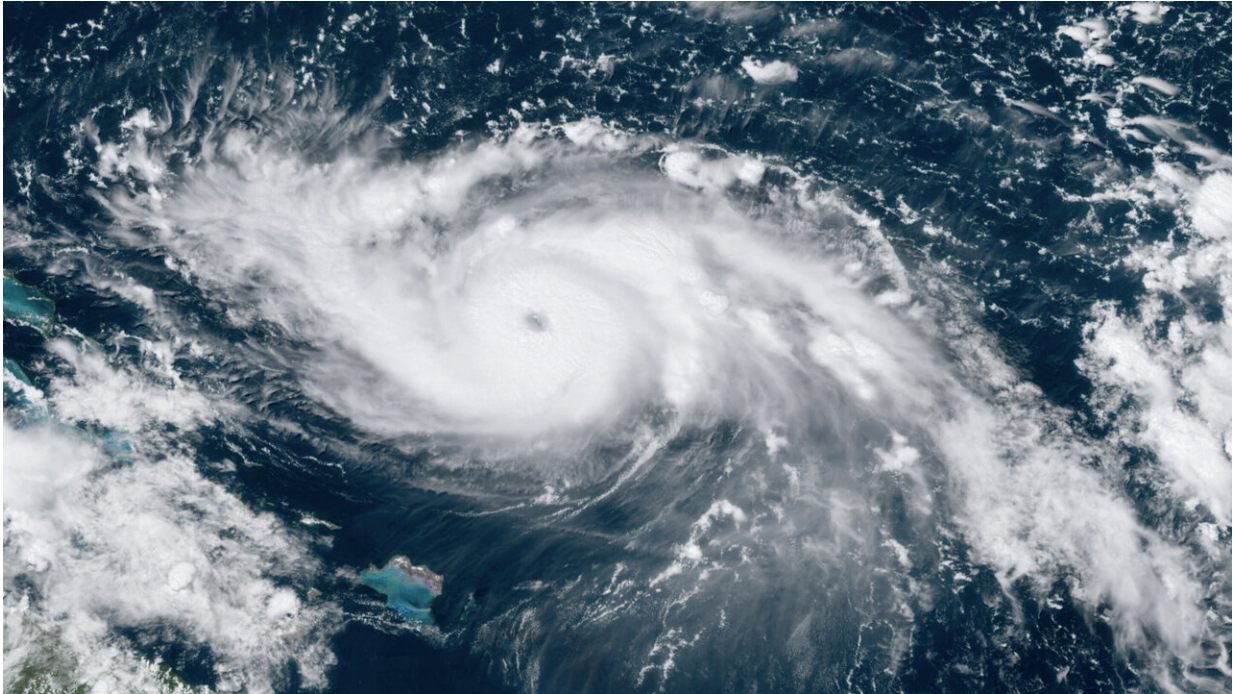
worth of food and supplies as Hurricane Dorian gathers strength and aims to slam the state as soon as Monday as a Category 4 storm. (AP Photo/Wilfredo Lee)

Also imperiled were the Bahamas , where canned food and bottled water were disappearing quickly and the sound of hammering echoed across the islands as people boarded up their homes. Dorian was expected to hit by Sunday with the potential for life-threatening [storm surge](#) that could raise water levels 15 feet above normal.

"Do not be foolish and try to brave out this hurricane," Prime Minister Hubert Minnis said. "The price you may pay for not evacuating is your life."

In Florida, the governor urged nursing homes to take precautions to prevent tragedies like the one during Hurricane Irma two years ago, when the storm knocked out the air conditioning at a facility in Hollywood and 12 patients died in the sweltering heat. Four employees of the home were charged with manslaughter earlier this week.

DeSantis said the timely message from those arrests is: "It's your responsibility to make sure you have a plan in place to protect those folks."



This GOES-16 satellite image taken Friday, Aug. 30, 2019, at 17:30 UTC and provided by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), shows Hurricane Dorian, right, moving over open waters in the Atlantic Ocean. Forecasters are now saying Dorian could be a Category 4 with winds of nearly 140 mph (225 kph) when it is forecasted to hit Florida late Monday or early Tuesday. It's also imperiling the Bahamas, where the storm is expected to hit by Sunday. (NOAA via AP)

At NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, NASA moved a 380-foot-high mobile launch platform to the safety of the colossal Vehicle Assembly Building, built to withstand 125 mph (200 kph) wind. The launcher is for the mega rocket that NASA is developing to take astronauts to the moon.

The hurricane season typically peaks between mid-August and late October. One of the most powerful storms ever to hit the U.S. was on

Labor Day 1935. The unnamed Category 5 hurricane crashed ashore along Florida's Gulf Coast on Sept. 2. It was blamed for over 400 deaths.

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