

Dorian's floodwaters trap people in attics in North Carolina

September 6 2019, by Jeffrey Collins And Ben Finley



Storm surge from Hurricane Dorian blocks Cedar Island off from the mainland on NC 12 in Atlantic, N.C., after Hurricane Dorian past the coast on Friday, Sept. 6, 2019. (AP Photo/Tom Copeland)

A weakened Hurricane Dorian flooded homes on North Carolina's Outer

Banks on Friday with a ferocity that took even storm-hardened residents by surprise, forcing people to retreat to their attics. Hundreds were feared trapped by high water.

Sheriff's officials sent medics and other rescuers to Ocracoke Island—accessible only by boat or air—to reach those who made the mistake of defying mandatory evacuation orders along the 200-mile (320-kilometer) ribbon of low-lying [islands](#) that stick out from the Eastern Seaboard like the side-view mirror on a car.

"There is significant concern about hundreds of people trapped on Ocracoke Island," Gov. Roy Cooper said. "There are rescue teams ready as soon as they can get in."

Its winds down to 90 mph (145 kph), Dorian howled over the Outer Banks as a far weaker storm than the brute that wreaked havoc on the Bahamas at the start of the week. But the Category 1 hurricane lashed communities with rain and surging seas, sending water coursing into the main floors of elevated homes.

Around midmorning, the eye of the storm came ashore at Cape Hatteras, Dorian's first landfall on the continental U.S.

"It's bad," Ann Warner, who owns Howard's Pub on Ocracoke Island, said by telephone. "The water came up to the inside of our bottom floor, which has never had water." She said a skylight blew out, and there were whitecaps in her front yard and underneath her house.



Storm surge from Hurricane Dorian blocks Cedar Island off from the mainland on NC 12 in Atlantic, N.C., after Hurricane Dorian past the coast on Friday, Sept. 6, 2019. (AP Photo/Tom Copeland)

"We're safe," Warner added. "But it's certainly a mess."

Another Ocracoke Island resident, bookshop owner Leslie Lanier, said via text message that the first floors of some homes had flooded and people had been forced to climb to their attics, but that the water had already begun to drop.

"We are flooding like crazy," she said, adding: "I have been here 32 years and not seen this."

Ocracoke Island resident and restaurant owner Jason Wells said the flooding was the worst he had ever seen or heard of.

"Several people were rescued from their upper floors or attics by boat by good Samaritans," Wells said in a text message. He said he wasn't aware of any serious injuries.

The Hyde County Sheriff's Office said deputies, medics and other rescuers were heading to the island amid reports of "catastrophic flooding." The governor said that authorities were telling people to get to the highest point in their homes.



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In Buxton on Hatteras Island, close to where Dorian blew ashore, Radio Hatteras volunteer Mary Helen Goodloe-Murphy said that people were calling in to report that "houses are shaking like crazy" and that "it's never been like this before."

"The wind is blowing with fury," she said.

Danny Couch, a resident of nearby Buxton and a Dare County commissioner, said that the storm sent crab traps flying, breaking windshields.

"I was out there, and stuff flying around, road signs and stuff," he said. "It's crazy. I don't want to be a statistic."

He added: "It's godawful. It's a storm of record, no doubt."

As of 11 a.m. EDT, Dorian was moving northeast at 17 mph (28 kph). The center of the storm had pushed past the Outer Banks and was about 50 miles (85 km) northeast of Cape Hatteras.

It is expected to remain a hurricane as it sweeps up the Eastern Seaboard through Saturday, veering far enough offshore that its hurricane-force winds are unlikely to pose any threat to land in the U.S.



Residents of the Bogue Shores condominiums work to hook up a generator after the complex lost its roof during high winds from Hurricane Dorian in Atlantic Beach, N.C., on Friday, Sept. 6, 2019. Only a few residents stayed behind after an evacuation order and no one was injured. (AP Photo/Jeffrey Collins)

More than 350,000 people were without electricity in the Carolinas and Virginia as Dorian moved up the coast.

At least four people were killed in the Southeast. All were men in Florida or North Carolina who died in falls or by electrocution while trimming trees, putting up storm shutters or otherwise getting ready for the hurricane.

More than a quarter-million residents and visitors had been ordered to evacuate the North Carolina island chain ahead of the storm, officials said.

But as Dorian closed in, many of the Outer Banks' residents tied down their boats, removed objects from their yards that could blow away, and hunkered down. Warner said about half the 1,000 residents of Ocracoke chose to tough it out.

At the start of the week, Dorian slammed the Bahamas with 185 mph (295 kph) winds, killing at least 30 people and obliterating countless homes. From there, it swept past Florida and Georgia at a relatively [safe distance](#), then sideswiped the Carolinas on Thursday, spinning off tornadoes that peeled away roofs and flipped recreational vehicles.



Blue sky is visible from Buxton, N.C., as Hurricane Dorian passes over Hatteras Island early Friday, Sept. 6, 2019. A weakened Hurricane Dorian flooded homes on North Carolina's Outer Banks on Friday with a ferocity that seemed to take storm-hardened residents by surprise. (Steve Earley/The Virginian-Pilot via AP)



Floodwaters swirl around a storm drain as heavy rain falls from Hurricane Dorian, Thursday, Sept. 5, 2019, in North Myrtle Beach, S.C. (Jason Lee/The Sun News via AP)



Kathy Desiderio took advantage of a calm between burst of rain to walk her dog Lily and survey the tornado damage at her neighbor's homes. A tornado touched down in the The Farm at Brunswick County in Carolina Shores, N.C. on Thursday, Sept. 5, 2019, damaging homes ahead of Hurricane Dorian's arrival. (Jason Lee/The Sun News via AP)



Mike Rogers takes a photo of the storm surge from Hurricane Dorian that blocks Cedar Island off from the mainland on NC 12 in Atlantic, N.C., after Hurricane Dorian past the coast on Friday, Sept. 6, 2019. (AP Photo/Tom Copeland)



High winds whip through Buxton, N.C., just after dawn as Hurricane Dorian passes nearby on Friday, Sept. 6, 2019. A weakened Hurricane Dorian flooded homes on North Carolina's Outer Banks on Friday with a ferocity that seemed to take storm-hardened residents by surprise. (Steve Earley/The Virginian-Pilot via AP)



Beaufort Police Officer Curtis Resor, left, and Sgt. Micheal Stephens check a sailboat for occupants in Beaufort, N.C. after Hurricane Dorian passed the North Carolina coast on Friday, Sept. 6, 2019. Dorian howled over North Carolina's Outer Banks on Friday—a much weaker but still dangerous version of the storm that wreaked havoc in the Bahamas—flooding homes in the low-lying ribbon of islands and throwing a scare into year-round residents who tried to tough it out. (AP Photo/Tom Copeland)



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Mike Rogers takes a photo of the storm surge from Hurricane Dorian that blocks Cedar Island off from the mainland on NC 12 in Atlantic, N.C., after Hurricane Dorian past the coast on Friday, Sept. 6, 2019. (AP Photo/Tom Copeland)



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Still, the damage was far less than feared in many parts of the Carolinas, including historic Charleston, South Carolina, which is prone to flooding even from ordinary storms, and Wilmington, North Carolina, the state's biggest coastal city.

Joseph Pawlick went out Friday morning to rake leaves, twigs and other debris blown from the sidewalk outside his Wilmington home.

"I slept like a baby last night. This, thankfully, was not bad," he said.

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