

Stranded North Carolinians take stock of Dorian's damage

September 7 2019, by Jeffrey Collins And Ben Finley



Two islanders ride their bikes through still-wet streets on Friday, Sept. 6, 2019 on Ocracoke Island, N.C., in the aftermath of Hurricane Dorian. (Connie Leinbach/Ocracoke Observer via AP)

As the sky cleared and floodwaters receded Saturday, residents of North Carolina's Outer Banks began to assess the damage wrought by Hurricane Dorian.

Steve Harris has lived on Ocracoke Island for most of the last 19 years. He's ridden out eight hurricanes, but he said he'd never seen a [storm](#) bring such devastation to his community, which is accessible only by boat or air and is popular with tourists for its undeveloped beaches.

"We just thought it was gonna be a normal blow," Harris, a semi-retired contractor, said Friday. "But the damage is going to be severe this time. This is flooding of biblical proportions."

Gov. Roy Cooper said about 800 people had remained on the island to wait out Dorian. The storm made landfall Friday morning over the Outer Banks as a far weaker storm than the monster that devastated the Bahamas. Yet despite having been downgraded to a Category 1 storm, it still sent seawater surging over neighborhoods, flooding the first floors of many homes.

"There is significant concern about hundreds of people trapped on Ocracoke Island," Cooper said.

Harris lost his car to the storm and his air conditioning is damaged, but he said he's blessed that his condominium is on the third floor and he is insured. Of the 11 units in his complex, seven had water in them, he said.



Ocracoke Volunteer Fire Department chief Albert O'Neal, in blue shirt, boats down Sunset Drive on his way to seek out islanders stranded in their flooded homes in the aftermath of Hurricane. Dorian Friday, Sept. 6, 2019 on Ocracoke Island, N.C. (Connie Leinbach/Ocracoke Observer via AP)

"It's just a strange picture," Harris said. "If you've been a regular guest down here for years, you can't imagine what we saw."

The U.S. Coast Guard began landing local law enforcement officers on the island Friday via helicopter and airlifting out the sick, elderly and others in distress, Hyde County authorities said. National Guard

helicopters also flew in supplies and a rescue team.

By Friday evening, the governor said that officials were aware of no serious injuries on the Outer Banks from the storm. People in need of temporary housing were being taken to a shelter on the mainland, the governor said.

Connie Leinbach, who publishes the Ocracoke Observer newspaper, said sheriff's deputies and other rescue personnel performed at least two rescues from attics. She said the Coast Guard was also called in to help a man who was having problems with his oxygen.



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)

"We've got a ton of water here. It's more than (Hurricane) Matthew," Leinbach said, comparing it to the damaging 2016 storm.

Dorian is expected to remain a hurricane as it sweeps up the Eastern Seaboard through Saturday. While tropical-storm force winds are buffeting southeastern Massachusetts and could sweep into Maine later Saturday, hurricane-force winds are unlikely to pose any threat to land in the U.S. Parts of eastern Canada could see dangerous storm surge Saturday, however, and a hurricane warning is in effect for parts of Nova Scotia.

At least four deaths in the Southeast were blamed on Dorian. 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.

As Dorian closed in, more than a quarter-million residents and visitors were ordered to evacuate the Outer Banks, which stick out from the Eastern Seaboard like the sideview mirror on a car. But many just tied down their boats, removed objects that could blow away from their yards, and hunkered down.



Hyde County officials, Sheriff Guire Cahoon and 3 deputies, and Hyde County Manager Kris Noble arrive at the fire company after having been helicoptered over, Friday, Sept. 6, 2019 on Ocracoke Island, N.C., in the aftermath of Hurricane Dorian. (Connie Leinbach/Ocracoke Observer via AP)



Jon Baranowski and his family play in the flooded parking lot of the Virginia Beach Fishing Center in Virginia Beach, Va., as Hurricane Dorian passes through Hampton Roads on Friday, Sept. 6, 2019. (Stephen M. Katz/The Virginian-Pilot via AP)



The Ocracoke Volunteer Fire Department makes rounds through the village on Friday, Sept. 6, 2019 on Ocracoke Island, N.C., in the aftermath of Hurricane Dorian. (Connie Leinbach/Ocracoke Observer via AP)



A woman walks her dog at sunrise past beach erosion caused by Hurricane Dorian in the Cherry Grove section of North Myrtle Beach, S.C., Friday, Sept. 6, 2019. Residents of Horry County breathed a collective sigh of relief today after Hurricane Dorian passed with only minor damages. (Jason Lee/The Sun News via AP)



A tree brings smashes a car after Hurricane Dorian passed by James Island, S.C., Friday, Sept. 6, 2019. (AP Photo/Mic Smith)



A tree brings down power and cable lines after Hurricane Dorian passed by James Island, S.C., Friday, Sept. 6, 2019. (AP Photo/Mic Smith)



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



The Ocracoke Village Fire Department is used as a command center Friday, Sept. 6, 2019 on Ocracoke Island, N.C., in the aftermath of Hurricane Dorian. (Connie Leinbach/Ocracoke Observer via AP)



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)



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)



Fred Lenihan carries Ollie, a six-year-old Sheltie, through floodwaters in Larchmont after Hurricane Dorian brought heavy wind and rain to Norfolk, Va., on Friday, Sept. 6, 2019. (Kaitlin McKeown/The Virginian-Pilot via AP)



Eric Young stand-up paddleboards through flooded streets in Larchmont with his daughter, Emily Ruth, 5, after Hurricane Dorian brought heavy wind and rain to Norfolk, Va., on Friday, Sept. 6, 2019. (Kaitlin McKeown/The Virginian-Pilot via AP)



Wood debris is left scattered across the Nags Head beach in the Outer Banks, N.C., as the sunsets, Friday, Sept 6, 2019. Hurricane Dorian continues to churn off the North Carolina coast, but it's heading further into the Atlantic Ocean, prompting forecasters to lift hurricane and tropical storm warnings south of the Virginia-North Carolina border. (L. Todd Spencer/The Virginian-Pilot via AP)



Beaufort Police Officer Curtis Resor, left, and Sgt. Micheal Stepehens 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)



Kids kayak through the flooded streets near the corner of Mowbray Arch and Botetourt Street after the storms caused by Hurricane Dorian on Friday, Sept. 6, 2019, in Norfolk, Va. (Sarah Holm/The Virginian-Pilot via AP)

Dorian slammed the Bahamas at the start of the week with 185 mph (295 kph) winds, killing at least 43 people and obliterating countless homes. From there, it swept past Florida and Georgia, then sideswiped the Carolinas on Thursday, spinning off tornadoes that peeled away roofs and flipped recreational vehicles.

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.

"Right now, it appears we've had no loss of life," Harris said of Ocracoke. "We're trying to make sure everybody is safe, but it's going to be a long recovery."

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