

Seven dead in Spain as winter storms lash coast

January 23 2020, by Daniel Bosque



Four people are still thought to be missing after Storm Gloria crashed into eastern Spain on Sunday

The death toll from a storm that has lashed Spain with strong winds and heavy snow has risen to seven, while four people were missing, officials

said.

Gale-force winds and [huge waves](#) have smashed into seafront towns, damaging many shops and restaurants, wrecking beach facilities and flooding some streets in the east of the country since Sunday.

The latest victim was a man who fell into the sea in the northeastern port of Palamos, [emergency services](#) said late Wednesday.

Police found a body on Wednesday in a flooded area in the eastern region of Valencia where they were looking for a 67-year-old man who went missing in his car, a local police spokesman said.

Two other deaths were recorded in the southern region of Andalusia—among them a 77-year-old farmer killed after a greenhouse collapsed on him in a hailstorm, police said.

Four people were still believed to be missing after Storm Gloria crashed into eastern Spain on Sunday with gusts of over 100 kilometres (60 miles) per hour, massive waves, snow and freezing rain.

National weather agency Aemet said the storm was starting to abate on Wednesday although it kept the northeastern region of Catalonia and the Balearic Islands on alert.

In the south of France, 1,500 people were evacuated as two rivers quickly overflowed overnight on Wednesday.

Meteorologists said the rains would continue throughout Thursday, varying in intensity, in France's southernmost Mediterranean departments of the Pyrenees-Orientales and Aude.



Waves broke over a sea wall at the Port Olympic marina in Barcelona as storm Gloria battered the Spanish eastern coast earlier this week

Flooded rice fields

While winter storms are not rare on Spain's Mediterranean coast, Spain has suffered several episodes of unusually intense rainfall in recent years.

Seven people died in September 2019 in [flash floods](#) in southeastern Spain and in October 2018, 13 people died on Mallorca as intense rain caused rivers to overflow with raging waters that tore through streets and swept away cars.

A study published in October by the Mediterranean Experts on Climate and Environmental Change (MedECC), which groups more than 600 scientists, said episodes of heavy rain could increase in the region by 10-20 percent because of [climate change](#).

A 25-year-old British man who visited a beach in the north of the holiday island of Ibiza in the Mediterranean was among those missing.

Ibiza is part of the Balearic Islands, which were hit by waves on Tuesday that reached a record high of 14.77 metres (45.93 feet), according to the port authority.

Spanish media showed images of a powerful wave crashing over a seafront wall and sending water cascading toward the street and nearby buildings in Cala Ratjada in Mallorca, the largest island of the archipelago.

A 27-year-old Spanish man who was practising canyoning—a sport that combines rappelling, climbing and watersliding through deep gorges—in Mallorca was also missing.

One of the areas most affected by the storm was the Ebro river delta south of Barcelona where a [storm](#) surge swept three kilometres (two miles) inland, according to the European Union's Copernicus Climate Change Service.

It released satellite images showing how the surface of the region disappeared under water.

Seawater has flooded about 30 square kilometres (12 square miles) of rice-growing areas in the region, according to a local collective.

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