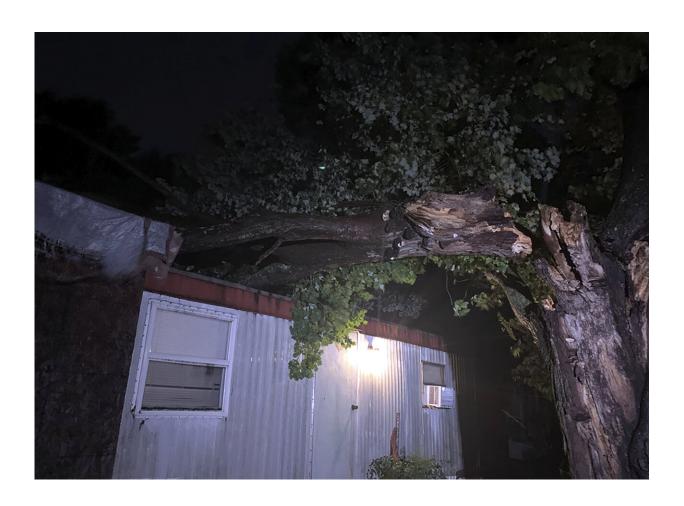# Isaias, again a tropical storm, spawns wild inland weather

August 4 2020, by Gerry Broome

A broken tree lays on a structure in Poquoson, Va., after Tropical Storm Isaias brought dangerous winds and heavy rain over eastern Virginia early Tuesday, Aug. 4, 2020, after making landfall as a hurricane near Ocean Isle Beach, North Carolina. (WVEC-TV via AP)

Tropical Storm Isaias spawned tornadoes and dumped rain along the U.S. East Coast on Tuesday after making landfall as a hurricane in North Carolina, where it smashed boats together and caused floods and fires that displaced dozens of people. At least one person was killed when one of its twisters hit a mobile home park.

Nearly 12 hours after coming ashore, Isaias was still sustaining near-hurricane-strength top winds of 70 mph (110 kph) late Tuesday morning, and its forward march accelerated to 35 mph (56 kph). "Potentially life-threatening urban flooding is possible in D.C., Baltimore and elsewhere along and just west of the I-95 corridor today," the National Hurricane Center warned.

Forecasters also issued clear warnings earlier, as Isaias approached land, urging people to heed the danger of "life-threatening storm surge inundation" along the coasts of North and South Carolina.

Some veterans of earlier storms were under the impression nevertheless that their areas would be spared.

Royce Potter, a fifth-generation seafood purveyor and owner of Potter's Seafood in Southport, said he rode out the storm on a boat docked near his business, which was damaged by the wind and water.

"They got this wrong," Potter said, visibly shaken. "I've ridden storms out here for years."

The storm surge and wind damage actually matched what the hurricane center predicted, leaving dozens of boats piled up against the docks, and many decks facing out on the water were smashed.

People walk on the flooded Sea Mountain Highway in North Myrtle Beach, S.C., as Isaias neared the Carolinas on Monday night, Aug. 3, 2020. (Jason Lee/The Sun News via AP)
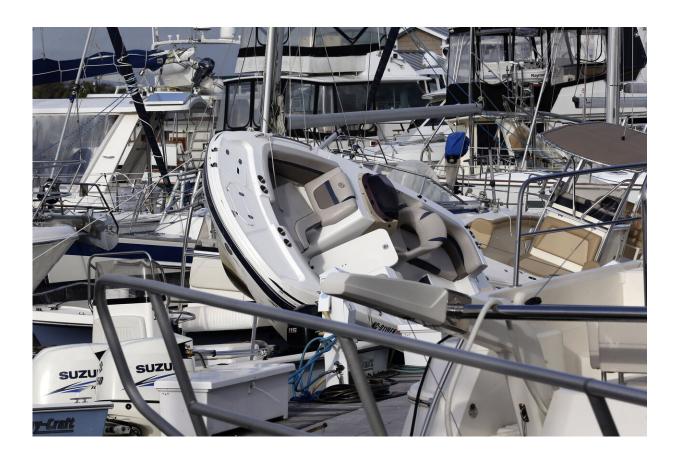
One person was killed and several others were unaccounted for after a tornado destroyed 10 mobile homes in Windsor, North Carolina, according to Bertie County Sheriff John Holley.

An aerial shot by WRAL-TV showed fields of debris where rescue workers in brightly colored shirts picked through splintered boards and other wreckage. Nearby, a vehicle was flipped onto its roof, its tires pointed up in the air.

"It doesn't look real, it looks like something on TV. Nothing is there," Holley told reporters. "All my officers are down there at this time. Pretty much the entire trailer park is gone."

The hurricane's eye moved over land near Ocean Isle Beach, North Carolina, just after 11 p.m. on Monday with maximum sustained winds of 85 mph (136 km/h), and forecasters expected the storm to hold its strength on a path into New England Tuesday night.

Boats are piled on each other at the Southport Marina following the effects of Hurricane Isaias in Southport, N.C., Tuesday, Aug. 4, 2020. (AP Photo/Gerry Broome)

"We don't think there is going to be a whole lot of weakening, we still think there's going to be very strong and gusty winds that will affect much of the mid-Atlantic and the Northeast over the next day or two," hurricane specialist Robbie Berg told The Associated Press.

Other tornadoes were confirmed by the national weather service in Virginia, Maryland and Delaware and New Jersey. Power outages also spread as trees fell, with more than 600,000 customers losing electricity, most of them in North Carolina and Virginia, according to PowerOutage.US, which tracks utility reports.

Isaias (pronounced ees-ah-EE-ahs) toggled between tropical storm and hurricane strength throughout its path to the U.S. coast, killing two people in the Caribbean and trashing the Bahamas before brushing past Florida.

Residents survey the damages along the waterfront following the effects of Hurricane Isaias in Southport, N.C., Tuesday, Aug. 4, 2020. (AP Photo/Gerry Broome)

Most of the significant damage seemed to be east and north of where the hurricane's eye struck land.

Gov. Roy Cooper said Tuesday morning that Brunswick, Pender and Onslow counties, along North Carolina's southeast coast, were among the hardest hit with storm surge, structure fires and reports of tornadoes. About two dozen shelters were open due to the storm, he said.

Eileen and David Hubler were out early Tuesday cleaning up in North Myrtle Beach, where the storm surge topped four feet (1.2 meters), flooding cars, unhinging docks and etching a water line into the side of their home.

"When the water started coming, it did not stop," she told the Associated Press. They had moved most items of value to their second floor, but a mattress and washing machine were unexpected storm casualties. Eileen Hubler said Isaias' incoming wrath was downplayed, and she wishes she would have followed her gut.

Boats are piled on each other at the Southport Marina following the effects of Hurricane Isaias in Southport, N.C., Tuesday, Aug. 4, 2020. (AP Photo/Gerry Broome)

"We keep thinking we've learned our lesson. And each time there's a hurricane, we learn a new lesson. The new lesson is you never trust that you're going to have a two-foot (0.6 meter) storm surge," she said.

On North Carolina's Oak Island, deputies had to rescue five adults and three children after the storm hit, causing damage along the beachfront and knocking electricity and sewer facilities offline, authorities said.

The storm set off flooding and sparked five home fires in Ocean Isle Beach, North Carolina, Mayor Debbie Smith told WECT-TV, and

firefighters from Horry County, South Carolina crossed the state line to help out, their spokesman, Tony Casey, told The Associated Press.

Further up the coast, about 30 people were displaced by a fire at a condominium complex in Surf City, news outlets reported. It wasn't immediately clear if the fires were connected to the storm. No injuries have been reported.
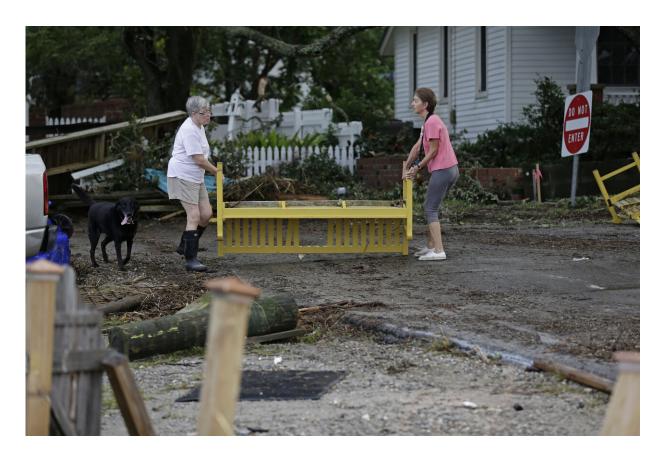

In this photo provided by the Horry County Frie Rescue, multiple structure fires burn Aug. 4. 2020, in Ocean Isle Beach, N.C. Hurricane Isaias sparked five home fires in town, Ocean Isle Beach Mayor Debbie Smith told WECT-TV. (Horry County Fire Rescue via AP)

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Residents begin to clean up following the effects of Hurricane Isaias in Southport, N.C., Tuesday, Aug. 4, 2020. (AP Photo/Gerry Broome)

A pier shows damages following the effects of Hurricane Isaias in Southport, N.C., Tuesday, Aug. 4, 2020. (AP Photo/Gerry Broome)

Friends play in the surf in Garden City, S.C., Monday afternoon, Aug. 3, 2020., as Isaias neared the Carolinas. (Jason Lee/The Sun News via AP)
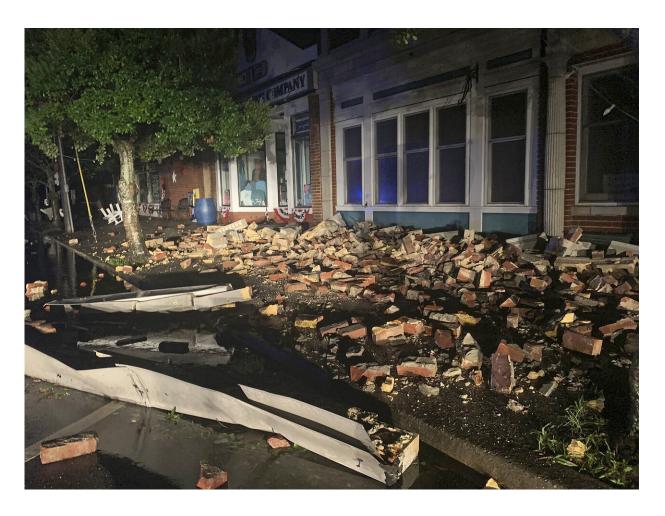
People walk at the Garden City (S.C.) Pier on Monday, Aug. 3, 2020, as Isaias neared the Carolinas. (Jason Lee/The Sun News via AP)

Royce Potter, a fifth generation seafood farmer, suveys the damage to his fishing vessel following the effects of Hurricane Isaias in Southport, N.C., Tuesday, Aug. 4, 2020. Potter spent the night on his docked boat. (AP Photo/Gerry Broome)

Debris covers the sidewalk in Southport, N.C. as hurricane Isaias moved through North Carolina early Tuesday, Aug. 4, 2020. (WECT-TV via AP)

People swim in the ocean as Tropical Storm Isaias approaches in Kure Beach, N.C., Monday, Aug. 3, 2020. (AP Photo/Gerry Broome)

People walk on the beach in Garden City, S.C., as Isaias approached the Carolinas on Monday, Aug. 3, 2020. (Jason Lee/The Sun News via AP)

A bell tower toppled outside of Southport Baptist Church in Southport, N.C. as hurricane Isaias moved through North Carolina on Tuesday, Aug. 4, 2020. (WECT-TV via AP)

Residents survey the damage following the effects of Hurricane Isaias in Southport, N.C., Tuesday, Aug. 4, 2020. (AP Photo/Gerry Broome)

A person walks along the shoreline as a earthmover prepares sand along the beach Tuesday, Aug. 4, 2020, in Atlantic City, N.J. Tropical Storm Isaias spawned tornadoes and dumped rain during an inland march up the U.S. East Coast, including New Jersey, on Tuesday after making landfall as a hurricane along the North Carolina coast. (AP Photo/Jacqueline Larma)

And in Suffolk, Virginia, near the coast, multiple homes were damaged by falling trees, and city officials received reports of a possible tornado. A fire station downtown sustained damage including broken window. A photo posted by city officials showed a pile of bricks lying next to a damaged business.

Coastal shops and restaurants had closed early in the Carolinas, where power began to flicker at oceanfront hotels and even the most

adventurous of beachgoers abandoned the sand Monday night. The Hurricane Center warned oceanside home dwellers to brace for storm surge up to 5 feet (1.5 meters) and up to 8 inches (20 centimeters) of rain in spots.

As the storm neared the shore, a gauge on a pier in Myrtle Beach recorded its third highest water level since it was set up in 1976. Only Hurricane Hugo in 1989 and Hurricane Matthew in 2016 pushed more salt water inland.