

Hawaii recoups from big storm amid lingering flood threats

December 8 2021, by Caleb Jones



A police officer directs traffic during a power outage in downtown Honolulu after a severe winter storm swept the islands, Tuesday, Dec. 7, 2021. Credit: AP Photo/Caleb Jones

A slow-moving storm that knocked out power, swamped dozens of

homes and sent creeks and streams surging had mostly passed over Hawaii on Tuesday, though the threat of flooding lingered in some already-drenched areas.

Showers were tapering off on Oahu, where Pearl Harbor survivors gathered under overcast skies for an 80th anniversary event. The island had received between 6 and 10 inches (15 and 25 centimeters) of rainfall since Monday, but isolated bands of [rain](#) were still possible.

A threat of heavy rain continued for the island of Kauai.

The unusually strong winter storm clobbered Hawaii for several days, knocking out power to 42,000 people on Maui and the Big Island, according to the Hawaiian Electric Company. Outages were also reported on other islands, though it wasn't immediately clear how many were affected.

On Tuesday, the Honolulu Fire Department reported responding to nearly 100 storm-related incidents within 24 hours, including 55 flooded homes. Ten people were also saved from flash flooding: Five boys ages 9 and 10 were pulled from a raging creek Monday; another five people were later rescued from a different stream, and one was sent to a hospital, the agency said. The department also responded to two landslides and four wind-torn roofs.



Clouds darken the sky over Ala Moana Beach Park in Honolulu on Tuesday, Dec. 7, 2021, as a major storm moves over the islands. Credit: AP Photo/Caleb Jones

Several schools were closed on Oahu due to the severe weather. And widespread power outages were reported on the island, including in downtown Honolulu, where utility crews were working to restore electricity after a substation flooded. Police were directing traffic at busy cross streets where [traffic lights](#) were out.

Four shelters had been opened on Oahu, where normally busy beaches remained mostly empty Tuesday morning.

The storm system was expected to move out of Hawaii on Wednesday,

two days after Gov. David Ige issued a state of emergency for all the [islands](#).

The Big Island and Maui were mostly clear of the heaviest rain by Tuesday morning.

On Maui, power outages and flooding were reported in previous days, with more than a foot (30 centimeters) of rain falling in some areas.

The relentless rain forced three couples from the U.S. mainland to postpone their Maui elopements, said Nicole Bonanno, owner of Bella Bloom Floral, a wedding florist and boutique in Wailea.



Clouds hang over Honolulu as a massive winter storm lingers over the state, Tuesday, Dec. 7, 2021. Flash flood warnings were canceled for Hawaii Tuesday but the threat of heavy rain and flooding persisted as a slow-moving storm system lingered over parts of the state. Rain was tapering off on Oahu but bands of rain were still possible and the threat of heavy rain continued for the island of Kauai. Credit: AP Photo/Caleb Jones



People hold umbrellas as it begins to rain on an otherwise empty beach in Honolulu on Monday, Dec. 6, 2021. A strong storm packing high winds and extremely heavy rain flooded roads and downed power lines and tree branches across Hawaii, with officials warning Monday of potentially worse conditions ahead. Credit: AP Photo/Caleb Jones



A car turns onto a flooded Cooke Street, Monday, Dec. 6, 2021, in Honolulu. A strong storm packing high winds and extremely heavy rain has flooded roads and downed power lines and tree branches across Hawaii. Credit: AP Photo/Marco Garcia



With storm clouds in the background, beachgoers are seen on Waikiki Beach, Monday, Dec. 6, 2021, in Honolulu. Credit: AP Photo/Marco Garcia



People scramble to get out of the heavy rain on Waikiki Beach, Monday, Dec. 6, 2021, in Honolulu. Credit: AP Photo/Marco Garcia



Diamond Head mountain is shrouded in rain, Monday, Dec. 6, 2021, in Honolulu. Credit: AP Photo/Marco Garcia



A car turns onto a flooded Cooke Street, Monday, Dec. 6, 2021, in Honolulu. A strong storm packing high winds and extremely heavy rain has flooded roads and downed power lines and tree branches across Hawaii. Credit: AP Photo/Marco Garcia



A pedestrian tries to cross a flooded Queen Street, Monday, Dec. 6, 2021, in Honolulu. A strong storm packing high winds and extremely heavy rain has flooded roads and downed power lines and tree branches across Hawaii. Credit: AP Photo/Marco Garcia



Dark clouds hang over a lifeguard tower on Ala Moana Beach Park, Monday, Dec. 6, 2021, in Honolulu. Credit: AP Photo/Marco Garcia



Ala Moana Beach Park was mostly empty of beachgoers, Monday, Dec. 6, 2021, in Honolulu, due to a strong storm packing high winds and extremely heavy rain. Credit: AP Photo/Marco Garcia



Dylan Faulk, from left to right, Miranda Faulk, and James Schumacher wait under a beach bar balcony for the rain to pass on Waikiki Beach, Monday, Dec. 6, 2021, in Honolulu. The family, who are from Livingston, Mo., said they didn't mind the rain claiming bad winter weather awaited them when they returned. Credit: AP Photo/Marco Garcia



Beach goers play in the rain on Waikiki Beach, Monday, Dec. 6, 2021, in Honolulu. A strong storm packing high winds and extremely heavy rain flooded roads and downed power lines and tree branches across Hawaii, with officials warning Monday of potentially worse conditions ahead. Credit: AP Photo/Marco Garcia



Calista Cafiero sweeps storm water out of the shop she manages on Waikiki Beach, Monday, Dec. 6, 2021, in Honolulu. Cafiero said the storm pushed water into her store flooding the inside. Credit: AP Photo/Marco Garcia



A small tractor pushes sand off a walkway on Waikiki Beach, Monday, Dec. 6, 2021, in Honolulu. A strong storm packing high winds and extremely heavy rain flooded roads and downed power lines and tree branches across Hawaii, with officials warning Monday of potentially worse conditions ahead. Credit: AP Photo/Marco Garcia



Miranda Faulk, from left to right, James Schumacher and Dylan Faulk walk back to their hotel on Waikiki Beach, Monday, Dec. 6, 2021, in Honolulu. A strong storm packing high winds and extremely heavy rain flooded roads and downed power lines and tree branches across Hawaii, with officials warning Monday of potentially worse conditions ahead. Credit: AP Photo/Marco Garcia



In this webcam image provided by the U.S. Geological Survey, steam rises from the west rim of the summit collapse on Kilauea in Hawaii, Monday, Dec. 6, 2021. A strong storm packing high winds and extremely heavy rain flooded roads and downed power lines and tree branches across Hawaii, with officials warning Monday of potentially worse conditions ahead. Credit: U.S. Geological Survey via AP



Beachgoers play in the rain on Waikiki Beach, Monday, Dec. 6, 2021, in Honolulu. A strong storm packing high winds and extremely heavy rain flooded roads and downed power lines and tree branches across Hawaii, with officials warning Monday of potentially worse conditions ahead. Credit: AP Photo/Marco Garcia



In this webcam image provided by the Canada-France-Hawai'i Telescope, snow is seen atop the summit of Mauna Kea in Hawaii on Monday, Dec. 6, 2021. A strong storm packing high winds and extremely heavy rain flooded roads and downed power lines and tree branches across Hawaii. Credit: Canada-France-Hawai'i Telescope via AP



While wearing rain coats, beach goers play in the rain on Waikiki Beach, Monday, Dec. 6, 2021, in Honolulu. A strong storm packing high winds and extremely heavy rain flooded roads and downed power lines and tree branches across Hawaii, with officials warning Monday of potentially worse conditions ahead. Credit: AP Photo/Marco Garcia



In this webcam image provided by the Canada-France-Hawai‘i Telescope, snow is seen atop the summit of Mauna Kea in Hawaii on Monday, Dec. 6, 2021. A strong storm packing high winds and extremely heavy rain flooded roads and downed power lines and tree branches across Hawaii. Credit: Canada-France-Hawai‘i Telescope via AP



Clouds darken the sky over a nearly empty Ala Moana Beach Park in Honolulu on Tuesday, Dec. 7 2021 as a major storm moves over the islands. Credit: AP Photo/Caleb Jones

"The roads, everything are a mess," she said. "There are lots of trees down."

Big Island Mayor Mitch Roth had declared an emergency after heavy rain and winds pounded the island on Sunday. A blizzard warning was issued for the island's highest peak, Mauna Kea.

Snow is not rare at the summit of Mauna Kea, which is nearly 14,000 feet (4,270 meters) high. However, the last time there was a blizzard warning for the summit was in 2018.

The storm, known as a "Kona low," is a unique type of low-pressure system that can form near Hawaii during the winter after gathering huge amounts of tropical moisture from equatorial regions.

"Kona lows tend to move slowly and so they can keep heavy rain and thunder showers focused over one area for a prolonged amount of time, and they can also cause pretty strong to damaging winds," said meteorologist Robert Ballard, the National Weather Service's science and operation officer in Hawaii.

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