

Much of Florida under state of emergency as possible tropical storm forms in Gulf of Mexico

August 27 2023, by Terry Spencer



Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis speaks during a news conference, May 9, 2023, in Miami. On Saturday, Aug. 26, DeSantis declared a state of emergency for most of Florida's Gulf coast as forecasters say a weather system off the coast of Mexico could soon become a tropical storm and start moving toward the area. Credit: AP Photo/Rebecca Blackwell, File

Forecasters are warning of possible flash flooding and landslides across the eastern Yucatan peninsula and western Cuba, and Florida braced for a possible hurricane by midweek, as a weather system off the coast of Mexico was expected to become a tropical storm by Sunday, the U.S. National Hurricane Center said.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis declared a state of emergency Saturday for most of the state's Gulf [coast](#) as the weather system strengthens as it moves northward across the Gulf of Mexico. The [National Hurricane Center](#) warned Saturday that the system could produce dangerous [storm surge](#), heavy rain and [strong winds](#) to Florida's Gulf coast and Panhandle by midweek.

DeSantis' declaration covers the Gulf coast from the southwestern city of Fort Myers north through Panama City in the Panhandle. Thirty-three of the state's 67 counties are covered in the declaration.

The [hurricane](#) center says there's a 70% chance the system will become a [tropical storm](#) by Monday and a 90% chance overall. Currently, it would be named "Idalia" if no other tropical storm forms before it. Forecast models do not show the storm's center approaching the areas of southwest Florida where deadly Hurricane Ian struck last year.

DeSantis said in a statement that he issued his executive order "out of an abundance of caution to ensure that the Florida Division of Emergency Management can begin staging resources and Floridians have plenty of time to prepare their families for a storm next week."

"I encourage Floridians to have a plan in place and ensure that their hurricane supply kit is stocked," he said.

Forecast models have the storm curving to the northeast toward Florida, coming ashore along the Gulf coast north of Tampa near the Big Bend

area and then heading diagonally across the state to emerge again in the Atlantic Ocean near southeast Georgia.

So far this year, the U.S. East Coast has been spared from cyclones. But out west, [Tropical Storm Hilary](#) caused widespread flooding, mudslides and road closures earlier this month in Mexico, California, Nevada and points to the north.

The [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration](#) recently said the 2023 [hurricane season](#) would be far busier than initially forecast, partly because of extremely warm ocean temperatures. The season runs through Nov. 30, with August and September typically the peak.

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