

# Major hurricane heads toward northwest Mexico, California

August 17 2023, by Joel Cosio

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Businesses in Mexico's tourist resort of Cabo San Lucas await the arrival of powerful Hurricane Hilary.

Mexico prepared Friday for a powerful Pacific hurricane that triggered a warning of "potentially catastrophic" flooding in a northwestern tourist

region and the neighboring US state of California.

Hurricane Hilary threatened to bring strong winds, flash floods and "life-threatening" surf and rip current conditions, the US National Hurricane Center (NHC) said.

"We've already had to live through similar experiences. We know what can happen to us. We must be prepared with food, canned goods and candles," Marlen Hernandez, a 30-year-old restaurant worker, told AFP.

Hilary's maximum sustained winds reached about 145 miles (230 kilometers) an hour before slowing slightly on Friday, according to the NHC.

It was a Category Four hurricane—the second-most powerful on the Saffir-Simpson scale of one to five.

"Life-threatening and potentially catastrophic flooding" was likely over much of Baja California and southern California this weekend and early next week, the NHC warned.

Residents and workers in Cabo San Lucas put up protective boarding, laid sandbags and stored furniture in preparation, as large waves crashed ashore.

Navy personnel were seen patrolling the beach in Cabo San Lucas—a popular destination for both Mexican and foreign tourists.



A family walks on the beach in the Mexican tourist resort of Cabo San Lucas before the arrival of Hurricane Hilary.

"We are a little scared and trying to stay positive," Katrina Morgan, a tourist from the United States, said in the Mexican resort of Cabo San Lucas on the Baja California peninsula.

Hilary was located about 285 miles southwest of Cabo San Lucas on the southern tip of Baja California, the NHC said.

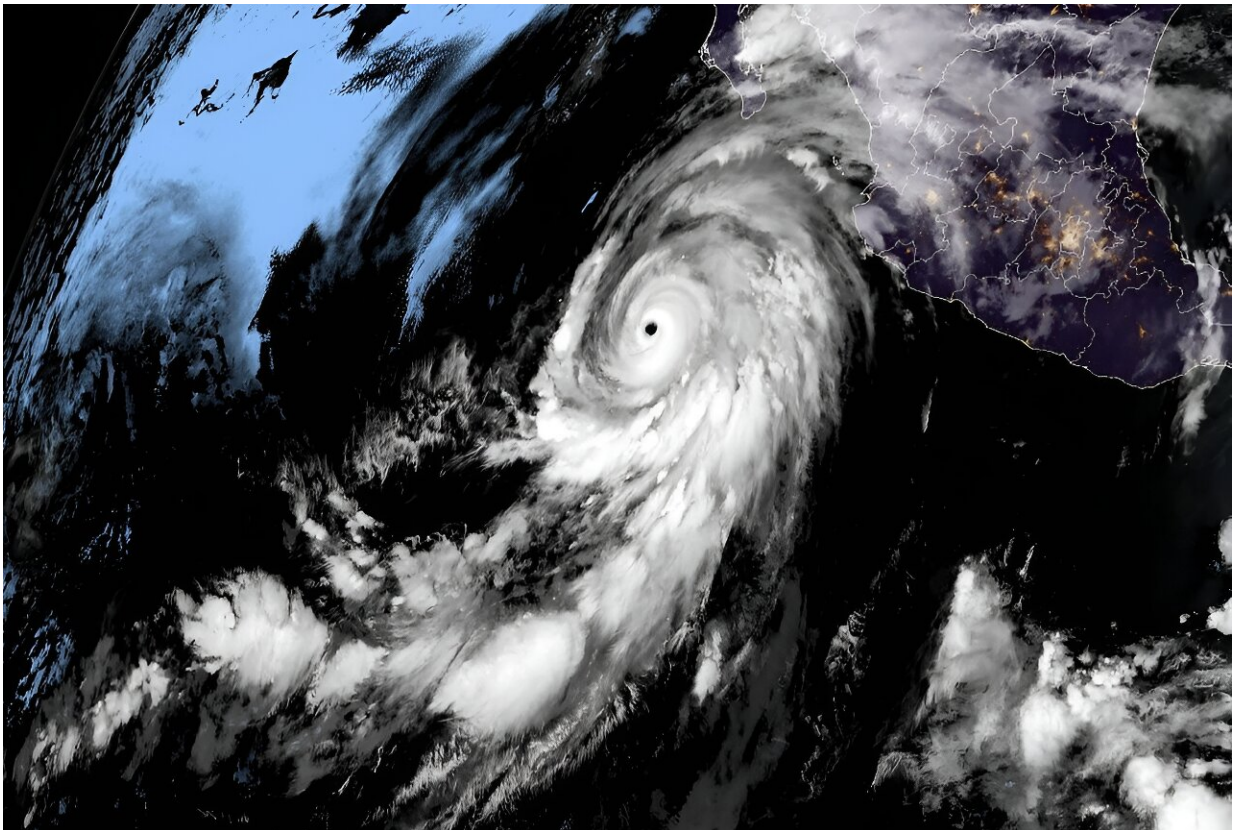
"On the forecast track, the center of Hilary will move close to the west coast of the Baja California peninsula over the weekend and reach southern California by Sunday night," it forecast.

## Rare California alert

A hurricane warning was issued for a stretch of coastline in Baja California from Punta Abreojos to Cabo San Quintin, and a hurricane watch north from there to Ensenada.

Across the border, an unusual tropical storm watch was in effect from the California/Mexico border to Point Mugu in Ventura County, as well as for Catalina Island, according to the NHC.

"Fluctuations in intensity are likely through tonight," it predicted.



An image obtained from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration shows Hurricane Hilary off the coast of Mexico.

"Weakening is expected to begin by Saturday, but Hilary will still be a hurricane when it approaches the west coast of the Baja California peninsula Saturday night and Sunday. Hilary is expected to weaken to a tropical storm by late Sunday before it reaches southern California," the NHC added.

The storm brought rain and rough seas to areas along Mexico's southwestern Pacific coast, including the tourist resort of Acapulco.

In the United States, "rainfall amounts of three to six inches, with isolated amounts of 10 inches, are expected across portions of southern California and southern Nevada. Dangerous to locally catastrophic flooding will be possible," the NHC said.

Major League Baseball and Major League Soccer have rescheduled games planned for Sunday in the region as the storm nears.

Hurricanes hit Mexico every year on both its Pacific and Atlantic coasts, usually between May and November.

Although their remnants sometimes affect California, it is rare for cyclones to hit the US state with tropical storm intensity.

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