

Storm threatens Gulf of Mexico oil spill clean-up

June 26 2010



An aerial view of the Chandeleur islands, on June 23, in the Gulf of Mexico, along the coast of Louisiana. Oil recovery efforts in the Gulf of Mexico could face the season's first tropical storm Saturday, with bad weather spreading a huge oil slick that has already closed beaches in Florida.

Potentially dangerous Tropical Storm Alex, which experts say could complicate the Gulf of Mexico oil spill clean-up, has formed in the Caribbean Sea, US forecasters said on Saturday.

At 1200 GMT, the eye of the season's first [tropical storm](#) was located about 200 miles (320 kilometers) east of Belize City, according to the US National Hurricane Center (NHC). It was packing maximum sustained winds of 40 miles (65 km) an hour.

After dropping rain on the Central American nations, the storm was

expected to turn toward the [Gulf of Mexico](#) as it moved around eight miles (13 km) per hour.

On the forecast track, Alex was forecast to approach the coast of Belize and Mexico's Yucatan peninsula late Saturday or early Sunday.

"Some erratic motion is possible ... as the circulation of Alex consolidates," the Miami-based NHC said in a bulletin.

The storm is forecast to dump heavy rain over the Yucatan peninsula through Sunday, with rain accumulations of four to eight inches (10-25 centimeters), though isolated amounts of up to 15 inches (38 centimeters) are possible.

"These rains could cause life-threatening flash floods and mudslides," the NHC said.

A tropical storm warning was in effect on the east coast of Belize, Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula and on the coastal islands in Honduras.

"A gradual turn toward the northeast and an increase in forward speed are expected in the next 48 hours," the center said.

The NHC's five-day forecast has the storm heading over the Gulf of Mexico in the direction of the US-Mexico border, but with a possibility of deviating along a broad area that includes the site of the huge [oil](#) slick unleashed by the April 20 explosion of the BP-leased Deepwater Horizon rig.

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