

Research drones launched into Hurricane Edouard

16 September 2014, by Jennifer Kay

U.S. government scientists are launching winged drones into Hurricane Edouard, hoping to collect data that could help forecasters understand what makes some storms strengthen into monsters while others fade away.

This week's launches mark the first time that unmanned aircraft have been dispatched from "hurricane hunter" planes flying through Atlantic tropical storms.

Scientists with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration say the 3-foot (0.9-meter), 7-pound (3.2-kilogram) drones are designed to spend hours slowly descending through storms, particularly in the lowest parts of a hurricane where planes can't fly.

NOAA got a few drones this year to test during the peak of hurricane season, thanks to post-Hurricane Sandy federal funding.

Edouard is the first major hurricane of the six-month Atlantic storm season, but it remained no threat to land Tuesday.

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