

Beat: Miscellaneous

First tropical depression of the season forms far off Mexico

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USPA News - A tropical depression formed far off Mexico's Pacific coast on Wednesday morning, making it the first tropical cyclone of the Eastern Pacific hurricane season, forecasters said. The system is expected to become a hurricane but there is no threat to land.

Forecasters at the U.S. National Hurricane Center (NHC) had been following the weather system since Tuesday when a broad area of low pressure formed about 650 miles (1,045 kilometers) south of Acapulco, a major sea port on the Pacific Coast of Mexico. It quickly became better organized and strengthened into a tropical depression on early Wednesday. As of 8 a.m. PDT (1500 GMT), the center of Tropical Depression One-E was located about 650 miles (1,045 kilometers) south-southwest of Acapulco. It is moving toward the west at a speed near 12 miles (19 kilometers) per hour, according to hurricane specialist Robbie Berg at the NHC. Wednesday also marked the first day of the 2013 Eastern Pacific hurricane season. "The Eastern North Pacific hurricane season has wasted no time getting started," Berg said. "The low pressure system that we have been monitoring south of the Mexican coast became better organized overnight, and a nearly unbroken band of deep convection now wraps around the southern and western side of the circulation." Maximum sustained winds of One-E are near 35 miles (55 kilometers) per hour, with higher gusts, bringing it near tropical storm strength. The depression is expected to continue to strengthen and is likely to become a tropical storm by late Wednesday, and a hurricane by Friday. "The depression is embedded in a zone of upper-level diffluence to the east of the subtropical jet, and it will be traversing the warmest waters of the Eastern North Pacific over the next few days," Berg explained. "This should support strengthening for at least the next 3 to 4 days before the system reaches strong upper-level westerlies and approach cooler waters." The weather system, which will be called Alvin after it reaches tropical storm strength, is expected to remain far from land throughout the entire forecast. "Even though a mid-level trough is likely to amplify in the vicinity of California in the coming days, the depression is so far south that any effects on steering should be minimal," Berg said. Tropical Depression One-E is the first tropical cyclone of the 2013 Eastern Pacific hurricane season, which was officially due to start on Wednesday. NOAA's Climate Prediction Center is expected to release a detailed forecast for this year's hurricane seasons sometime later this month. An average Eastern Pacific hurricane season produces 15 to 16 named storms, with eight to nine becoming hurricanes and four becoming major hurricanes. The Eastern Pacific hurricane season runs from May 15 through November 30, with peak activity from July through September.

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