



HURRICANES and the Environment

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Words in **bold** are in the glossary.

CARRIED AWAY!

In September 2010, Hurricane Earl swept over several countries in the Atlantic Ocean. It destroyed homes, downed trees, and toppled power lines. The hurricane flooded towns and cities. Many animals were injured, and the storm destroyed many animal habitats.

One animal that became injured in the storm was a brown pelican. These pelicans can be found along the Atlantic coast from northern Virginia to Peru. But this pelican was picked up by strong winds and carried all the way to Canada. She was lost and alone in a strange place that was much colder than she was used to.

Luckily, she was rescued and sent to a wildlife shelter in Canada. The bird was named Ralph. Ralph was later sent to a wildlife center in North Carolina. In the summer of 2011, Ralph was released back into a forest in North Carolina to live free again.



Ralph sits in the wildlife shelter in Canada awaiting her return to the United States.

Chapter One

BIG OCEAN STORMS

Hurricanes are huge storms that form over the warm waters of the Atlantic Ocean or eastern Pacific Ocean. Around the world, hurricanes may be called cyclones or typhoons. They usually occur between June and November each year. These storms come with powerful winds and large amounts of rain. The winds push the sea toward the land, creating high walls of water that crash into coastlines. This rise in water is called a storm surge. This is the most destructive part of a hurricane.

Storm surges that flood roads can be dangerous for motorists.





Hurricane Irma's storm surge affected coastlines near Miami, Florida, in 2017.

FACT

The tallest storm surge was 42 feet (12.8 meters). It happened in 1899 during Tropical Cyclone Mahina.

Scientists believe that hurricanes are becoming more dangerous. As the oceans grow warmer because of **climate** change, hurricanes will hold more moisture in them. They will move more slowly over the land and be more intense.

Hurricanes can cause a lot of destruction. They can cause billions of dollars in damage to cities. Many people can be killed or injured. Fish, birds, and other animals that live in the paths of these storms can be affected too. The **environment** can also experience terrible effects from these storms. Let's take a closer look at how hurricanes affect nature.





A Giant Cage

Hurricanes whirl in a giant cone shape. In the middle of this cone is the eye of the storm. It is quiet and still. The eye can act as a giant cage to hold whatever is swept up inside. Shorebirds such as sandpipers can be carried far inland, a long way from their homes.