

## THE ATLANTIC HURRICANE SEASON FORECAST - 2013

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### Forecast

The general consensus among tropical cyclone experts is for an above normal Atlantic Hurricane Season for 2013. The consensus forecast calls for 16 named storms, 9 hurricanes and 4 major hurricanes. A normal season averages of 12.1 named storms, 6.4 hurricanes and 2.7 major hurricanes (See table 1). The science behind the outlook is rooted in the analysis and prediction of current and future global climate patterns as compared to previous seasons with similar conditions. For this season, the experts are citing a warmer than normal Tropical North Atlantic as the main reason for an above normal season prediction.

Forecast (Groups) Source	Forecast Date	Named Storm	Hurricane	Major Hurricane
NOAA	May 23, 2013	13 – 20	7 – 11	3 – 6
Colorado State University	Jun 3, 2013	18	9	4
Tropical Storm Risk	May 24, 2013	15	8	3
United Kingdom Met Office	May 15, 2013	10 - 18	4 - 14	NA
Institute of Meteorology, Cuba	May 4, 2013	17	9	NA
AccuWeather	May 19, 2013	16	9	5
Florida State University	May 31, 2013	12 - 17	5 - 10	NA
<b>Consensus*</b>	<b>Jun 3, 2013</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>
61-yr Antigua Climatology/Average <sup>1</sup>	1950 - 2010	0.7	0.4	0.2
61-yr Atlantic Climatology/Average	1950 - 2010	10.9	6.2	2.7
30-yr Atlantic Climatology/Average	1981 - 2010	12.1	6.4	2.7

Table 1: The Atlantic Hurricane Season Forecast - 2013. \*The Consensus forecast is the mean of the June and May forecasts issued by the various groups. Annual averages (1981 – 2010): 12.1 named storms, including 6.4 hurricanes of which 2.7 intense hurricanes. <sup>1</sup>Storms passing within 105 nautical miles of Antigua. NOAA – National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration.

### What does this mean for Antigua and Barbuda?

Although there have been great advancements in the science of tropical cyclone (depression, tropical storm and hurricane), the science has not yet reached the stage where accurate predictions can be made of how many cyclones will form in a given year. Also, the science cannot accurately predict when and where these systems will move or make landfall months in advance. The details of the large-scale weather patterns that direct the path of these cyclones cannot be predicted more than a few days into the future. However, for the current active era (1995 – present), there is around a 39% chance or 4 in 10 chances of one or more hurricanes affecting Antigua (directly or indirectly) this season; this is around 10% above the long term chance.

### The 2012 Hurricane Season

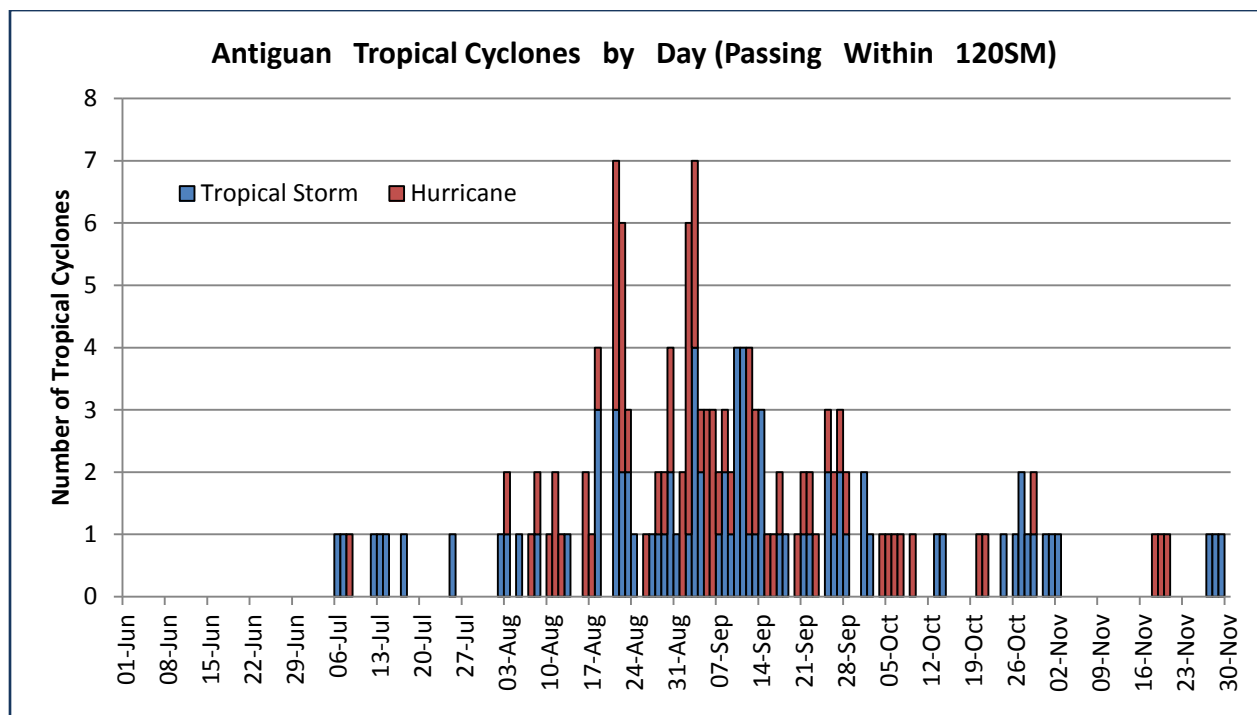
The 2012 Atlantic Hurricane Season produced nineteen (19) named storms. Of the nineteen (19) storms, ten (10) became hurricanes and one (1) strengthened to achieve major hurricane status - category three (3) or higher on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale. The strongest tropical cyclone for the season, in terms of pressure was Hurricane Sandy with peak winds of 110 mph and minimum pressure of 940 mb;

however, category 3, Major Hurricane Michael had the highest sustained winds of 115 mph and minimum pressure of 964 mb. Relative to Antigua and Barbuda, Isaac and Rafael brushed Antigua and Barbuda as tropical storms.

A number of records were or nearly broken during the 2012 hurricane season. The season had a hectic start and by June 23 Debby formed and become the earliest 4<sup>th</sup> named storm on record. Prior to the official start of the hurricane season, June 1, there were two pre-season storms – Alberto and Chris – the second time on record two storms form in May in a given year, May 1887 was the only other time. It was also the first time since 1908 two named storms preceded the hurricane season and the third time on record. The most intense hurricane, in terms of lowest central pressure, was Hurricane Sandy; it is also considered the largest known Atlantic hurricane by gale diameter on record. Hurricane Nadine was the fifth longest-lived tropical cyclone on record. In addition, August 2012 was tied with August 2004, September 2002, and September 2010 for most number of named storms in a particular month, at eight.

### It Only Takes One

Regardless of the numbers, we should always approach the hurricane season in the same manner each year: be aware and be prepared. The prevention of the loss of life and property from tropical cyclones is a responsibility that should be shared by all. As a reminder, recall our lesson from Hurricane George of 1998: it only takes one hurricane to make it a bad season. Accordingly, the Meteorological Service will play its usual role in alerting the public of any tropical cyclone that may form and threaten Antigua and Barbuda, the Leeward Islands and the British Virgin Islands. We endeavour to provide weather and climate information for the protect life, property, livelihood and the enhancement of the economy. Although the hurricane season officially runs from June 1 through November 30 each year, tropical cyclones can and have occurred outside the season – be prepared!



Graph 1: Antiguan Tropical Cyclones – distribution of tropical cyclones within 120 statute miles of Antigua (1851 – 2012)

For more information see the links below or email me at [dale\\_destin@yahoo.com](mailto:dale_destin@yahoo.com). You are also welcome to follow us via [twitter](#) [facebook](#) [youtube](#) and [blog](#) .

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