



Hurricane Wilma Strikes Southern Florida

Fact Sheet

Event date: October 15-26, 2005

Peak winds: 185 mph

Landfall winds: 120 mph

Minimum pressure: 882 mb

Landfall pressure: 950 mb

Maximum storm surge: 12-18 ft near landfall

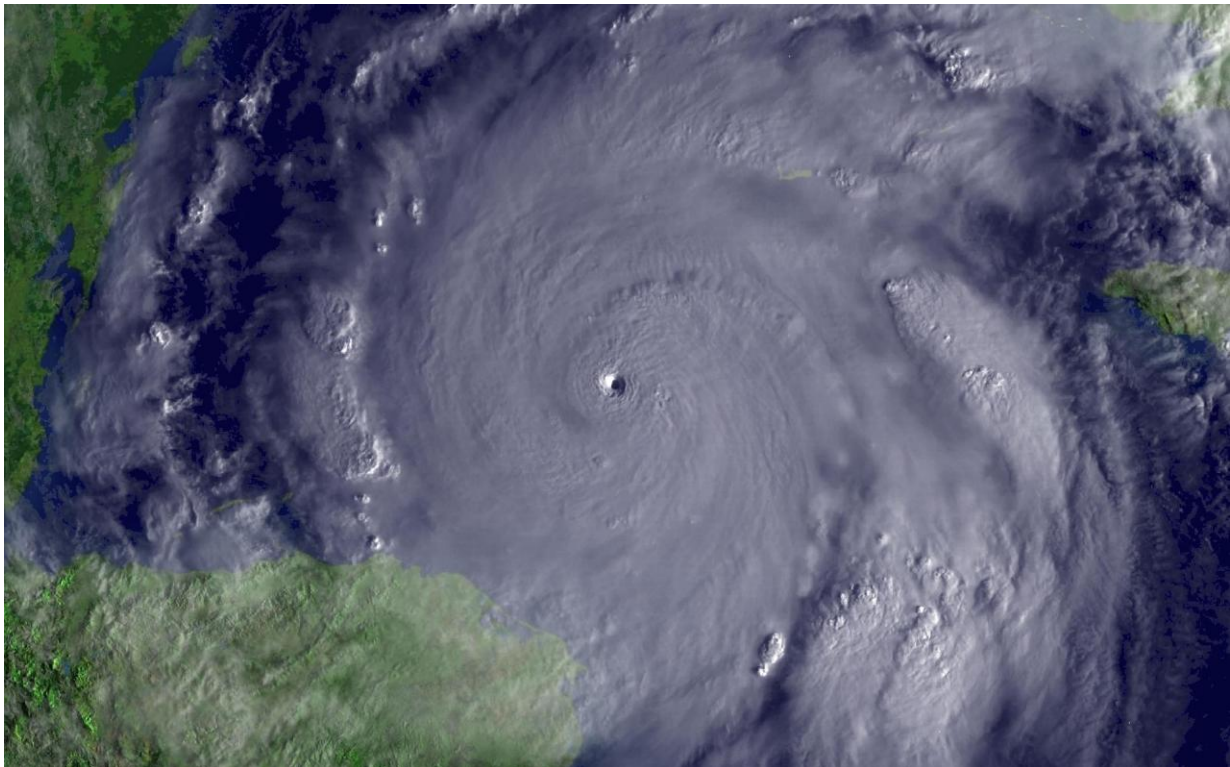


Figure 1. Wilma at peak intensity in the Caribbean Sea, with a central minimum pressure of 882 mb and only a 5 mile wide eye.

Summary of event: Hurricane Wilma was the strongest hurricane ever recorded in the Atlantic basin with a minimum central pressure of 882 mb, and peak winds of 185 mph. Fortunately however, after an eyewall replacement cycle, Wilma weakened, and made landfall in Cape Romano, FL as a category 3 hurricane on the Saffir-Simpson scale. Radar estimates a storm total precipitation maximum of 10-12 inches in Polk County. Hurricane force winds were felt as far north as Lee County, where 208,000 people lost power. This is where the most extensive damage was seen in the Tampa Bay region. Hundreds of trees were uprooted throughout the entire Tampa Bay area, and property damage was moderate to major for poorly constructed buildings such as mobile homes. Tide departures became negative across the region as winds from the hurricane blew water out of the bays.

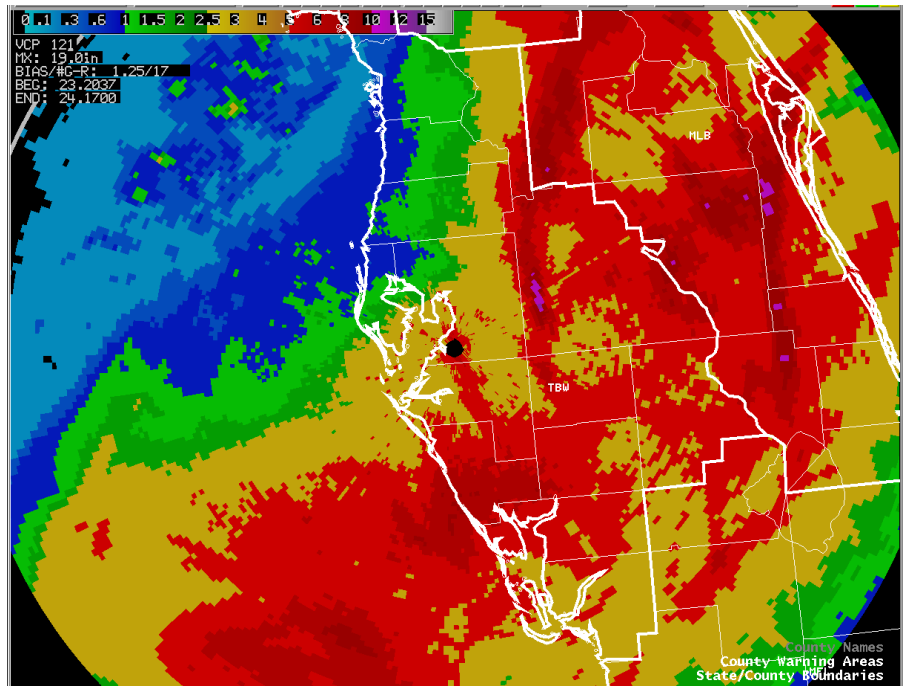


Figure 2. Storm total precipitation for Hurricane Wilma, beginning October 23, 2005 at 2037 UTC and ending October 24, 2005 at 1700 UTC.



Figure 3. Damage to aluminum sided building in Bonita Beach, FL from Hurricane Wilma.

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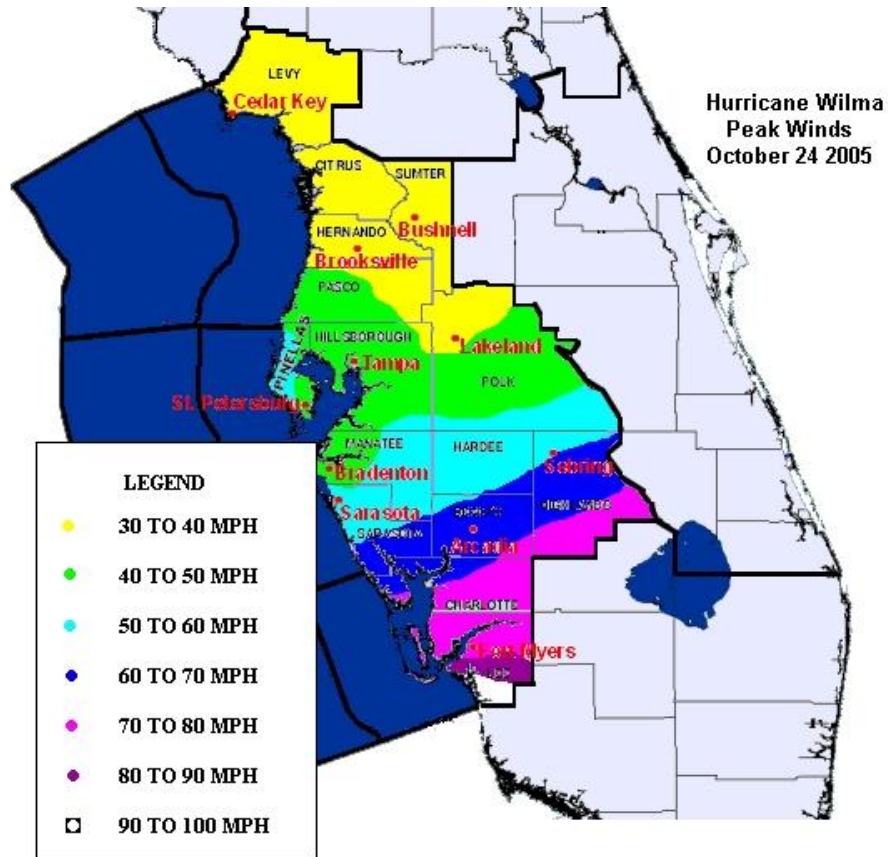


Figure 4. Peak wind gusts observed across the Tampa Bay area.

Links for more information:

<http://www.srh.noaa.gov/tbw/?n=tampabayweatherhurricanewilma>.

Acknowledgements: National Weather Service, Tampa Bay Area.