

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE



WEATHER BUREAU

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NOTES ON THE NAMING OF HURRICANES

Present procedure in the Atlantic, Caribbean, and Gulf of Mexico.

Girls' names have been used by the Weather Bureau to identify tropical cyclones in the Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean Sea, and Gulf of Mexico since 1953. In 1960 a semi-permanent list of four sets of names in alphabetical order was introduced. A separate set of names is used each year, beginning with the first name in each set. The letters Q, U, X, Y, and Z are not included because of the scarcity of names beginning with those letters. After four years, when the four sets have been used, the sets are used over again in the same manner. If a major hurricane seriously affects the United States, the name assigned to it is "retired" for 10 years and another name substituted in the list.

The list of names is as follows:

- 1963 - Arlene, Beulah, Cindy, Debra, Edith, Flora, Ginny, Helena, Irene, Janice, Kristy, Laura, Margo, Nona, Orchid, Portia, Rachel, Sandra, Terese, Verna, Wallis.
- 1964 - Abby, Brenda, Cleo, Dora, Ethel, Florence, Gladys, Hilda, Isbell, Janet, Katy, Lila, Molly, Nita, Odette, Paula, Roxie, Stella, Trudy, Vesta, Winny.
- 1965 - Anna, Betsy, Carol, Debbie, Elena, Frances, Gerda, Holly, Inga, Jenny, Kara, Laurie, Martha, Netty, Orva, Peggy, Rhoda, Sadie, Tanya, Virgy, Wenda.
- 1966 - Alma, Becky, Celia, Dorothy, Ella, Flossy, Greta, Hallie, Inez, Judith, Kendra, Lois, Marsha, Noreen, Orpha, Patty, Rena, Sherry, Thora, Vicky, Wilna.

It should be emphasized that the names of particular individuals have not been chosen for inclusion in the list of hurricane names.

Why hurricanes are named.

Experience shows that the use of girls' names, in written as well as in spoken communications, is shorter, quicker and less subject to error than the older more cumbersome latitude-longitude identification methods. These advantages are especially important in exchanging detailed storm information between hundreds of widely scattered stations, airports, coastal bases and ships at sea.

The use of easily remembered names greatly reduces confusion when two or more tropical storms occur at the same time. For example, one hurricane can be moving slowly westward in the Gulf of Mexico, while at exactly the same time another hurricane can be moving rapidly northward along the Atlantic Coast. In the past, confusion and false rumors have arisen when storm advisories broadcast from one radio station were mistaken for warnings concerning an entirely different storm located hundreds of miles away.

Hurricane identifiers should be short, clearly pronounced, quickly recognized and easily remembered. These requirements can be appreciated when one realizes that a single hurricane (such as Hurricane Carla in September 1961) can prompt millions of additional telephone calls, thousands of additional news bulletins over radio and television stations, numerous newspaper stories, and countless telegrams, written messages, advices, warnings, and oral instructions among the millions of people who may be affected.

Suggestions have been made to designate hurricanes by numbers (1-2-3), by English letters (A-B-C), by Greek letters (Alpha-Beta-Gamma), by boys' names (Arthur-Ben-Christopher), by the phonetic alphabet used by our military services during World War II (Able-Baker-Charlie), by the International Civil Aviation Organization's phonetic alphabet (Alfa-Bravo-Coca), by the names of animals (Antelope-Bear-Coyote) or by descriptive adjectives (Annoying, Blustery, Churning). The complete list of suggestions received covers a wide range from little-known mythological characters and historical personalities to well-known people, places and things.

History of hurricane names.

For several hundred years many hurricanes in the West Indies were named after the particular saint's day on which the hurricane occurred. Mr. I. R. Tannehill describes in his book "Hurricanes" the major tropical storms of recorded history, and mentions many hurricanes named after saints. For example, there was "Hurricane Santa Ana" which struck Puerto Rico with exceptional violence on July 26, 1825, and "San Felipe" (the first) and "San Felipe" (the second) which hit Puerto Rico on September 13 in both 1876 and 1928.

The first written mention of the use of a girl's name for a storm, as by a forecaster when studying weather charts, may have been in the novel "Storm" written by George R. Stewart, published by Random House in 1941, and recently filmed by Walt Disney. During World War II this practice became widespread in weather map discussions among forecasters, especially Air Force and Navy meteorologists who plotted the movements of storms over the wide expanse of the Pacific Ocean.

Pacific names.

Girls' names are also used to identify typhoons and hurricanes in the Pacific. One set of 4 alphabetical lists is used for hurricanes and typhoons in the Central and Western North Pacific and another set of 4 alphabetical lists in the Eastern North Pacific. In the Pacific, unlike the Atlantic, each entire list is used; the first name used each year is the name following that last used in the preceding year. Names are occasionally changed on the basis of experience with their use. The lists follow:

Eastern North Pacific:

Annette, Bonny, Celeste, Diana, Estelle, Fernanda, Gwen, Hyacinth, Iva, Joanne, Kathleen, Liza, Madeline, Naomi, Orla, Pauline, Rebecca, Simone, Tara, Valerie, Willa.

Ava, Bernice, Claudia, Doreen, Emily, Florence, Glenda, Hazel, Irah, Jennifer, Katherine, Lillian, Mona, Natalie, Odessa, Prudence, Roslyn, Sylvia, Tillie, Victoria, Wallie.

Adele, Blanca, Connie, Dolores, Eileen, Francesca, Gretchen, Helga, Ione, Joyce, Kirsten, Lorraine, Maggie, Norma, Orlene, Patricia, Rosalie, Selma, Toni, Vivian, Winona.

Agatha, Bridget, Carlotta, Denise, Eleanor, Francene, Georgette, Hilary, Ilsa, Jewel, Katrina, Lily, Monica, Nanette, Olivia, Priscilla, Ramona, Sharon, Terry, Veronica, Winifred.

Central and Western North Pacific:

Agnes, Bess, Carmen, Della, Elaine, Faye, Gloria, Hester, Irma, Judy, Kit, Lola, Mamie, Nina, Ora, Phyllis, Rita, Susan, Tess, Viola, Winnie.

Alice, Betty, Cora, Doris, Elsie, Flossie, Grace, Helen, Ida, June, Kathy, Lorna, Marie, Nancy, Olga, Pamela, Ruby, Sally, Tilda, Violet, Wilda.

Anita, Billie, Clara, Dot, Ellen, Fran, Georgia, Hope, Iris, Joan, Kate, Louise, Marge, Nora, Opal, Patsy, Ruth, Sarah, Thelma, Vera, Wanda.

Amy, Babe, Carla, Dinah, Emma, Freda, Gilda, Harriet, Ivy, Jean, Kim, Lucy, Mary, Nadine, Olive, Polly, Rose, Shirley, Trix, Virginia, Wendy.