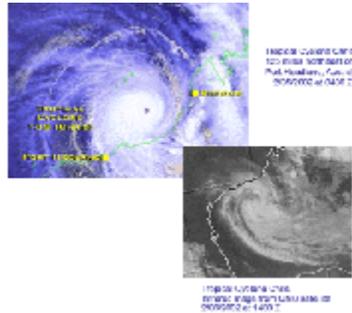


Climate-Watch, February 2002

National Climatic Data Center - (last update Feb 22, 2002)



Mosaic Satellite Image of Tropical System Chris
(Click on the image for a larger view)

Review

Tropical Cyclones in the Southern Hemisphere

Tropical Cyclone Chris affected the sparsely populated region of the northern Australia coast on the 5th. Winds with the storm gusted up to 200 kilometers per hour (125 miles per hour) battering remote communities. The center of cyclone passed to the south-west of Port Hedland, a mining town and port of 14,000 people. The storm weakened and then dissipated late early on the 7th over interior Western Australia. Chris was the first tropical storm of the southern hemisphere summer cyclone season on the northwest Australian coast. Additional information is available from the Australian Bureau of Meteorology- [Perth Tropical Cyclone Warning Centre](#). Meanwhile, according to media reports on the 5th, torrential rain, flash floods and landslides caused havoc along Australia's more heavily populated east coast, more than 3,200 kilometers (2,000 miles) away.

Weather Log - February 1-10th, 2002

According to media reports **gale-force winds hit the British Isles** on the 1st with Ireland bearing the brunt of the storm, four days after violent winds killed at least seven people. High winds and heavy rain tore across Ireland with up to 25,000 homes left without power and motorists forced to abandon their cars due to flooding. Winds toppled trees and power lines as well. Worst-hit were the southern counties of Cork and Kerry and Galway and Mayo in the west of the country. In England, high winds had abated in the southwest of the country, a Met Office spokeswoman said, but gusting winds could reach 80 or 90 mph in the north later in the day.

Britain's flood-watching Environmental Agency said 35 flood warnings remained in force across England and Wales due largely to seasonally high tides coupled with high winds.

According to media reports, **constant overnight rain triggered more flooding** in Indonesia's capital Jakarta early on February 1st. Forty people so far were killed throughout the vast archipelago this week from flooding and landslides triggered by monsoon rains that some officials said would peak in Jakarta in the middle of February. More than 300,000 residents in Jakarta -- a city of 12 million people -- have been taking shelter in mosques, churches and even graveyards to escape some of the worst floods in the capital in decades, giving rise to health fears. The port city has been a picture of chaos this week, with buses left abandoned on flooded roads and mountains of garbage washing by the windows of many homes. Thousands of residents have also been unable to reach their offices. Floodwaters have reached up to six meters (20 feet) in several areas, forcing city authorities to rescue residents in rubber rafts. Many homes have been left without power. Chronic flooding, mostly caused by damaged water ducts and poor drainage in cities like Jakarta, hits Indonesia every year during the wet season, from October to April. As of February 7th, at least 142 people have died across Indonesia in two weeks of crippling floods, according to local officials. In east Java, flooding engulfed several towns including Situbondo and Bondowoso, where 75 died.

Heavy rains hammered Peru on February 5th, triggering landslides and turning roads and shantytowns into rivers of mud and debris in the capital Lima and across the Andean nation, officials said. "The rains are coming at us from all sides and we have to take precautionary measures," President Alejandro Toledo told reporters during a visit to the mud-strewn outskirts of Lima. According to radio reports, rains also soaked the city of Tumbes near Peru's northern border with Ecuador. "Rains are normal during this time of year but this is heavier than usual," said one civil defense official in Lima who requested anonymity. January and February are the hottest months of Peru's South American summer but the wettest months in the Andes, the backbone of the country. In 1998, violent storms, flooding, and mudslides killed more than 200 people and left thousands homeless when Peru was hit by El Nino, a periodic weather phenomenon.

According to media reports, up to 20 people were feared killed by either asphyxiation or from hypothermia after an **avalanche blocked Afghanistan's Salang Tunnel during a howling blizzard**, witnesses said on the 7th. The Soviet-built tunnel, the world's highest at 11,034 ft, was only re-opened last month after it was cleared of tons of debris left over from war in the 1990s. Shocked survivors stumbled to safety through waist-high snow drifts on Thursday to tell of a harrowing night spent in blizzard conditions in temperatures of minus 22 Fahrenheit.

Blowing snow cut visibility nearly to zero and shut down hundreds of miles of major highways Saturday February 9th, as a storm gathered strength on the northern Plains. Up to 2 feet of snow had fallen by midday in the Black Hills of eastern Wyoming, and winter storm warnings and blizzard warnings were posted for parts of Wyoming, Colorado, Nebraska, South Dakota, Minnesota and Iowa, the National Weather Service said.

Weather Log - February 11-20th, 2002

For the second day in a row, high winds whipped across parts of southern California on the 9th and 10th. The winds knocked out power for for hundreds of residents, stranding at least one boater at sea and uprooting dozens of trees. According to media reports, nearly 1,000 firefighters were **battling to control a fire that tore through homes and dense brush** Sunday hope to have the smoldering blaze fully contained by Tuesday night the 12th. The [brush fire \(seen as a red hot spot on the satellite image\)](#) , maneuvered by the winds, continued to push west yesterday, away from homes and across the expanse of Camp Pendleton. In its wake is more than 5,200 acres of scorched earth, 34 homes and six other structures destroyed, and two fire engines charred. The fire is now 60 percent contained and cost an estimated \$1.14 million to fight. Dark smoke rose over the base's eastern end as firefighters let isolated blazes burn themselves out. A huge fist of gray-black smoke could be seen from much of San Diego County.

According to media reports, **bulldozers cleared mud from the streets**, and rescue workers on pulled more bodies from swollen rivers around Bolivia's capital, bringing the death toll from powerful rainstorms/thunderstorm to 69 people. Mayor Juan del Granado said on the 20th, that another 150 people were injured and 122 families who lost their homes were sheltered at the city's main soccer stadium. He put the damage at \$60 million. The storm on Tuesday the 19th, was the most powerful in the capital's history, collapsing scores of homes and cutting electricity under a torrent of rain and hail that quickly flooded La Paz, which is located at the lowest point of a natural bowl surrounded by the Andes mountains. The storm, which began about 3 p.m. Tuesday and lasted nearly an hour, flooded streets in the city center, turning the main street into a muddy river. Development Minister Ramiro Cavero said almost a gallon of water per square foot fell on the city in less than an hour Tuesday. Many of the dead were vendors who ran to street underpasses where they drowned in flash flooding. Authorities said the United Nations offered to coordinate reconstruction works. The National Meteorological Service said the city has not had such an intense rain in the 50 years it has kept records.

Weather Log - February 21-28th, 2002

According to Thai government officials, so far this year at least 36 of Thailand's 73 provinces have already been **touched by drought with concern over future rice production**. The Thai government Meteorological Department director-general Prapansak Buranaprapa told Reuters the impact of a possible El Nino on Thai weather would be felt at least six to nine months from now, as a small reduction in rainfall during the monsoon season. We might only get 10 percent less rain than a maximum rain of 1,200 millimetres during the rainy season".

Note: Hazard event satellite images available courtesy of [NOAA OSEI Satellite Images](#).

Selected U.S. City and State Extremes

The [Selected U.S. City and State Extremes](#) provides a list of new records that were set across the U.S. during February 2002.

Additional Resources

- [Recent Global Daily Data](#)
- [NOAA 2002 Hurricane Season Forecast](#)
- [NCDC El Nino / La Nina](#)
- [NNDC Climate Data Online \(for long-term climate data\)](#)
- [NCDC Climatic Extremes and Weather Events](#)
- [Additional NOAA OSEI Satellite Images](#)(Western Fires, Tropical Storms, etc)
- [NCDC Storm Event Database](#)

Citing the Article

Ross, Tom; Lott, Neal; Graumann, Axel; McCown, Sam; “Climate Watch February 2002”; February 2002; NOAA’s National Climatic Data Center, Asheville, NC