Hurricane Eloise - 1975

- Florida’s first major hurricane in 10 years
- Long path of destruction in the Caribbean as a tropical storm
- Rapidly intensified north of Yucatan Peninsula in Gulf of Mexico
- Initially forecast to hit Mobile, but took an unexpected turn northeast overnight, causing most Panhandle residents to go to bed still thinking it was going west
- Moving quickly, leaving little time to evacuate east of Ft. Walton
- Landfall between Ft. Walton and Panama City Beach 7:30am Sept 23 as a Cat 3 hurricane with 130mph winds.
Hurricane Eloise (3) - 1975

- Storm surge estimated up to 12-16’ Bay/Walton, over 3’ west of Cedar Key to Pensacola
- Up to 15” rain (mostly west of track, which is unusual)
- Gust of 135mph at Panama City
- Anemometer at Eglin AFB blew away after 92mph gust
- Private wind instruments recorded highest gust of 156mph
- Winds flipped and destroyed planes, cars sandblasted to bare metal
• 40 mile wide heavy damage zone
• ¾ of all structures along “Miracle Strip” received some level of damage
• 8,000 families suffered losses
• 500 businesses destroyed
• Agriculture (fish/shrimp) losses over $2 million
• 0 direct deaths, but 2 indirect deaths (cardiac arrest) and numerous injuries (glass cuts during cleanup) after the storm
• Property losses $150 million (1975 USD)
Hurricane Donna (1960)

- After battering Cuba, this so-called “killer hurricane” turned toward the Florida Keys
- Weather Bureau described the storm: “it [Donna] packed the same energy as a hydrogen bomb exploding every 8 minutes”
- Donna made landfall near Marathon at 2:30am on September 9, 1960
- Max winds 140 mph (Cat 4), gusts to 180mph
- A radar image shows an eye about 21 miles in diameter and an eyewall another 17-20 miles wide.
- Forward motion slowed as it crossed the Keys and moved toward the mainland of southwest Florida.
- Second landfall just south of Naples (140mph)
- The storm passed over Central FL near before crossing the Atlantic coastline south of Flagler Beach on September 11.
- What made Donna so damaging was the sheer size of the storm, its intensity and its slow movement across Florida (9-13mph).
Marathon

- winds in excess of 120mph lasted over 4 hours.
- severe coastal flooding
- Extensive damage to 75% of buildings and destroyed several subdivisions in Marathon
• Storm surge of 8-9.5 ft was reported at Marathon, with 9-13.5 feet of surge north at Matecumbe Key.
• Walls of water surged inland, gutting hotels and larger buildings, tearing motel cottages from their foundations, carrying docks, trailers, houseboats and other forms of habitation out into the bays and inlets.
• Bridges linking the Keys destroyed
At the Everglades National Park, winds were estimated at around 150 mph. Inland over Hardee County, wind gusts measured 150 mph. Donna dumped heavy rains from Florida to Maine. 10-12 inches of rain fell across the Peninsula of Florida near the hurricane's track.
Naples/Ft. Myers/ Port Charlotte

- Additionally, 75% of homes damaged in Fort Myers Beach
- Half of all buildings were destroyed in the city of Everglades
- Extensive crop loss (approx. half of grapefruit, 10% of orange and tangerine, and nearly all of the avocado crop)
Disaster, Thy Name Was Donna
And For Many Stark Despair

In Short...
The City of Palms almost became the City of Ex-Palms.

Exclamation of one fellow watching the 121-mile an hour gusts: Gosh Donna!

It's a question which you miss the most, hot water or air-conditioning.

Chamber Of Horrors
In Hurricane's Wake

ONLY SEAGULLS REMAIN
30,000 Evacuated From Gulf Beaches

NAPLES, COUNTY AREAS DIGGING OUT;
FORD PUTS DAMAGE AT $25 MILLION

Devastation Runs Heavy Everywhere

Many Noted To Hear The Word 'Evacuate'
Hurricane Donna was widely regarded as the most destructive hurricane to date in Florida history.

The state suffered significant losses from Donna with total damages estimated at $300 million ($2.2 billion in 2009 dollars).

Agricultural losses were pegged at $362 million.

Thirteen people lost their lives due to Donna in Florida with 122 hospitalized injuries.

An estimated 1844 homes were lost during the storm, another 3253 suffered major damage, and 31,000 minor damage.
Exercise Wind Swath