NASA spots Tropical Storm Howard developing in Eastern Pacific

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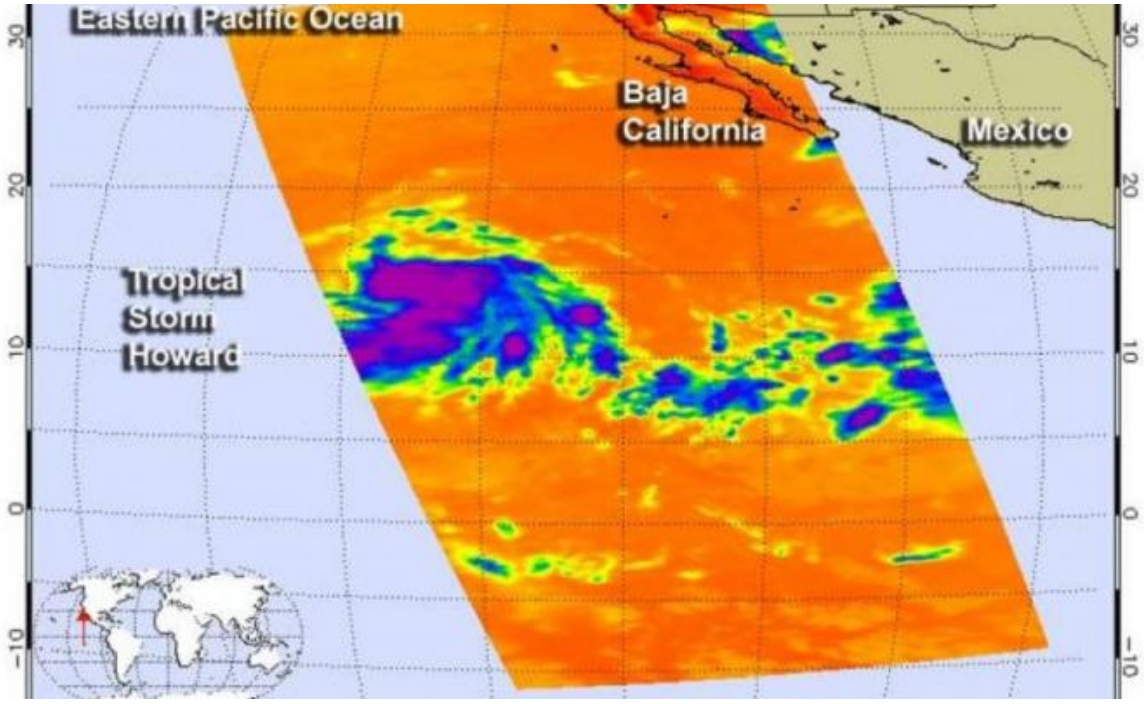

Infrared data from NASA's Aqua satellite showed strong thunderstorms within the ninth tropical depression of the Eastern Pacific Ocean, as the storm was strengthening. Early on Aug. 1 Tropical Depression 9E intensified into a tropical storm and was renamed Howard.

Tropical Storm Howard, the ninth tropical cyclone to develop in 30 days in the Eastern Pacific is also the eighth named storm of the 2016 season. Tropical Depression 1E in June was the only tropical cyclone that developed this season and did not reach tropical storm status.

On July 31, at 5:05 p.m. EDT (9:05 p.m. UTC) the Atmospheric Infrared Sounder or AIRS instrument aboard NASA's Aqua satellite captured infrared data on Tropical Depression 9E. The AIRS data showed that the coldest cloud top temperatures of at least minus 63 F (minus 53 C) and strongest thunderstorms circled the low-level center with the exception of the northern quadrant of the storm. Strong storms also fed into the low level center from a band of thunderstorms southwest of the center.

Over the course of 12 hours, the cloud pattern of the cyclone improved. At 5 a.m. EDT (9: a.m. UTC) on Aug. 1, the depression became a tropical storm. At that time, Tropical Storm Howard's maximum sustained winds were near 40 mph (65 kph) with higher gusts. The center of Tropical Storm Howard was located near 16.1 degrees north latitude and 122.9 degrees west longitude, about 965 miles (1,555 km) west-southwest of the southern tip of Baja California, Mexico. Since Howard is far enough away from land areas there are no coastal watches or warnings in effect.

The National Hurricane Center NHC said that Howard was moving toward the west-northwest near 10 mph (17 kph) and this general motion is expected to continue for the next couple of days. The estimated minimum central pressure was 1,005 millibars.

The NHC forecast indicated that some additional strengthening is forecast today and Tuesday morning. Then,

gradual weakening is expected to begin by Tuesday night and Wednesday when Howard moves over cooler water.