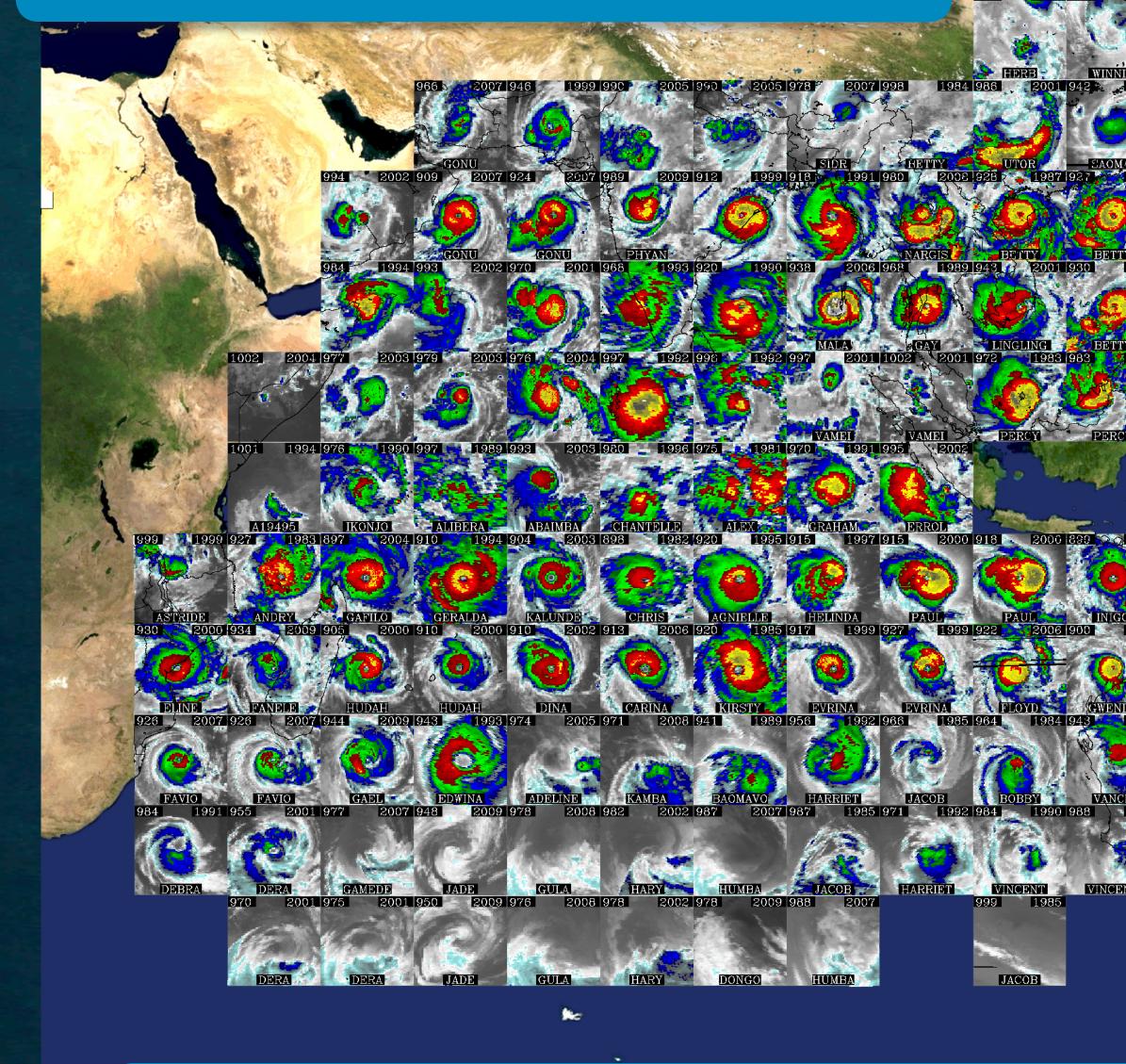
Tropical Cyclones

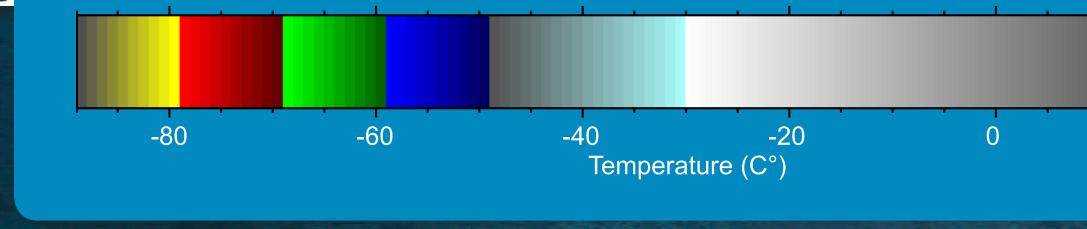
The tropical cyclone is one of the most intense and feared storms of the world; winds can exceed 200 mph and its rains are torrential. They form over all the tropical oceans except rarely in the South Atlantic and the eastern South Pacific. Fully mature tropical cyclones range in diameter from 70 to well over 700 miles. The following are regional names for tropical cyclones: hurricanes in the Atlantic, typhoons in the Western Pacific, and cyclones in the Indian Ocean and Australia.

In regions where tropical cyclones form – such as the East Atlantic – they begin as small groups of tall, cold clouds. They generally move west and organize into circular and spiral shapes that have lower central pressures and stronger winds. The strongest storms have taller and colder clouds and well-developed eyes, which are warm, cloud free regions at the storm center. Storms become less organized and weaken when they move over land. They also turn to the east as they move toward the poles. In these regions, the coldest clouds move away from the storm center.



Satellite Data

Satellites sense energy – temperature – emitted from the surface or cloud top. Cloud temperature is related to the cloud height, with colder clouds being taller.



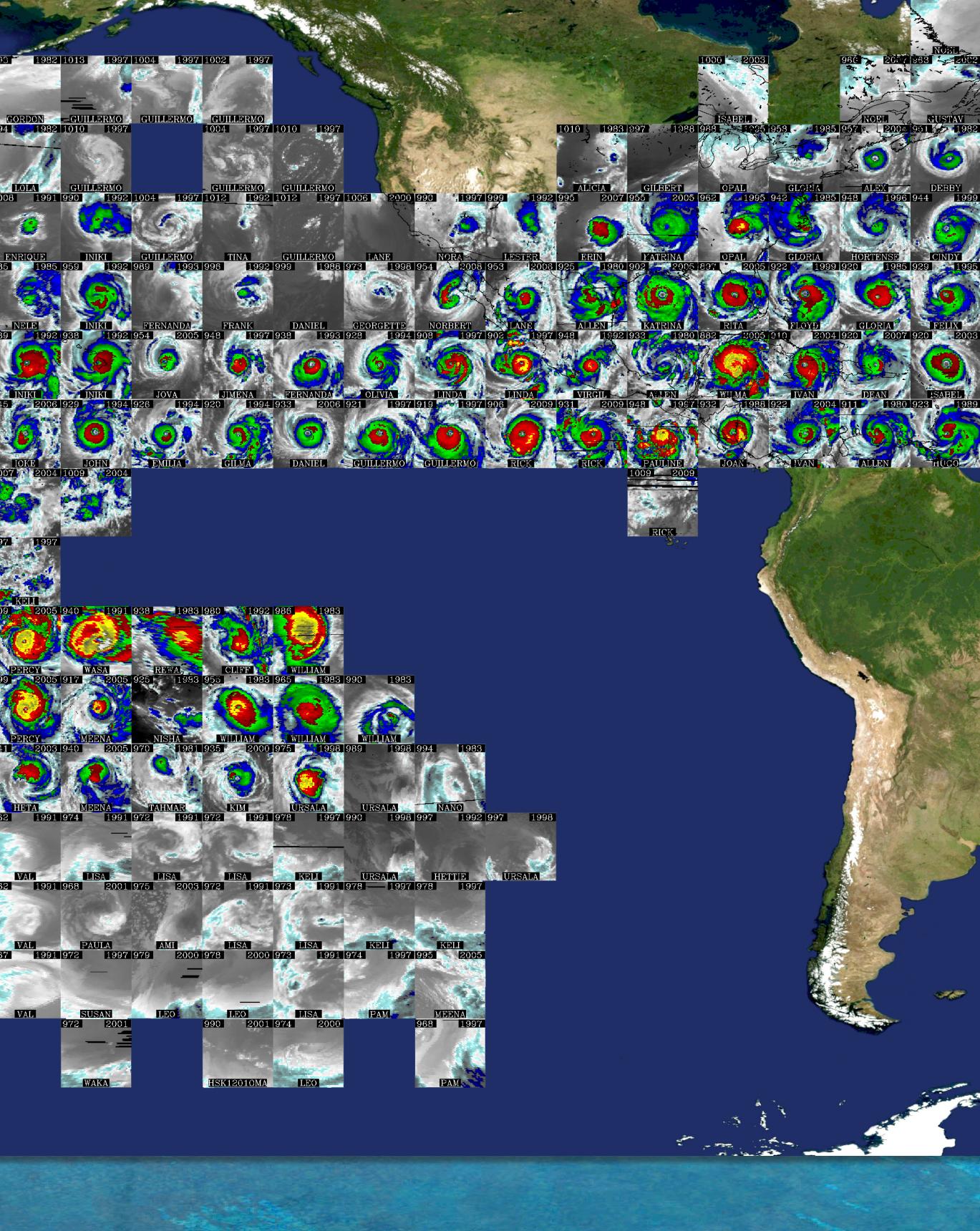


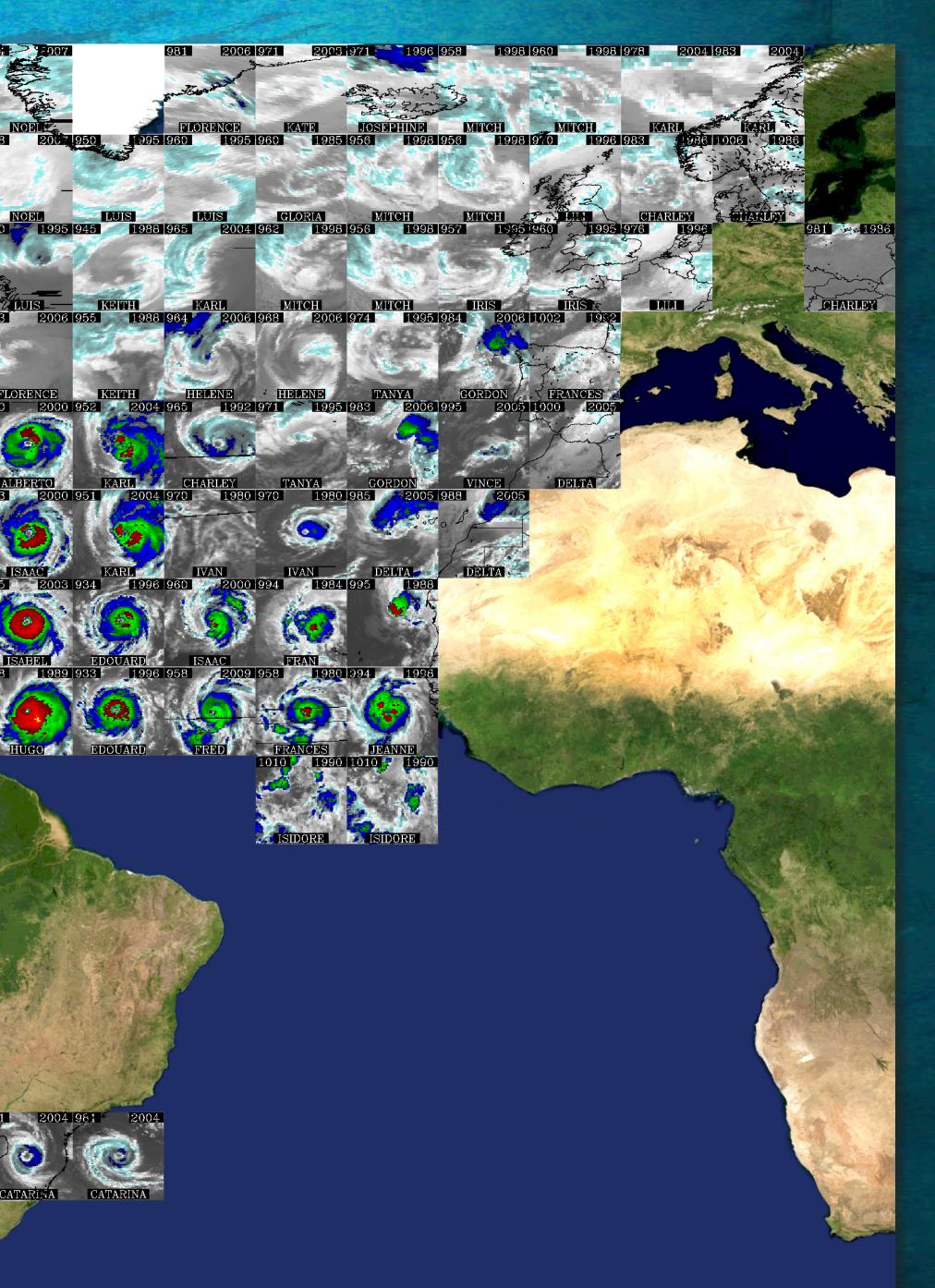


Strongest Tropical Cyclones: 1980 – 2009 A 30-year collage of Hurricane Satellite (HURSAT) data.



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Satellite imagery was available from 1980 through 2009. The image of the strongest cyclone in each 500 mile region during this time period is shown. The storm image is remapped to show the storm center at the grid box center, so positions of storms are not accurate. Storm names, year and minimum central pressure at the time of the satellite image are shown. Missing satellite data can appear as black lines in the imagery.

