

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a black sleeveless top, stands with her hands open in a presentational gesture. To her left is a map of the Atlantic Ocean and parts of North and South America. A white line on the map traces the path of Hurricane Sandy from the Caribbean Sea, up the East Coast of the United States, and into the Canadian Maritimes. The text 'TRACK OF HURRICANE SANDY' is overlaid on the map in yellow.

**TRACK OF  
HURRICANE SANDY**

1  
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:03,290

As we head into the 2015 Atlantic hurricane season,

2  
00:00:03,310 --> 00:00:06,360

I bet you didn't realize it's been nine years

3  
00:00:06,380 --> 00:00:09,440

since the United States has had a hurricane make landfall

4  
00:00:09,460 --> 00:00:11,380

that's been category 3 or higher.

5  
00:00:11,680 --> 00:00:13,670

A category 3 or higher hurricane

6  
00:00:13,690 --> 00:00:15,510

is considered a 'major' storm

7  
00:00:15,530 --> 00:00:18,270

with winds greater than 111mph.

8  
00:00:18,290 --> 00:00:20,470

Of course, storms less than Category 3,

9  
00:00:20,490 --> 00:00:25,220

like Hurricane Sandy still wreaked havoc with heavy rains and coastal storm surges.

10  
00:00:25,240 --> 00:00:30,000

So how rare is it for the U.S. to avoid a major storm for nine years?

11  
00:00:30,020 --> 00:00:33,310

Let's look back at the actual record of hurricane tracks

12  
00:00:33,330 --> 00:00:35,370

for the last several decades.

13  
00:00:35,760 --> 00:00:38,300

Green and yellow lines means they didn't make landfall

14

00:00:38,320 --> 00:00:40,810

or they did and weren't major hurricanes.

15

00:00:40,830 --> 00:00:44,730

Red lines are the major hurricanes that did make landfall.

16

00:00:44,750 --> 00:00:48,730

Some years like 1964, 2004, and 2005

17

00:00:48,750 --> 00:00:51,820

have seen 2 or more storms hit our coasts.

18

00:00:51,840 --> 00:00:54,400

We can also see that gaps of a few seasons

19

00:00:54,420 --> 00:00:56,390

with no major storms is common.

20

00:00:56,410 --> 00:00:58,960

But none as long as nine years.

21

00:00:59,470 --> 00:01:02,660

A new NASA study used a model to gauge hurricane activity.

22

00:01:02,680 --> 00:01:06,830

They found that every year, there's roughly a 40% chance

23

00:01:06,850 --> 00:01:09,130

that one or more category 3 storms

24

00:01:09,150 --> 00:01:10,450

will make landfall.

25

00:01:10,470 --> 00:01:15,650

And that a nine-year gap only comes along every 177 years.

26

00:01:16,660 --> 00:01:19,550

But that doesn't make a major storm any more likely for this year.

27

00:01:19,570 --> 00:01:22,200

Just like when you flip a coin 9 times in a row

28

00:01:22,220 --> 00:01:24,180

and you get tails every time,

29

00:01:24,200 --> 00:01:27,890

the odds of heads versus tails on that tenth flip remain the same.

30

00:01:27,910 --> 00:01:31,500

Just to be clear, it hasn't been a quiet nine years for hurricanes.

31

00:01:31,520 --> 00:01:32,870

They've been out there.

32

00:01:32,890 --> 00:01:36,400

It's just that the major storms haven't made landfall.