

## Northwesters



Climatically the year can be divided into two seasons-the wet, summer season, generally from mid-May through October and the dry, winter season, from November to April. Occasional surges of cooler air from continental North America, the leading edge of which is called a cold front is the main winter system affecting the Cayman Islands from late October through early April. These systems are the major producers of rainfall during the dry winter months. During the summer months the major rain producing



systems are called tropical waves or inverted troughs. Very strong tropical waves may evolve into a tropical depression or tropical storm.

### Exercise Caution

The stronger cold fronts tend to bring strong north to northwest winds and rough seas, especially along the western and northern coasts. Fifteen and twenty foot waves hammer the coastline leading to a halt in water-sports and can cause port activities to close of the west side. Vessels, which do not heed the weather forecast to move to safe harbor, are at risk to be



damaged or destroyed by the very rough seas produced by such a system.

On average the Cayman Islands observes the passage of some ten to fifteen cold fronts per year with

around three such fronts actually produce seas rough enough to require the roads to be closed along the coast.

In late December 1989 there was a cold front that brought waves big enough wash a large number of turtles out of the Turtle Farm. The holding tanks and pens were also damaged



### Rain and Wind

On Saturday January 18 2003 a cold front became stationary across the Cayman Islands. The Cayman Islands experienced an evening of torrential rainfall that resulted in widespread flooding of the capital, George Town. The National Weather Service recorded a record 9.06 inches between 1 and 7 p.m. local time. This total was so excessive that the 6 hour total was greater than any 24-hr total since records commenced in 1957.

## Waterspout and Tornado



Waterspouts occasionally occur in the coastal waters around Cayman and they are generally not a cause for concern.

Typically the wind inside the waterspout is less than 67 mph. They develop rapidly and are usually gone within 20 minutes. Waterspouts normally move very slowly. They are formed by vertical convective action and are associated with dark, flat-bottomed convective cumulus clouds.



Tornados are very rare in Cayman. When they do occur they are very

weak in comparison to the systems that occur in the United States. Weak tornados are likely in the northeast portion of strong hurricanes.



## Drought

Drought is considered to be an increasing problem for the Caribbean. Scientists who study climate change believe that our region will experience less overall rainfall.

Prolonged periods of drought can have a detrimental effect on agriculture and farming. It may also lead to increased demands on the city water supply. Raise household costs and affect the capacity of the water lens to recharge

Cayman has not experienced a drought in the true sense of the definition; however we have had a number of periods over the years where we had very low rainfall totals that have produced "drought-like" conditions.

# HAZARD MANAGEMENT CAYMAN ISLANDS

*Northwester, Tornado,  
Waterspouts and  
Drought*

*Preparing for All Hazards*



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