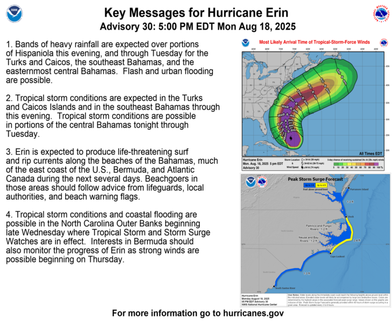
TOP STORY | EDITOR'S PICK

Carteret County braces for Hurricane Erin and potential erosion

KATHLEEN HOPEWELL NEWS-TIMES Aug 18, 2025 0



CARTERET COUNTY - Erin, the first named Atlantic hurricane of the 2025 season is slated to brush past the Crystal Coast without making landfall, about 300 miles offshore per most recent estimates, early Thursday morning.

While Carteret County does not currently have any evacuation orders announced, officials across the area are preparing for storm surges, flooding and rip currents that can extend well beyond the storm's eye, as well as resulting erosion.

A Tropical storm watch was issued from Beaufort Inlet to Duck, including the Pamlico Sound and a Storm Surge Watch was issued from Cape Lookout to Duck at 5 p.m. on Monday.

Atlantic Beach Police Chief David Clifton said, "The Town of Atlantic Beach, NC is now posturing for any potential impacts of Hurricane Erin later this week. The ABPD and ABFD will be fully staffed and will have extra personnel on stand-by ready to be deployed, as needed. We are currently in constant communication with local partners along the Crystal Coast to include but not limited to: NC Department of Transportation, Carteret County Emergency Management, NOAA, and various other agencies that would generally be activated in a natural disaster."

Chief Clifton added, "Normal town operations will not be interrupted at this point unless the storm's path shifts to the west which would increase our chances of a landfall in Carteret County," and there are no plans to close the Atlantic Beach bridge nor issue evacuation orders at this time.

The Emerald Isle, Pine Knoll Shores and Indian Beach Police Departments have not yet responded to requests for comment.

Cape Lookout National Seashore will be closing the North and South cores Tuesday at noon, and they will remain closed until Friday, according to a press release issued Monday afternoon. Cape Lookout's Natural and Cultural Resources staff member, BG Horvat says after Friday, National Park Service staff will "reassess after the storm passes and, hopefully, we'll be open as normal on Saturday, but it all depends."

Regarding potential erosion, Horvat said, "That's always a possibility, I think that's why we're taking precaution to close the North Core and South Core, because that's where the waves will be the worst."

Horvat added, with respect to erosion that may occur at Cape Lookout, "I mean, if you look back at Dorian—because that's the same area that the storm's gonna be in, not necessarily the same path—I would say there's a lot of potential for damage, given how that storm went."

Nick Wilson, Carteret County's Public Information Officer, responded to request for comment in place of the county's Shore Protection Manager, stating, "The National Weather Service office in Newport/Morehead City indicates that Hurricane Erin could lead to some beach erosion along vulnerable areas, even with the center of the storm remaining offshore."

Wilson additionally noted that the county, "monitors the coastline each year and conducts pre-storm surveys every April in preparation for hurricane season." Right before storms, the county captures drone images of the dune system and the first line of stable vegetation. After storms, beaches are assessed visually and, if a disaster was declared, they conduct broader surveys of the islands, Wilson explained.

Regardless of the storm's impact, a large-scale beach nourishment project is planned for fall 2026," Wilson also mentioned.

Greg Rudolph, the county's former Shore Protection Manager, nodded to hurricanes that have taken paths similar to Erin's currently project path in the past 20 years which impacted local shorelines without ever making landfall. These were Hurricane Edouard (1996), which caused high surf add rip currents; Hurricane Igor (2010), which, "brought significant wave action and coastal erosion," Rudolph said; Hurricane Florence (2006), that had, "similar timing and intensity to Irene," and Hurricane Larry (2021), that, "stayed well offshore but generated dangerous surf along the east coast."

So far, only Dare and Hyde counties have ordered mandatory evacuations for Hatteras Island visitors (10am Monday) and residents (7am Tuesday), and Ocracoke Island visitors and non-resident property owners (8pm Sunday) and residents (Monday 6am), respectively.

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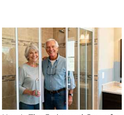
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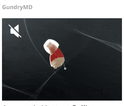
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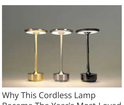
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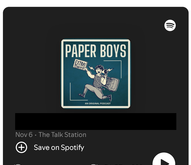

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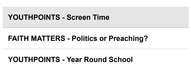

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