



# METEOROLOGICAL SERVICE NETHERLANDS ANTILLES & ARUBA

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## PRESS RELEASE

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### AUGUST 2009: HURRICANE SEASON FINALLY UNDERWAY

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The first tropical storm of the year, Ana, finally formed on August 15, more than two months after the official start of the hurricane season (average amount of tropical cyclones June through August is 4.2). The storm appeared to become a threat to the SSS Islands and for that reason the Meteorological Service of the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba issued a Tropical Storm Watch. This threat however decreased gradually as Ana started to weaken. It weakened to a tropical depression and took a more southerly track, which would keep it rather far south of the SSS Islands. A heavy shower moved over parts of St. Maarten during the early morning of August 17 and an amount of more than 20 mm of rain was measured at the airport. During the morning of August 17, the Tropical Storm Watch was discontinued.

Hurricane Bill followed in the steps of Ana but became a much stronger system. Bill however took a track which was farther north and for that reason the SSS Islands were not affected directly by this system. Since swells of this hurricane were forecast to reach these islands, the Meteorological Service of the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba issued a Small Craft Advisory and a High Surf Warning. Bill passed during the early morning of August 20 at a distance of more than 500 kilometers (300 miles) of the SSS Islands in a northwesterly direction. As expected, especially St. Maarten experienced significant swells which resulted in some coastal flooding. A single brief shower also fell over sections of this island but barely any flooding was reported.

Almost at the same time as Ana and Bill, tropical depression Four developed over the Gulf of Mexico, just west of Florida. This system rapidly became tropical storm Claudette and, within 24 hours, it made landfall in northwestern Florida, where it quickly weakened.

Tropical storm Danny developed in the final week of the month on August 26 over the northwestern Atlantic Ocean, east of the Bahamas. It moved in northwesterly direction and appeared to become a threat to the east coast of the U.S.A. Before that occurred, this system weakened again on August 29 without reaching any land area.

#### **Rainfall:**

During August 2009, there was quite a variation in the rainfall amounts in the ABC Islands. Some stations were wetter than normal while other spots received less rain than average.

Most of the rain fell during the weekend of August 22 and 23 as the result of the passage of a tropical wave. Hato Airport (Curaçao) had a month total of 42.9 mm which is about equal to the long-term average of 41.5 mm. Some parts of Bonaire also received at that time an amount of rain. Playa Pabou, for instance, received 19.1 mm on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and the month ended there with a total of 29.7 mm. Flamingo Airport was drier and had a monthly sum of 18.4 mm. This is only a little more than half of the monthly average of 35.0 mm. In Aruba, Queen Beatrix Airport got 19.2 mm of rain, which is 24% below the August average of 25.2 mm.

In St. Maarten, Princess Juliana Airport received 83 mm of rain during August 2009. This is 16% below the monthly average of 98.8 mm.

The rainfall outlook for the ABC Islands during the period October through December 2009 remains pessimistic. The latest forecasts indicate that the chance of a normal or drier than normal rainy season is 80 percent. For the SSS Islands, a normal rainy season is still in the forecast.

As is usually the case, the Meteorological Service will closely monitor the development of tropical disturbances and, in case it's necessary will issue warnings for the local authorities and population of the islands.

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