

Unusual Rainfall Events 2004-2005 for Barbados

The rainfall total of 1624.3mm (63.95 inches) for the year 2004 at the Grantley Adams' Airport represents the third highest rainfall total since 1942. The highest total of 1828.55mm (71.99 inches) occurred in 1966 while the second highest of 1713.74mm (67.47 inches) was observed in 1951.

Signs that the rainfall pattern in 2004 would be unusual was evident from as early as April when the total for that month reached 127mm (5 inches) which was almost twice the 30-year average of 59.9mm (2.36inches). The trend of above-normal rainfall continued into May and June while between August and October the monthly rainfall totals remained just below their corresponding thirty-year averages. Meanwhile, no tropical systems developed over the Atlantic Basin during the period June 1st to July 30th but there were fifteen named storms during the period July 31st to October 11th. Only one of these, "Ivan" became a Category Five hurricane. Three systems achieved Category Four status and two reached the Category Two designation.

The fifteenth and last tropical storm of the 2004 Atlantic Hurricane Season was "Otto" which was born on November 30th and was in existence until December 2nd.

However, the most outstanding rainfall events occurred in November which lead to a whopping 403.86mm (15.9 inches) at the Airport . This represents the second highest November total since that of 1991 when we recorded 513.08mm (20.2inches). The year tapered off with a December total of 107.7mm (4.24 inches) which was also above the 30-year average of 92.71mm (3.65 inches).

Below is a table showing the monthly rainfall totals for 1966 and 2004 vs the corresponding 30-year averages (1971-2000).

Rainfall (mm): 1966 and 2004 Vs 30-Year Average

Months	1966	2004	30-Yr Average
January	34.3	50.8	56.4
February	103.6	45.6	40.4
March	15	48.3	43.4
April	43.2	127	59.9
May	177.04	205	72.6
June	158.2	128	86.4
July	171.7	125	111.8
August	272.5	125.2	148.8
September	224.03	125.5	145
October	209.6	130.3	169.9

November	140	404.1	165.4
December	279.2	106.9	92.7

Conversion 25.4mm = 1inch

If there is one comparison that can be made between the wet January of 1956 and that of 2004, it is the fact that in each case, a strong hurricane passed south of Barbados. To be more precise, the previous January record of 1956 followed the passage of Hurricane "Janet" in 1955 while the very wet January, 2005 occurred in the wake of the destructive Hurricane "Ivan".