



Hurricane Florence 'nightmare' scenario shows it stalling, swinging southwest to Georgia

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Some meteorologists are warning of a "nightmare" scenario in which Hurricane Florence slows down and sits off the coast of North Carolina, bringing about a deluge of rain and hurricane-force winds for an extended period of time.

In its latest forecast, the European model — one of several top models — suggests the possibility of the storm getting stuck on or off the coast where it can retain some of its moisture and intensity and then curl around heading southwest towards the southern coast of South Carolina and Georgia. The remnants of the storm would then swing into Kentucky.

In its 5 p.m. forecast, the National Hurricane Center, which looked at multiple models, stuck pretty close to its prior outlooks which had the storm making landfall late Thursday or early Friday somewhere in the Carolinas and slowing and weakening when it gets inland, due to a high-pressure zone to its north, before turning west towards Tennessee. And though it casts some doubt on the accuracy of the European model, an accompanying discussion from NHC admits that the forecast track on Days 3-5, which would be Friday through Sunday, is "quite uncertain." While the NHC has upped its rainfall forecast to 15-25 inches, and up to 35 inches in some isolated areas, the European model says some spots could get 45 inches.

In either case, Florence is expected to be at least a powerful Category 3 storm when it nears land at the end of the week and brings the threat of damaging winds, life-threatening storm surges, heavy rainfall, and flooding, even in locations that are miles away from the center of the storm. A state of emergency has been declared in North and South Carolina, Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, D.C.

But should the storm follow the European model, some forecasters predict worse conditions.

"Just awful — worst-case scenario for Hurricane #Florence from ECMWF 12z update as it nears Wilmington, NC area coastline late Thursday," said weather.us meteorologist Ryan Maue, who

is also a research meteorologist and an adjunct scholar at the Cato Institute. "Eye remains offshore / over water, stuck in place all day Friday lashing coast with winds & flooding."

His weather.us colleague Jack Sillin called this scenario a "complete nightmare" since it would impact highly populated areas. More than a million people have been ordered to evacuate due in the Carolinas and Virginia to the onset of Florence.

Though this sudden possibility alarmed local meteorologists too, they stressed that a threat to places farther south, such as Georgia, needs to still need to be verified.

Meanwhile, throughout the day, weekend forecasts for D.C., Maryland, and farther north have improved as the expected storm track has changed.