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## Mighty wind lashes Carolinas

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**ATLANTIC BEACH, N.C.** -- Thousands of people were without power as gusting winds of a weakened Hurricane Isabel lashed the North Carolina and Virginia coast Thursday morning.

The eye of Isabel came ashore on the Outer Banks of North Carolina early Thursday afternoon, pouring heavy rain on eastern North Carolina and southeastern Virginia.

Gusts clocked at 96 km/h bent trees as most of the barrier islands were nearly empty early Thursday.



*Oceanfront at Virginia Beach, Va. (AP PHOTO)*

More than 507,000 people in Virginia and North Carolina had lost power by Thursday morning.

Isabel had weakened to 161 km/h winds as it approached land, making it a borderline Category-1 or Category-2 storm.

More than 300,000 people were told to leave the coast and barrier islands of North Carolina Wednesday.

Another 160,000 people in Virginia were advised to leave low-lying areas.

In Virginia Beach, Va., police have asked those staying in their homes to write their names in permanent marker on their forearms so they can be identified if they're injured or killed.

This is the biggest storm to hit the region since Hurricane Floyd in 1999.

Floyd, also a Category-2 storm, caused up to \$4.6 billion US in damage and 56 deaths in the United States.

Authorities overseeing the evacuation order in North Carolina said many people have left their homes for higher ground, but many want to wait and see if the storm pattern changes before they leave.



*Hurricane Isabel hits the United States east coast, heads for the Great Lakes.  
NASA/MODIS*