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Science Focus

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EYE OPENER

Eye on the storm

LOUISIANA, USA

One of the most intense hurricanes to hit the US state of Louisiana could be seen from the International Space Station in August.

The storm, named Hurricane Ida, caused rivers to breach their banks and power grids to fail. It also affected the northeastern US, with underground living spaces in New York flooding within minutes. A total of 112 deaths have so far been connected to Ida.


"Aside from being strong and rapidly intensifying, Ida impacted Louisiana in an already historically wet year," explains Prof Paul Miller, a coastal meteorologist at Louisiana State University. "Ida's rain fell on soils that had already absorbed a lot of water, increasing the flood risk."

Big cities have more paved surfaces, preventing rain from being absorbed, says Miller. The flooding that occurs after intense rainfall is exacerbated, because the water is channelled into streams and low-lying areas to result in rapidly rising levels.

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