

**Territory:** China

**Region:** Central and SW China (Hunan, Guangdong, Guangxi, Guizhou, Jiangxi and Fujian, Hubei, Sichuan, Chongqing, Henan, Anhui, Jiangsu provinces)

**Date:** Late May to August 2007

**Event:** Flood

**Impact:** As of August 1st, over 200 million people had been affected in the worst floods in the country since 1998. By the end of July, nearly 5 million residents had been evacuated and at least 650 people had died. At the time of writing, 450,000 homes had been destroyed and millions more damaged. An estimated 8 million hectares of crops had also been destroyed. Water pouring into the reservoir behind the recently completed Three Gorges Dam at a rate of more than 50,000 cubic metres a second forced the dam to open sluices to control the reservoir level. This in turn sent flood waves down the Yangtze River, threatening further flooding downstream in the industrial city of Wuhan and neighbouring areas. Direct economic losses are estimated at \$6.9 billion, and are likely to rise. No information on insured losses is yet available.

**Summary:** Torrential rains have afflicted

central and southern parts of China since late May, contrasting with severe drought conditions in the north of the country over the period. The heavy rains started in the southwest and south of China in late May and June before moving north to central provinces in July. Rainfall totals have been extreme with, for example, 30cm falling across southern Huaihua province in just three hours. In Jinan city, capital of the coastal province of Shandong, 18cm of rain fell in three hours on July 17th. A day earlier, Chongqing, the capital of neighbouring Sichuan province endured a 16 hour storm with 40,000 lightning strikes, which also dropped 26cm of rain in 24 hours, a record for the city. In addition to river flooding on a massive scale, numerous flash floods and landslides contributed to the damage and death toll.

**Data sources:**

ReliefWeb  
[www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int)

**Additional sources:**

BBC Weather Centre  
[www.bbc.co.uk/weather](http://www.bbc.co.uk/weather)  
NASA Earth Observatory  
<http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/>  
NaturalHazards

**Territory:** Southern and southeastern Europe

**Region:** Greece, Cyprus, Serbia, Macedonia, Croatia, Bosnia, Albania, Romania, Italy, France, Spain

**Date:** June – August 2007

**Event:** Heat wave and wildfires

**Impact:** The European Forest Fire Information System announced that by August 2nd, an area of 3,376km<sup>2</sup> had been burned across the continent, with July 2007 being the worst month on record. Greece, Cyprus, Bulgaria, Croatia, Italy, Turkey, Albania and Spain have all experienced major fires. In Greece, over 60,000 hectares burned, with wildfires

threatening Athens and destroying forested areas on Mount Parnitha. They also affected parts of Kefalonia, the Peloponnese, Crete and large parts of the north of the country, extending into Albania and Macedonia. In early August, fire-fighters narrowly prevented major fires reaching the Croatian city of Dubrovnik. In Hungary, over 500 people died from heatstroke, while in Romania, an estimated 19,000 have been hospitalised due to the effects of heat. Power cuts due to the conditions were reported from Serbia, Macedonia, Albania and northern Greece.

**Summary:** A blocking high pressure system, building from the Azores, led to unprecedented summer temperatures across much of southern and southeastern Europe during June, July and early August. In Greece, temperatures reached as high as 46°C, and in Sicily they topped 49°C. Temperatures reached 41°C in Romania, 44°C in Bulgaria, the highest temperature experienced for 200 years, and 45°C in Macedonia.

**Data sources:**

ReliefWeb [www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int)  
European Forest Fire Information System  
<http://effis.jrc.it>

**Territory:** United Kingdom

**Region:** Midlands, south, southeast and northeast England, south Wales

**Date:** Mid-June to early August 2007

**Event:** Flood

**Impact:** At least 11 people died in the floods. A minimum of 75,000 properties suffered damage, and road and rail services were severely disrupted. During the June floods, the Yorkshire cities of Sheffield, Doncaster, Rotherham, Barnsley and Hull were particularly badly affected. Cracks appeared in the dam of Rotherham's Ulley reservoir and 700 hundred people were evacuated from the vicinity. The flooding in Sheffield and Doncaster resulted primarily from the River Don bursting its banks. The city of Hull was worst affected, with the town centre and many uninsured municipal buildings inundated. One in five homes was affected in the city, along with 90 of its 105 schools. Damage to the schools alone is estimated at £100 million (\$200 million). In July, over 3,000 homes in Oxfordshire, at Abingdon, Kidlington, Banbury, Whitney, Botley and Oxford itself, were flooded. In Berkshire, the July rains caused the flooding of Newbury and Maidenhead town centres, and the M4 motorway was closed by a landslide. Gloucestershire was worst hit as the River Severn burst its banks,

completely cutting off the town of Tewkesbury. More than 50,000 people in the county lost their electricity supply and 450,000 were without drinking water, some for nearly three weeks. As of August 7th, total insured losses arising from the June and July floods were estimated around £3 billion (\$6 billion), from around 60,000 domestic claims and 14,500 commercial claims. The spread, in terms of losses is evenly split between the June and July floods.

**Summary:** Following the warmest April since records began in 1865, the period from May to July 2007 was the wettest

(40.6cm) in England and Wales since the first precipitation records were kept in 1766. A slow-moving depression crossed the country and brought heavy rainfall and localised flooding to northern England on June 15th. A second depression crossed the Midlands and eastern England on the 25th, bringing further torrential rain; Fylingdales in North Yorkshire recorded 10.3cm in 24 hours, and 10cm fell in Hull in East Yorkshire. With the ground already saturated, major flooding resulted across many parts of England and Wales. Worst affected were southwest and east Yorkshire, Worcestershire, Gloucestershire

and the Midlands. On July 20th, another very active frontal system crossed southern England, bringing rainfall totals of up to 14.2cm at Pershore in Worcestershire. Extensive flooding ensued in Gloucestershire, Worcestershire, Wiltshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire, London and South Wales.

**Data sources:** UK Met Office  
[www.metoffice.gov.uk](http://www.metoffice.gov.uk)  
Association of British Insurers  
<http://www.abi.org.uk>

**Additional sources**  
Wikipedia [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Summer\\_2007\\_United\\_Kingdom\\_floods](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Summer_2007_United_Kingdom_floods)

