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Hazardous Sea Conditions Expected to Impact St. Thomas, St. John, and Northern Beaches Across the Region

Large breaking waves, rip currents, and hazardous seas fueled by northerly swells are impacting northern beaches in STT, STJ, PR, and Culebra, posing life-threatening risks to swimmers and causing potential coastal erosion and property damage

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Hazardous and rough seas driven by northerly swell pulses are creating life-threatening conditions along the northern beaches of the U.S. Virgin Islands, Culebra, and Puerto Rico, the National Weather Service in San Juan, Puerto Rico announced early Friday. High rip current risk and high surf advisories are in effect as large breaking waves, some reaching up to 11 feet, pose significant threats to swimmers and coastal areas.

The hazardous conditions will affect the northern beaches of St. Thomas and St. John, as well as north-facing beaches of Puerto Rico, from Rincón to Fajardo, and Culebra. These dangers are expected to persist and expand through the weekend, with the most severe impacts expected along exposed coastlines.

For marine areas, Atlantic waters and local Caribbean passages will remain dangerous for small craft operators through at least next Sunday.

Specific Hazards and Their Impacts

Small Craft Advisory: Rough seas will create hazardous conditions for small boats, with the potential to capsize or damage vessels.

High Rip Current Risk: Rip currents can swiftly pull even strong swimmers far from shore, creating life-threatening situations. Swimmers are urged to avoid entering the water.

High Surf Advisory: Large breaking waves may wash over jetties, sweep people and pets onto rocks, and knock individuals off their feet. Dangerous swimming conditions are likely, and localized beach erosion could occur. There is also the potential for minor flooding and damage to beachfront structures.

Localized Impacts in St. Thomas and St. John

The northern beaches of St. Thomas and St. John are particularly vulnerable to these hazardous conditions. Residents and visitors in these areas are advised to stay informed and exercise extreme caution near coastal zones.

Officials emphasize that rough surf conditions not only endanger swimmers but can also cause significant damage to coastal properties and structures. Localized minor flooding could also impact some beachfront areas.

Ongoing Advisories

The hazardous conditions, fueled by the northerly swell, are expected to worsen before they improve. Authorities recommend adhering to all advisories and avoiding affected beaches until conditions stabilize. Swimmers, surfers, and small craft operators are especially urged to take precautions and stay updated on local weather warnings.