

# April 2014 Global Catastrophe Recap



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## Executive Summary

- Severe weather outbreaks cause billions of dollars of damage in the United States
- Cyclone Ita makes landfall in Australia's Queensland; causes nearly USD1.0 billion in agricultural damage
- Earthquakes cause damage and casualties in Chile, Nicaragua, China and Mexico

Following a quiet start to the 2014 severe weather season in the United States, the month of April marked multiple events that combined to cause billions of dollars in damage. The biggest event was a multi-day outbreak of severe weather and flash flooding that caused extensive damage in more than 20 states in the Plains, Mississippi Valley, Southeast, Midwest, and Mid-Atlantic. At least 39 people were killed and 250 others were injured. Nearly 70 confirmed tornadoes touched down, including at least 11 of EF-3 or greater intensity. Given the scope of recorded damage, preliminary assessments indicate that this could be 2014's first multi-billion dollar economic loss event attributed to severe weather. Insured losses will be at least in the hundreds of millions (USD), and possibly higher.

Another outbreak led to major damage in parts of the Plains, Midwest and the Mississippi Valley. The most significant damage was attributed to hail, as hailstones the size of softballs struck the Denton, Texas metro region. Total economic losses were estimated at USD950 million, with insured losses in excess of USD650 million. The Insurance Council of Texas listed insured losses in Denton alone at beyond USD500 million.

Elsewhere, four separate stretches of severe thunderstorms and heavy rainfall affected China. According to data from the Ministry of Civil Affairs (MCA), the events left a combined nine people dead and damaged more than 40,000 homes and thousands of hectares (acres) of crops. Economic losses were listed at CNY6.2 billion (USD1.0 billion).

Cyclone Ita made landfall in Australia's northern Queensland, bringing high winds and heavy rains to multiple areas in the state. However, the landfall location came in a rural region with a low level of exposure, which helped minimize damage. Despite minimal structural damage, the agricultural sector was heavily affected as crop losses were recorded from Mossman through the Herbert and Burdekin valleys. Total economic losses – almost entirely to the agricultural sector – were estimated at up to AUD1.1 billion (USD1.0 billion). The Insurance Council of Australia reported that it had received 680 claims with payouts estimated at AUD8.4 million (USD7.9 million).

Torrential rains from a tropical disturbance that would later become Cyclone Ita led to extensive flooding in the Solomon Islands' capital city of Honiara. At least 23 people were killed. A state of emergency was declared after the rains caused the Matanikau River to burst its banks and affect more than 50,000 residents.

A powerful magnitude-8.2 earthquake struck off the northern coast of Chile, causing damage and spawning a small tsunami. Seven people were killed. The overall scope of damage was much less than initially feared, though a combined 13,000 homes were damaged in the towns of Iquique and Alto Hospicio. Total economic losses were expected to be less than CLP55 billion (USD100 million).

Additional earthquake events occurred in Nicaragua, Mexico, and China.

Torrential rains fell across northern Afghanistan, leading to extensive flash flooding and landslides in 10 provinces. An estimated 2,665 people died, including 2,500 alone in a massive landslide in Badakhshan province. Damage was also noted in the provinces of Jowzjan, Faryab, Sar-e Pol and Baghdis, where 70,000 people were left homeless.

Heavy rains and a melting snowpack led to flooding in parts of Romania, Serbia and Bulgaria, killing at least four people. Each country declared states of emergency for the hardest-hit districts and municipalities as several rivers overflowed their banks. Damage estimates to infrastructure and property were listed in excess of USD10 million.

A large wildfire burned multiple neighborhoods in the Chilean city of Valparaiso, killing at least 15 people and sending more than 500 others to the hospital. A citywide state of emergency was declared as the fire destroyed at least 2,900 homes. Total damage and aid costs were listed at CLP18.7 billion (USD34 million).

## United States

Date	Event	Location	Deaths	Structures/ Claims	Economic Loss (USD)
1/1-5/1	Drought	West	0	Unknown	4.0+ billion
4/2-4/4	Severe Weather	Plains, Midwest, Southeast	0	110,000+	950+ million
4/12-4/14	Severe Weather	Plains, Midwest, Southeast	0	65,000+	625+ million
4/27-5/1	Severe Weather	Central/Eastern U.S.	39	100,000+	2.0+ billion

Exceptional drought conditions continued to worsen across portions of the western U.S. during the month of April. The worst impacts were in California, where more than 96% of the state was minimally in a severe drought. Severe crop damage was reported, and the California Farm Water Coalition cited losses nearing USD3.6 billion. Additional agricultural impacts elsewhere in the West will cause the overall drought cost to top USD4.0 billion.

A severe weather outbreak affected the central and eastern United States between the 2nd and 4th, injuring several people. The Storm Prediction Center (SPC) registered reports of tornadoes, hail and damaging winds in the Plains, Midwest and the Mississippi Valley during the stretch. The most significant damage was attributed to hail, as hailstones the size of softballs struck the Denton, Texas region. Other states affected included Missouri, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Illinois. Total economic losses were estimated at USD950 million, with insured losses in excess of USD650 million. The Insurance Council of Texas listed insured losses in Denton alone at beyond USD500 million.

Severe thunderstorms swept across central and eastern sections of the United States between the 12th and 14th, injuring more than a dozen people. Most of the damage was attributed to large hail, damaging straight-line winds and flooding rains, though multiple tornadoes did touch down. The most severe impacts were registered in parts of Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, Kansas, and Texas as up to tennis ball-sized hail and winds in excess of 80 mph (130 kph) were reported. Total economic losses were estimated at USD625 million, with insured losses at USD400 million.

Multiple days of prolific severe weather affected much of the central and eastern United States between April 27 and May 1, killing at least 39 people and injuring more than 250 others. Widespread damage was noted in more than 20 states following at least 69 confirmed tornado touchdowns (including 11 rated EF-3 or higher), up to softball-sized hail, and damaging straight-line winds in the Plains, Mississippi Valley, Southeast, and the Midwest. Torrential rains also caused significant flash flooding in parts of Florida, Alabama, and the Mid-Atlantic. Given the scope of recorded damage, preliminary assessments indicate that this has the potential to be a multi-billion dollar economic loss event. Insured losses will be minimally in the hundreds of millions (USD), and possibly higher.

## Remainder of North America (Canada, Mexico, Central America, Caribbean Islands, Bermuda)

Date	Event	Location	Deaths	Structures/ Claims	Economic Loss (USD)
4/10	Earthquake	Nicaragua	1	2,354+	Millions+
4/18	Earthquake	Mexico	0	2,500+	Millions+

A magnitude-6.1 earthquake struck western Nicaragua on the 10th, killing at least one person and injuring more than 266 others. The tremor occurred at 5:27 PM local time (23:27 UTC) with an epicenter 10 kilometers (6 miles) west of Valle San Francisco, Nicaragua. Multiple strong aftershocks shook the region in the days that followed which added to the damage. In total, nearly 2,400 homes were damaged or destroyed, with the hardest-hit municipalities including Nagarote, Managua and Mateare. Total economic losses were estimated into millions of dollars (USD).

A magnitude-7.2 earthquake struck near the western coast of Mexico on the 18th, causing sporadic damage and injuring only a few people. The tremor occurred at 9:27 AM local time (14:27 UTC) with an epicenter 48 kilometers (30 miles) east of Petatlan, Mexico. At least 15 states reported shaking from the tremor, with the most damage sustained in parts of Guerrero, Morelos, Distrito Federal, and Michoacan. An estimated 2,500 homes sustained varying levels of damage, but overall impacts were less than feared. Total economic losses were estimated in the millions of dollars (USD).

## South America

Date	Event	Location	Deaths	Structures/ Claims	Economic Loss (USD)
4/1	Earthquake	Chile	7	13,000+	100+ million
4/12-4/16	Wildfire	Chile	15	2,900+	34+ million

A powerful magnitude-8.2 earthquake struck off the northern coast of Chile on the 1st, causing widespread damage and spawning a small tsunami. However, the overall scope of damage was much less than initially feared. Seven people were killed. States of emergency were declared in the Chilean provinces of Arica, Parinacota, and Tarapaca, with a combined 13,000 homes damaged or destroyed in the towns of Iquique and Alto Hospicio. The transportation and electrical infrastructures were affected in some areas as well. Total economic losses were expected to be less than CLP55 billion (USD100 million).

A large wildfire burned multiple neighborhoods in the Chilean city of Valparaiso between the 12th and 16th, killing at least 15 people and sending more than 500 others to the hospital. A citywide state of emergency was declared as the fire destroyed at least 2,900 homes. The fire was ignited on April 12 in woodlands near the Fundo Los Perales region of the city before quickly spreading and charring more than 965 hectares (2,385 acres) of land in the densely populated hills surrounding Valparaiso. Total damage and aid costs were listed at CLP18.7 billion (USD34 million).

## Europe

Date	Event	Location	Deaths	Structures/ Claims	Economic Loss (USD)
4/19-4/22	Flooding	Romania, Serbia, Bulgaria	4	Hundreds+	10+ million

Heavy rains and a melting snowpack led to flooding in parts of Romania, Serbia and Bulgaria between the 19th and 22nd, killing at least four people. Each country declared states of emergency for the hardest-hit districts and municipalities as several rivers overflowed their banks (including the Ogosta and Lom). Hundreds of residential properties were inundated and a combined 20,000 hectares (49,400 acres) of cropland were submerged. Damage estimates to infrastructure and property were listed in excess of USD10 million.

## Africa

Date	Event	Location	Deaths	Structures/ Claims	Economic Loss (USD)
4/11-4/14	Flooding	Tanzania	32+	Thousands+	Millions+

Multiple days of heavy rainfall between the 11th and 14th led to flooding across Tanzania, killing at least 32 people. The most significant damage was registered in Coast, Morogoro, and Dar es Salaam regions, where as many as 20,000 residents were displaced from their homes.

## Asia

Date	Event	Location	Deaths	Structures/ Claims	Economic Loss (USD)
4/5	Earthquake	China	0	15,000+	80+ million
4/7-4/9	Severe Weather	China	0	1,000+	230+ million
4/11-4/12	Flooding	Tajikistan	15	500+	Millions+
4/14-4/16	Severe Weather	China	0	1,000+	155+ million
4/16-4/20	Severe Weather	China	3	20,000+	156+ million
4/18	Winter Weather	Nepal	16	Unknown	Unknown
4/22-4/28	Severe Weather	China	9	10,000+	452+ million
4/24-6/1	Flooding	Afghanistan	2,665	15,000+	Unknown
4/27-4/28	Severe Weather	Bangladesh	16	1,000+	Unknown

A magnitude-5.4 earthquake struck China's Yunnan Province on the 5th, injuring at least 32 people. The tremor was registered at 6:40 AM local time (22:40 UTC Friday) with an epicenter seven kilometers (four miles) southeast of Xiluodu, China. Roughly 15,000 homes, farming facilities and schools were damaged or destroyed. Total economic losses were listed at CNY530 million (USD80 million).

Severe thunderstorms swept across China's Xinjiang, Guangxi, Yunnan, and Guizhou provincial regions between the 7th and 9th, damaging residential property and agriculture. No serious injuries or fatalities were reported. Most of the damage was attributed to large hail and damaging straight-line winds, though flooding also occurred. Data from the Ministry of Civil Affairs (MCA) indicated that in excess of 1,000 homes were damaged or destroyed, though most impacts were to the agricultural sector. Total economic losses were estimated at CNY1.42 billion (USD230 million).

Torrential rains on the 11th and 12th led to extensive flooding across parts of Tajikistan's Khatlon Province, killing at least 15 people and injuring 38 others. The floods swept through the districts of Vose, Shurobod, and Hamadony with nearly 500 homes and other structures damaged or destroyed. Several landslides also caused damage throughout these areas, including to vital roads and bridges that connected rural communities.

Hail-inducing thunderstorms caused severe damage to crops in parts of China's Guizhou and Gansu provinces between the 14th and 16th. No injuries or fatalities were recorded. The MCA reported that a combined seven county-level regions were affected as nearly 10,000 hectares (24,700 acres) of cropland and nearly 1,000 homes were damaged. Total economic losses were listed at CNY960 million (USD155 million).

Days of heavy rain and hail-producing thunderstorms affected parts of China's Sichuan, Chongqing, Anhui, Hubei, and Guizhou provinces between the 16th and 20th. At least three people were killed. The MCA noted that nearly 20,000 homes and thousands of hectares (acres) of cropland were damaged or destroyed by hail, landslides and flooding. Total economic losses were listed at CNY968 million (USD156 million).

A large avalanche occurred on Mount Everest in Nepal on the 18th, killing at least 16 people. This is the deadliest accident in the mountain's history.

An active stretch of inclement weather led to damage across multiple sections of China between the 22nd and 28th, leading to the deaths of at least nine people. The MCA reported that six provinces (Xinjiang, Shaanxi, Guangxi, Hunan, Jiangxi, Qinghai) were each affected by hail, floods and sandstorms. More than 10,000 homes were damaged or destroyed; while farmers cited tens of thousands of hectares (acres) of damaged crops. Total economic losses were estimated at CNY2.83 billion (USD452 million).

Torrential rains fell across northern Afghanistan between late-April and early June, leading to extensive flash flooding and landslides in 10 provinces. An estimated 2,665 people died, including 2,500 alone in two massive landslides in the province of Badakhshan. Heavy damage was also noted in the provinces of Jowzjan, Faryab, Sar-e Pol and Baghdis, where more than 120,000 people were left homeless after in excess of 15,000 homes were destroyed. Regional infrastructure and agriculture were severely impacted as well.

A powerful storm system tracked across parts of Bangladesh on the 27th and 28th, spawning damaging winds killed at least 16 people and injured dozens of others. The most significant impacts were registered in the districts of Netrokona, Sunamganj, Tangail, and Naogaon, where the storm damaged more than 1,000 tin and mud-built homes, uprooted trees and downed electricity poles.

## Oceania (Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific Islands)

Date	Event	Location	Deaths	Structures/ Claims	Economic Loss (USD)
4/3-4/4	Flooding	Solomon Islands	23	Thousands+	24+ million
4/10-4/14	CY Ita	Australia	0	680+	1.0+ billion

Torrential rains from a tropical disturbance that would later become Cyclone Ita led to extensive flooding in the Solomon Islands' capital city of Honiara on the 3rd and 4th. At least 23 people were killed. A state of emergency was declared after the rains caused the Matanikau River to burst its banks and inundate a large section of the city, which affected more than 50,000 residents. Record rainfall and damage was also registered elsewhere on the main Guadalcanal Island. Total economic losses were listed in excess of USD24 million.

Cyclone Ita made landfall in Australia's northern Queensland on April 11, bringing high winds and heavy rains to multiple areas in the state. The landfall location came in a rural region with a low level of exposure, which helped minimize damage. No serious injuries or fatalities were reported. The towns of Cooktown, Port Douglas, Hopeville, Mossman, and Cairns indicated that only a small number of homes had sustained wind and flood damage. The agricultural sector was heavily affected as crop losses were recorded from Mossman through the Herbert and Burdekin valleys. Total economic losses – almost entirely to the agricultural sector – were estimated at up to AUD1.1 billion (USD1.0 billion). The Insurance Council of Australia declared the event a catastrophe and reported that it had received 680 claims with payouts estimated at AUD8.4 million (USD7.9 million).

## APPENDIX

### Updated 2014 Data: January – March

#### United States

Date	Event	Location	Deaths	Structures/ Claims	Economic Loss (USD)
1/1-5/1	Drought	Western U.S.	0	Unknown	4.0+ billion
1/1-1/5	Winter Weather	Midwest, Ohio Valley, Northeast	16	10,000+	200+ million
1/5-1/8	Winter Weather	Midwest, Northeast, Southeast	21	150,000+	3.0+ billion
1/11	Severe Weather	Southeast	2	5,000+	50+ million
1/20-1/22	Winter Weather	Central and Eastern U.S.	4	Thousands+	100+ million
1/26-1/29	Winter Weather	Southeast, Midwest, Mid-Atlantic	13	Thousands+	250+ million
2/3-2/6	Winter Weather	Midwest, Plains, Northeast	9	30,000+	250+ million
2/11-2/14	Winter Weather	Southeast, Northeast	25	50,000+	900+ million
2/20-2/21	Severe Weather	Midwest, Southeast, Mid-Atlantic	1	20,000+	175+ million
2/28-3/4	Winter Weather	Nationwide	12	Thousands+	Millions+
3/1-3/31	Flooding	Montana, Wyoming	0	Hundreds+	10+ million
3/6-3/7	Winter Weather	Southeast, Mid-Atlantic	0	12,500+	100+ million
3/22	Mudslide	Washington	41	50+	10+ million
3/27-3/29	Severe Weather	Midwest, Plains, Southeast	0	70,000+	525+ million
3/28	Earthquake	California	0	Hundreds+	25+ million

#### Remainder of North America (Canada, Mexico, Caribbean, Bermuda)

Date	Event	Location	Deaths	Structures/ Claims	Economic Loss (USD)
1/13	Earthquake	Puerto Rico	0	Hundreds+	Unknown
1/1-3/31	Drought	Haiti	0	Unknown	Millions+
3/26	Winter Weather	Canada	0	Thousands+	Millions+

#### South America

Date	Event	Location	Deaths	Structures/ Claims	Economic Loss (USD)
1/1-2/28	Flooding	Bolivia	64	25,000+	100+ million
1/1-4/30	Drought	Brazil	0	Unknown	4.3+ billion
1/12	Flooding	Brazil	24	500+	Unknown
2/15-3/31	Flooding	Brazil, Bolivia, Peru	0	29,500+	200+ million

#### Europe

Date	Event	Location	Deaths	Structures/ Claims	Economic Loss (USD)
12/23-3/1	Flooding	United Kingdom	0	17,500+	1.5+ billion
1/2-1/3	WS Anne	United Kingdom, France	0	Thousands+	100+ million



Date	Event	Location	Deaths	Structures/ Claims	Economic Loss (USD)
1/5-1/7	WS Christina	UK, France, Scandinavia	3	Thousands+	500+ million
1/26-1/30	Winter Weather	Central/Western Europe	4	5,000+	Millions+
1/26-2/3	Earthquakes	Greece	0	1,000+	Millions+
2/1-2/8	WS Nadja & Petra	Western/Central Europe	1	Thousands+	410+ million
2/11-2/13	WS Tini	Western Europe	1	Thousands+	800+ million
2/14-2/15	WS Ulla	Western Europe	5	Thousands+	100+ million

## Africa

Date	Event	Location	Deaths	Structures/ Claims	Economic Loss (USD)
1/21	Flooding	Tanzania	1	4,086+	Millions+
1/20-2/10	Flooding	Zimbabwe	0	6,393+	20+ million
2/9-2/10	Flooding	Burundi	77	3,790+	Millions+
3/2-3/20	Flooding	South Africa	32	Thousands+	85+ million
3/29-4/1	CY Hellen	Madagascar, Comoros	17	2,000+	Millions+

## Asia

Date	Event	Location	Deaths	Structures/ Claims	Economic Loss (USD)
1/1-2/1	Volcano	Indonesia	32	Unknown	83+ million
1/1-4/30	Drought	Pakistan	180	Unknown	18+ million
1/2	Earthquake	Iran	1	Thousands+	Millions+
1/11-1/20	Flooding	Philippines	79	3,500+	13+ million
1/12-1/15	Winter Weather	China	0	Unknown	89+ million
1/14-1/17	Flooding	Indonesia	20	10,844+	153+ million
1/14-1/21	Flooding	Indonesia	12	38,762+	430+ million
1/15-1/31	Winter Weather	Thailand	63	Unknown	Unknown
1/17-1/20	Winter Weather	India	25	Unknown	Unknown
1/17-1/22	Winter Weather	China	0	Unknown	79+ million
1/19-1/22	Flooding	Indonesia	13	4,000+	515+ million
1/24-1/28	Flooding	Indonesia	26	100+	173+ million
1/31-2/1	TD Kajiki	Philippines	6	427+	3.2+ million
2/1-2/7	Winter Weather	Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan	46	Hundreds+	Unknown
2/4-2/5	Winter Weather	China	0	10,000+	115+ million
2/7-2/14	Winter Weather	China	10	20,000+	675+ million
2/8-2/16	Winter Weather	Japan	37	5,000+	2.0+ billion
2/12	Earthquake	China	0	90,000+	350+ million
2/13-2/20	Flooding	Malaysia	2	5,000+	25+ million
2/14	Volcano	Indonesia	7	12,447+	103+ million
2/17	Winter Weather	South Korea	10	Unknown	11+ million
2/17-2/21	Winter Weather	China	0	5,000+	140+ million
2/22	Flooding	Indonesia	11	2,000+	Millions+
3/10-3/12	Winter Weather	India	17	1,922+	Unknown

Date	Event	Location	Deaths	Structures/ Claims	Economic Loss (USD)
3/12-3/14	Winter Weather	China	0	2,000+	50+ million
3/19-3/20	Severe Weather	China	1	5,000+	118+ million
3/23-3/27	Severe Weather	China	0	15,000+	95+ million
3/27-4/4	Severe Weather	China	27	80,000+	161+ million

## Oceania (Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific Islands)

Date	Event	Location	Deaths	Structures/ Claims	Economic Loss (USD)
1/10-1/12	CY Ian	Tonga	1	1,130+	48+ million
1/12-1/19	Wildfires	Australia (WA, VIC, SA)	2	350+	25+ million
1/20	Earthquake	New Zealand	0	4,004+	Millions+
1/30-1/31	CY Dylan	Australia (QLD)	0	Unknown	Unknown
2/25-2/28	Flooding	Fiji	0	Hundreds+	2.1+ million
3/4-3/5	Flooding	New Zealand	0	1,000+	Millions+
3/9-3/12	CY Lusi	Vanuatu	12	Hundreds+	Millions+

### Additional Report Details

TD = Tropical Depression, TS = Tropical Storm, HU = Hurricane, TY = Typhoon, STY = Super Typhoon, CY = Cyclone

Fatality estimates as reported by public news media sources and official government agencies.

Structures defined as any building – including barns, outbuildings, mobile homes, single or multiple family dwellings, and commercial facilities – that is damaged or destroyed by winds, earthquakes, hail, flood, tornadoes, hurricanes or any other natural-occurring phenomenon. Claims defined as the number of claims (which could be a combination of homeowners, commercial, auto and others) reported by various insurance companies through press releases or various public media outlets.

Damage estimates are obtained from various public media sources, including news websites, publications from insurance companies, financial institution press releases and official government agencies. Damage estimates are obtained from various public media sources, including news

websites, publications from insurance companies, financial institution press releases and official government agencies. Economic loss totals include any available insured loss estimates, which can be found in the corresponding event text.

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