

Progress Monitoring Probe 17

Waterspouts

When is a tornado not a tornado? When that furiously spinning column of air known as a tornado is rotating over water, it's called a waterspout. A waterspout can form out of a small thunderstorm and drop down over water, or, in coastal areas, it can begin as a tornado on land and then move out over water.	10
A waterspout extends down from a towering cumulus cloud to a large body of water. Waterspouts have been spotted over lakes, oceans, and wide rivers. They are usually smaller than tornadoes, and the winds are not as strong, although there have been some exceptional waterspouts reported over the years. As with tornadoes, waterspouts can occur in series and take on different characteristics. Their usual speeds are about fifty miles per hour but their speeds can vary substantially.	22
A famous waterspout occurred over the ocean near Massachusetts a little over one hundred years ago. Those who witnessed the waterspout estimated that the column was about three thousand feet long. It lasted for about thirty-five minutes, disappearing and reappearing several times.	34
Where is a good place to see a waterspout in the United States? You can usually find them in the Florida Keys or on the Great Lakes. Waterspouts occur most often during spring and summer in the northern United States and year-round in southern areas.	45
Although there have been few proven cases of waterspouts destroying large ships, they can be dangerous to small vessels. They can also become deadly when they move from water onto land in populated areas.	58
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Waterspouts (Continued)

One myth holds that firing a cannonball into a waterspout can break it up, but this has no scientific basis. Also, some people have reported waterspouts sucking up fish and seaweed from the water and then carrying them inland and raining them onto the land. I know what you're thinking. You're picturing the weather forecaster on the nightly television news pointing to the Florida coast and saying, "The forecast for tonight is cloudy, with a thirty percent chance of fish."	268
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Total words: _____ – errors: _____ = words correct: _____

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