

Sea Level Rise

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Sea level observations from tide gauges and satellites can be interpreted in several different ways. In order to understand the long-term changes in sea level recorded by tide gauges, it is important to know the movement of the land relative to the sea, and understand the difference between tides and other causes of sea level change. Satellites provide observations that are difficult to calibrate and also have a degree of uncertainty, but they provide truly global measurements. For areas in the Caribbean region, the trend over the past 60 to 100 years has averaged approximately +2.4 mm/y (about +0.09 inches per year). So, if this sea level trend is maintained, we can expect a similar average increase of about 13-15 cm (about 5 to 6 inches) over the next 60 years. We review this simplistic estimate in the context of past sea level changes and explore predictions based on models that include forces related to global climate change. We seek to discuss how different communities and countries in the region learn about these changes, and whether they are defining 'adaptation' strategies and what these may be.