



Coastal Fast Facts

coast.noaa.gov

Our website provides a reliable source of coastal management facts for use in handouts, speeches, and outreach material. Contact Pamela.Jacobs@noaa.gov to suggest a new fast facts category or provide fast facts to share. Examples are provided below.

Lots of people live along the coast.

DEMOGRAPHICS

- U.S. coastal counties are home to 40 percent of the nation's population, but only account for 10 percent of the nation's land mass (excluding Alaska).
- From 1970 to 2010, coastal county populations increased by 40 percent.
- Approximately 461 people per square mile live in coastal counties (except Alaska), compared to the national population density of roughly 87 people per square mile.



The coast brings a lot of \$\$\$ to the table.

ECONOMICS

- Annually, coastal counties produce more than \$9.5 trillion in goods and services, employ 58.3 million people, and pay \$3.8 trillion in wages.
- If the nation's coastal counties were an individual country, it would rank third in the world in gross domestic product, surpassed only by the United States and China.
- The U.S. marine economy provides 2.4 million jobs annually, and contributes \$397 billion in gross domestic product.

Hurricanes cost a lot.

HURRICANES

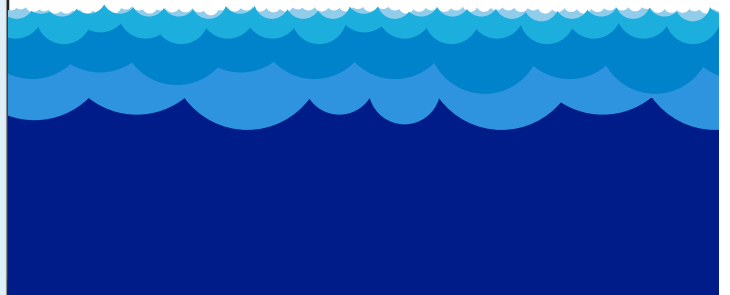
- Of the 310 billion-dollar weather disasters between 1980 and 2021, hurricanes have caused the most damage: over \$1.1 trillion total.
- In 2021 alone, hurricane costs were almost \$79 billion.
- Harvey had total costs of \$125 billion—second only to Hurricane Katrina, which had an approximate cost of \$161 billion.



“Nuisance” flooding is a big deal.

TIDAL FLOODING

- Scientists say this type of flooding has increased 400 to 1,100 percent since the year 2000.
- Several cities are experiencing it 10 to 20 additional days per year, evoking road closures, overwhelmed storm drains, and compromised infrastructure and water quality.
- Projections say high tide flooding is likely to occur 25 to 75 days per year by 2050.



Weather can be ugly.

WEATHER DISASTERS

- There were 20 weather events in the U.S. in 2021 with losses exceeding \$1 billion.
- Between 1980 and 2021, there were 310 billion-dollar weather disasters. The total costs of these events exceeds \$2.155 trillion.



Pretty, but oh so much more.

WETLAND BENEFITS

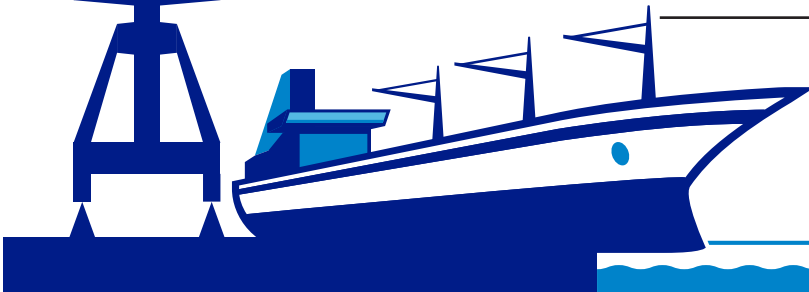
- Areas behind existing salt marshes have 20 percent fewer property damages.
- The Nature Conservancy says coastal wetlands prevented more than \$625 million in property damages during Hurricane Sandy; in New Jersey, wetlands saved more than \$425 million in property damages. In Maryland, wetlands reduced damages by 29 percent.
- Long Island Sound (New York) has lost 50 percent of its wetlands in the past 130+ years.



Shipping is what brings stuff.

PORTS

- Seventy-six percent of all trade involves some sort of marine transportation. That figure jumps to 90% for international trade.
- Ships move \$1.5 trillion worth of products in and out of U.S. ports every year.



Seafood farming is growing.

AQUACULTURE

- The U.S. produced \$1.5 billion worth of aquaculture seafood in 2017, and the top marine aquaculture species were oysters (\$186 million), clams (\$129 million), and Atlantic salmon (\$61 million).
- In 2017, the country's seafood industry supported 1.7 million jobs and contributed \$212 billion in sales.
- In 2018, the average American ate 16.1 pounds of seafood. The U.S. is the world's second largest consumer of seafood after China.



The ocean trash can.

MARINE DEBRIS

- Worldwide, more than 800 species of marine life have been negatively impacted by debris.
- Since 2006, NOAA has supported over 100 marine debris removal projects across the country, removing more than 22,500 metric tons of debris from our oceans.
- All across the world, large areas of concentrated marine debris, mostly made up of microplastics, swirl through the ocean's water column, in what's known as garbage patches.

