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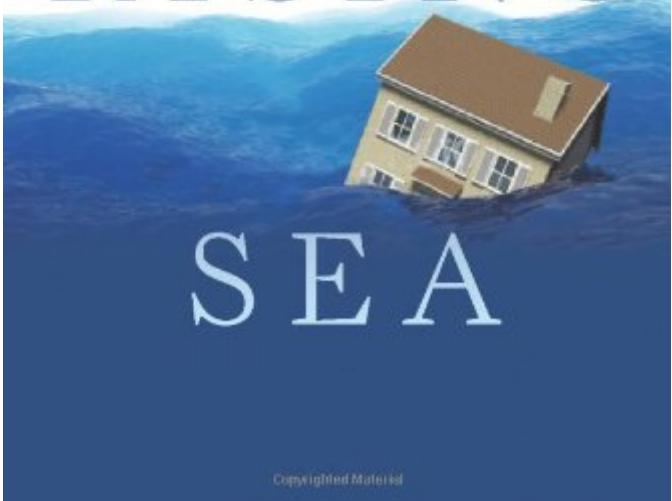
# The Rising Sea

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T H E

Orrin H. Pilkey *and* Rob Young

R I S I N G



SEA

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## Synopsis

On Shishmaref Island in Alaska, homes are being washed into the sea. In the South Pacific, small island nations face annihilation by encroaching waters. In coastal Louisiana, an area the size of a football field disappears every day. For these communities, sea level rise isn't a distant, abstract fear: it's happening now and it's threatening their way of life. In *The Rising Sea*, Orrin H. Pilkey and Rob Young warn that many other coastal areas may be close behind. Prominent scientists predict that the oceans may rise by as much as seven feet in the next hundred years. That means coastal cities will be forced to construct dikes and seawalls or to move buildings, roads, pipelines, and railroads to avert inundation and destruction. The question is no longer whether climate change is causing the oceans to swell, but by how much and how quickly. Pilkey and Young deftly guide readers through the science, explaining the facts and debunking the claims of industry-sponsored skeptics. They also explore the consequences for fish, wildlife and people. While rising seas are now inevitable, we are far from helpless. By making hard choices—including uprooting citizens, changing where and how we build, and developing a coordinated national response—we can save property, and ultimately lives. With unassailable research and practical insights, *The Rising Sea* is a critical first step in understanding the threat and keeping our heads above water.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Dramatic increases in sea level are possible in the next 50-100 years. The extent of sea level increase will depend on what nature and we do between now and then to our Earth's atmosphere and oceans. This book clearly summarizes the current changes in sea levels around the world, and what can be expected with anticipated changes in global climate trends. Importantly, the book includes guidelines for coping with foreseeable consequences of sea level rise. Sea levels are on the rise. There's no mistake about it. Imagine, for example, what the coast may look like in 50 years when the seashore is 1000 feet inland from where it is now. All the ocean-front dwellings will need to be moved back from the encroaching sea. And this is for regions that can adapt to changing sea levels. Some island nations will disappear with the rising sea. Miami, Florida, is on the front-line for potential impact by rising sea levels and will need to adapt. All these issues are addressed in this book in a very readable way. The potential impact on New Orleans and the Gulf Coast is dramatically portrayed. A number of illustrations of past impacts of storms on these and other regions is reviewed. However, the connection between the recounts of past storm damages and impacts of climate change is somewhat difficult to interpret, expect to imply that future storms may be worse than the awful damage we've seen before. The real soul of the authors lies in recommendations for current shoreline management policies that will preserve their beauty and enjoyment for the public for the foreseeable future. Shorelines change and we need to adapt to those changes, not try to prevent them. There's lots to think about after reading this book. It's very readable and flows well. It would have benefited from additional editing as some parts are redundant and overall connections could be better made. It's an enjoyable book to read while at the beach this summer.

Dr. Orrin Pilkey (Coastal geologist) is America's leading critic of US Gov't policies along its coastlines and one of the world's leading experts on all things Coastal. This book updates his positions on these issues plus warns all of us that the world's Oceans are rising (due to Global warming) and the pace is picking up! By 2100 he predicts in this book that they could rise by more than 20 ft., drowning most of the world's low-lying regions and Islands and with it America's major coastal cities like NYC and Miami! Dr. Pilkey is a very serious scientist so these predictions and claims are not just speculation but founded on hard science. This book is easy to read and is a must for anyone seriously interested in our Coastlines and Oceans. Some scientific jargon but mostly written for a

lay audience. All in all its a good read.

very important info for those who want a survivable environment & life in 2050

This book is an excellent review of the data, theory, and consequences of sea level rise due to increasing temperature. I started reading it just before I went to Hilton Head Island for a week at the beach and just after I started writing a web page about sea level versus temperature [...] I spent more time reading the book than I did walking the beach. When I did walk the beach, because of reading the book, I had a greater understanding of what the beach might be like a century from now. And the book influenced how I finished writing the web page as much as other sources did. The book will be of interest to scientists who work in related fields and to citizens who want to be informed about the consequences of rising temperatures. It should be required reading for those who own shore-front property.

I was disappointed, though perhaps I am not the ideal demographic for this book. It seems to be written either for people who doubt that sea levels are rising, or for people who like to see people who do doubt beaten up by experts. I am not in either audience. Myself, I hoped to see more, much more, about adapting to that rise. The authors do offer seven feet over the next century as an estimate of the amount of rise that seems prudent to plan for, but they never explain where they get that number. The ghost of a much greater rise runs through these pages. If all the ice melts, as it did in the Carboniferous, ocean levels would rise by 200 feet, and there seems to be no very good reason why something much more like that than seven feet might not happen. The authors keep talking about a "tipping point," a measure of warming past which ice melting turns auto-catalytic, spiraling off without waiting for further increases in CO<sub>2</sub>. The concept of a tipping point suggests that once this point is passed that melting will not stop until all the ice is gone, and there is nothing in this book to contradict that inference. Even if you don't believe in this "tipping point", it takes no very great sense of fatalism about the world's politics to think that CO<sub>2</sub> levels (which now are at about 400 ppm) are not likely to plateau out much short of 750 ppm. Either way we end up at the same place. The looming sense of a major melt undermines much of the text here, very much including the authors' discussion of policy adaptations. It is clearly not prudent to plan for a seven foot rise if that rise occurs as part of a runup to 200', such that we get to seven feet by the end of the century, but fifteen feet ten years after that, etc. We do not want to waste resources on one Maginot line after another. The author's favorite policy recommendation is moving people inland (as opposed to sea

walls, etc), but it is not obvious that this idea will scale when the populations involved number in the millions and tens of millions. I would like to have seen more analysis of the point. Clearly the politics would be brutal. Almost certainly a considerable amount of upland real estate would have to be seized by force. If you believe there is a chance that melting and warming will push sea levels significantly higher than ten feet, let alone 200', the only response that seems to work is floating cities. Floating cities scale with both sea level and population size. They can be handed over to third-world countries facing inundation, like Bangladesh. They do not require the confiscation of property. Quite possibly they can be manufactured at reasonably low costs per square mile. I don't know. I would have liked to see some analysis on the point. In a line, the policy thinking in this book was way too timid given its geochemical and meteorological thinking.

The bible. It can't be sent to Florida and ....

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