

Coastal County Snapshots: Frequent Questions

NOAA Office for Coastal Management

coast.noaa.gov

General

Why doesn't my county have a snapshot?

Your county may be considered an inland county, which the snapshots don't cover, or if it is on the coast, data for that particular county may not exist.

Where do the data come from?

Data are secured from a variety of national sources, including the U.S. Census Bureau, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

When or how often is the information updated?

The snapshots are updated as national data sets are updated, and as resources permit. Ideally, NOAA will revisit each data set at least once every year and update as appropriate.

What is a Special Flood Hazard Area? How are the flood zones defined?

On a Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) created by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), a flood hazard area is identified as a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA). An SFHA is defined as the area that will be inundated by the flood event having a 1-percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year. The 1-percent annual chance flood is also referred to as the base flood, or 100-year flood.

What is the difference between the "total economy" and the "marine economy" snapshots?

Each data set covers the coastal counties. The total economy covers all businesses in said county, while the marine economy data are focused on businesses (such as recreation and tourism, or ship and boat building) that depend on the ocean or Great Lakes. The marine economy includes six business sectors.

I spotted a mistake.

Because these data sets are national in scope, there may be errors when county-level data are extracted. But most communities have access to similar state and local data sets that can be used to conduct a risk assessment. Contact your [National States Geographic Information Council state GIS representative](#) to explore your state's data holdings.

Who can I contact for more information about the snapshots?

coastal.info@noaa.gov

Special Flood Hazard Snapshot

What is a Special Flood Hazard Area? How are the flood zones defined?

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Why doesn't my county have a snapshot?

The snapshots were developed with the best available digital flood data as of July 2020. Digital flood data may not exist for your county or may not have existed when the snapshots were created. There may not be digital flood data because your county might not participate in the National Flood Insurance Program, which means flood maps for your county have not been created. Check [FEMA's Community Status Book](#) to see if your county or community participates. You may also contact your state or local floodplain manager as listed on the [Association of State Floodplain Managers website](#). Otherwise, your county may only have paper Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs). You can do a product search on [FEMA's Map Service Center](#) to see what is available for your county.

Where do the data come from?

- **Flood zone data** were developed with the best available digital flood data as of July 2020. Effective [National Flood Hazard Layer](#) (NFHL) data were used where available. Older digital flood data were used as supplements to NFHL where available.
- **Demographic information** comes from the Census 2014-2018 [American Community Survey 5-Year summary file](#).
- **Critical facilities data** come from the [U.S. Geological Survey's \(USGS\) Structures database](#).
- **Insurance payout information** comes from the [OpenFEMA](#) data resources.
- **Business location data** come from ESRI Business Analyst (2019).
- **Land cover data** come from the [NOAA Coastal Change Analysis Program \(C-CAP\)](#). These data represent the change in land cover from 1996 to 2016 as observed and mapped from satellite imagery.

Total Economy Snapshot

What is meant by "total coastal economy," and how is that different from the "marine economy?"

The total coastal economy includes all business activities in counties directly adjacent to oceans, Great Lakes, and major water bodies like the Chesapeake Bay and the Puget Sound. These areas are most at risk from coastal inundation. The marine economy statistics cover the same geographic zone, but these statistics only cover the six economic sectors (ship and boat building, recreation and tourism, etc.) that depend on marine resources.

Why doesn't my county have a snapshot?

These data are only available in counties that are directly adjacent to major water bodies. Visit [this link](#) to get a full definition.

Why do I get a warning saying "data not available"?

Not all data included in this snapshot are available for all geographies. Gross domestic product from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, as well as business data from ESRI Business Analyst, are not available for the U.S. territories.

What does "suppressed data" mean?

Based on rules from the Bureau of Economic Analysis, some economic information cannot be shown for confidentiality reasons. This usually occurs if there are too few businesses or employees in a particular economic sector. For more information, see the [Bureau of Labor Statistics Confidentiality Pledge and Laws](#).

Where do the data come from?

- **Economic information** associated with jobs, wages, establishments, business sectors, and gross domestic product comes from data included within the [Total Coastal Economy](#) and [Nonemployer Statistics](#) data sets. These data are developed by NOAA, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Bureau of Economic Analysis, and Census.
- **Business location data** come from ESRI Business Analyst (2019).
- **Flood zone data** were developed with the best available digital flood data as of December 2020. Effective [National Flood Hazard Layer](#) (NFHL) data were used where available. Older digital flood data were used as supplements to NFHL where available.
- **Sea level rise data** come from NOAA's [Sea Level Rise Inundation](#) data.

Marine Economy Snapshot

What is meant by the "marine economy"? How is that different from the "total coastal economy"?

The marine economy includes businesses in the shoreline-adjacent counties that depend on marine resources. The activities are grouped into sectors, including living resources, marine construction, marine transportation, offshore mineral resources, ship and boat building, and tourism and recreation. This is different from the total coastal economy, which includes all businesses located in coastal geographies.

Why doesn't my county have a snapshot?

These data are only available in counties that are directly adjacent to major water bodies, or have deep-draft navigation capabilities. Visit [this link](#) to see a full definition.

What does "suppressed data" mean?

Based on rules from the Bureau of Economic Analysis, some economic information cannot be shown for confidentiality reasons. This usually occurs if there are too few businesses or employees in a

particular economic sector. For more information, see the [Bureau of Labor Statistics Confidentiality Pledge and Laws](#).

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Sea Level Rise Snapshot

How do I know how much sea level rise there will be for my area?

The last section of the snapshot (“When is the Time to Act? Now!”) provides relative sea level rise curves that show projected sea levels up to year 2100 for multiple climate change scenarios. Users can choose between the scenarios developed as part of the 2017 or 2022 Sea Level Rise Technical Report developed by NOAA and its federal agency partners. In addition to the sea level rise curves, a table is included which identifies the project year an amount of sea level rise (2, 4, 6, 8, or 10 feet) would occur within each of the scenarios. The choice of scenario is left to the user and is dependent on your community’s risk tolerance.

What is the difference between the 2017 and 2022 sea level rise projections?

The sea level rise projections developed as part of the 2017 Sea Level Rise Technical Report were updated in 2022 to incorporate the best-available science. For more information on the 2022 projections, including differences with the 2017 projections, visit the [2022 Sea Level Rise Technical Report](#).

What is the baseline year for the sea level rise projections used in this snapshot?

The elevations for both the 2017 and 2022 projections have been referenced to the local mean higher high water tidal datum, which itself is referenced to 1992, the centerpoint of the last official tidal epoch. This enables users to tie the projections to a local tidal datum to assess potential impacts to a community. Before the 1992 adjustment, the 2017 projections were originally referenced to 2000, and the 2022 projections were referenced to 2005.

Why doesn't my county have a snapshot?

Sea Level Rise Snapshots were created for counties and county equivalents in all coastal states and territories (except Alaska). Sea level rise inundation data used to create these snapshots were developed for [NOAA Office for Coastal Management's Sea Level Rise Viewer](#). If your county is in a

coastal state or territory and does not have a Sea Level Rise Snapshot, it is likely because there was not a significant extent of sea level rise inundation data within the county to support the snapshot analyses.

What does it mean when “No Data” is noted?

These hash-marked areas indicate places where adequate accuracy elevation data were not available for mapping sea level rise inundation.

Where do the data come from?

- **Sea level rise inundation layers** from NOAA’s [Sea Level Rise Inundation](#) data.
- **Demographic information** comes from the Census 2014-2018 [American Community Survey 5-Year summary file](#).
- Critical facilities data come from the [U.S. Geological Survey’s \(USGS\) Structures database](#).
- **Business location data** come from ESRI Business Analyst (2019).
- **Land cover data** come from the [NOAA Coastal Change Analysis Program \(C-CAP\)](#). These data represent the change in land cover from 1996 to 2016 as observed and mapped from satellite imagery.
- **Sea level rise projections** come from the [2017 Sea Level Rise Technical Report](#) and the [2022 Sea Level Rise Technical Report](#).