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## Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Changes in Sea Level

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### Authors

[Philip L. Woodworth](#) | National Oceanography Centre, Liverpool, UK

[W. Roland Gehrels](#) | School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences at the University of Plymouth, UK

[R. Steven Nerem](#) | Colorado Center for Astrodynamics Research, and Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO, USA

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## Abstract

Following the Last Glacial Maximum (25,000–20,000 years ago), sea level rose at rates on the order of several tens of millimeters per year at times, and increased overall by over 130 m. However, melting of the great ice sheets was largely complete by 6,000 years ago, and it is believed that sea level did not rise significantly again until recently. The rates of sea level change during the last few centuries and in recent decades can be measured in units of millimeters per year and are particularly important in understanding present-day climate change. We now have a range of techniques with which sea level changes can be measured and thus studied more intensively than before, as a global average and in each region. This article introduces each of the main data sets and presents the primary research findings. It is hoped that a greater understanding of the reasons for past observed sea level change, discussed elsewhere in this issue, will lead to better estimation of the changes likely to occur in the future.

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