



Coastal Fast Facts

coast.noaa.gov

Here are some handy “fast facts” about the U.S. coast from NOAA’s Office for Coastal Management. Head to coast.noaa.gov for more bite-sized facts on coastal economics, demographics, weather, storms, ports, marine debris, and more.

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 39 percent.
- Approximately 446 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.

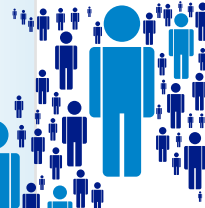
ECONOMICS

- Annually, coastal counties produce more than \$7.6 trillion in goods and services, employ 53.6 million people, and pay \$3 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.
- There are 149,000 ocean-dependent businesses in the U.S., employing more than 3 million people and paying over \$117 billion in wages. These businesses grew almost twice as fast as the economy as a whole.

Hurricanes cost a lot.

HURRICANES

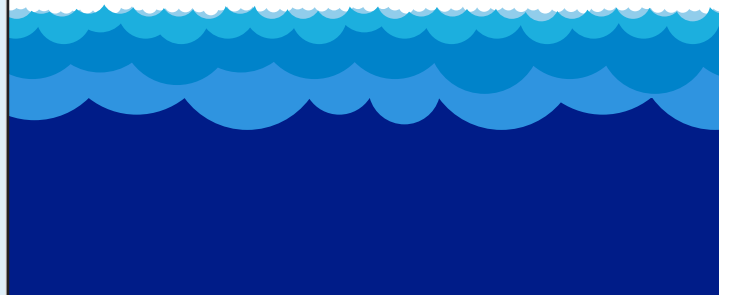
- Katrina was the most expensive hurricane. Insured losses were calculated to be \$41 billion.
- Sandy caused \$18.75 billion in insured property losses.
- Estimates for insured losses from Matthew were from \$1.5 billion to \$7 billion.
- For Katrina, there were 167,985 flood insurance payouts, which amounted to \$16 billion. The average paid loss was \$97,140.



“Nuisance” flooding is a big deal.

TIDAL FLOODING

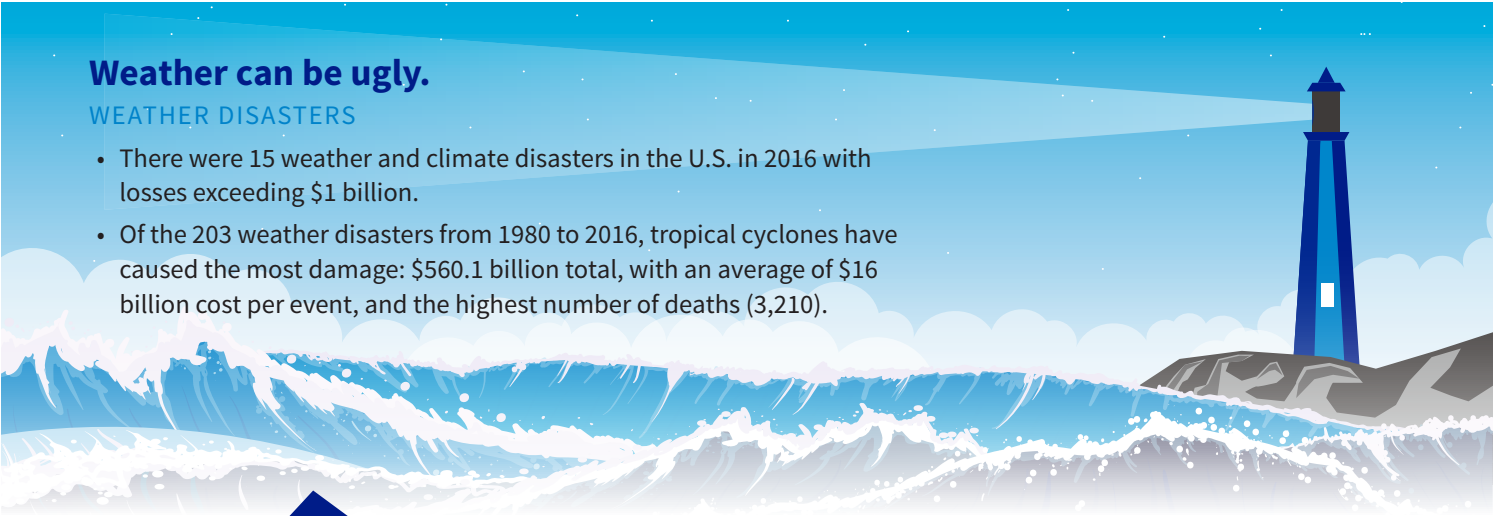
- Scientists say this type of flooding has increased 300 to 900 percent since the 1960s.
- Several cities are experiencing it 10 to 20 additional days per year, evoking road closures, overwhelmed storm drains, and compromised infrastructure and water quality.
- Projections say the majority of coastal communities will experience 30 days of tidal flooding annually by 2050.



Weather can be ugly.

WEATHER DISASTERS

- There were 15 weather and climate disasters in the U.S. in 2016 with losses exceeding \$1 billion.
- Of the 203 weather disasters from 1980 to 2016, tropical cyclones have caused the most damage: \$560.1 billion total, with an average of \$16 billion cost per event, and the highest number of deaths (3,210).



Pretty, but oh so much more.

WETLAND BENEFITS

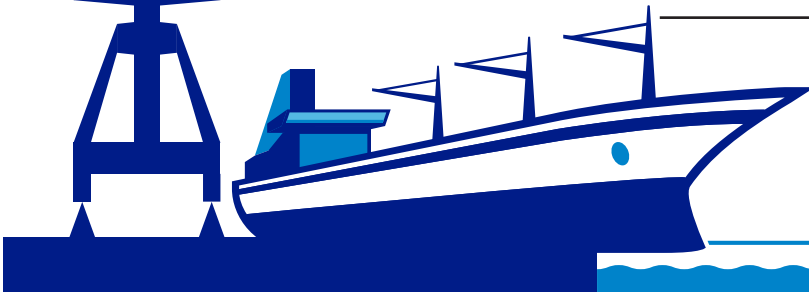
- Areas behind existing salt marshes have 20 percent fewer property damages.
- The Nature Conservancy says coastal wetlands prevented more than \$625 million in property damages during Hurricane Sandy; in New Jersey, wetlands saved more than \$425 million in property damages. In Maryland, wetlands reduced 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.
- Traffic volume is expected to double by 2012 and double again shortly after 2030.



Seafood farming is growing.

AQUACULTURE

- The United States produced \$1.2 billion worth of aquaculture seafood in 2012, and the top U.S. marine aquaculture species were Atlantic salmon (\$77 million), oysters (\$136 million), and clams (\$99 million).
- In 2014, the country's seafood industry supported nearly 1.4 million jobs and generated \$153 billion in sales impacts.
- In 2013, Americans consumed more than 4.6 billion pounds of seafood, equating to about 14.5 pounds per person.



The ocean trash can.

MARINE DEBRIS

- Worldwide, more than 200 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 5,500 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.

