



Written by [James Murphy](#) on February 12, 2018

The Curious Case of the Growing Island Nation

The tiny island nation of Tuvalu, once thought to be a certain casualty of rising oceans owing to global warming, is actually growing larger, according to a study by the University of Auckland.



A Polynesian island nation located roughly halfway between Hawaii and Australia, Tuvalu consists of nine atolls and 101 reef islands. Despite the nation being located in a region of the South Pacific where sea level is, reportedly, rising at twice the global average, the University of Auckland study shows that eight of the atolls and nearly three-quarters of Tuvalu's islands actually *increased* in size between the years 1971 and 2014. The study challenges the belief that low-lying Pacific islands will be overwhelmed with sea water owing to climate change. The study, entitled "Patterns of island change and persistence offer alternate adaptations pathways for atoll nations" and published in the journal *Nature Communications*, can be read [here](#).

"We tend to think of Pacific atolls as static landforms that will simply be inundated as sea levels rise," said Paul Kench, a co-author of the study. "But there is growing evidence these islands are geologically dynamic and are constantly changing."

The island nation has grown by approximately 73 hectares (just over 180 acres), an area roughly the size of California's Disneyland. Researchers believe that the expansion is due to several factors, such as waves depositing sand and rock on the shores, as well as storms depositing sediment.

"The study findings may seem counter-intuitive, given that sea level has been rising in the region over the past half century, but the dominant mode of change over that time on Tuvalu has been expansion, not erosion," Kench said.

Climate alarmists have made the case that the approximately 10,000 residents of Tuvalu should be relocated in advance of the "certain" sea-level rise. An "environmental refugee" crisis was predicted and many of Tuvalu's citizens picked up and moved to Australia or New Zealand to escape the coming calamity.

The fear-mongering has real-life consequences.

From the study: "Under these environmental scenarios, conjectures of habitability and mobility become entwined and have driven an urgency in socio-political discourse about atoll nation futures and human security. Strategies for adaptation to changing biophysical conditions are coupled with narratives of



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environmentally determined exodus. Such persistent messages have normalized island loss and undermined robust and sustainable adaptive planning in small island nations.”

The study goes on to say that, while climate change and sea-level rise remain a problem for atoll nations such as Tuvalu (because any scientific study must say that), the native people should make long-term plans to remain on the island instead of blindly accepting the upcoming disaster and relocating to higher ground.

“On the basis of this research we project a markedly different trajectory for Tuvalu’s islands over the next century than is commonly envisaged,” Kench said.

It is not the first such study to run counter to the claims of climate alarmists. In 2010, Kench and his group found that islands in Tuvalu, Kiribati, and the Federated States of Micronesia were, generally, expanding rather than being inundated by sea water. At that time, at least, the group believed that the growth of the islands would keep pace with the rising sea level.

“The reason for this is these islands are so low lying that in extreme events waves crash straight over the top of them,” Kench said at the time. “In doing that they transport sediment from the beach or adjacent reef platform and they throw it on to the top of the island.”

In his 2006 science-fiction film *An Inconvenient Truth*, amateur climatologist Al Gore warned that the danger to low-lying atoll nations such as Tuvalu was so severe that many had already abandoned their islands. “The citizens of these island nations have all had to evacuate to New Zealand,” Gore breathlessly (and wrongly) asserted.

In 2012, Professor Mohamed Dore, an environmental economist from Brock University in Canada, claimed that Tuvalu was deserted already. “There is an island called Tuvalu which was completely evacuated and New Zealand accepted all the residents because of sea level rising,” Dore wrote.

Imagine the surprise of Tuvalu’s residents. They were all in New Zealand and they didn’t even know it.

No one denies that the climate is changing — because climate is always changing — but there comes a time when the unreasonable and sometimes outright crazy pronouncements of people such as Gore and Dore should be ridiculed for what they are: fear-mongering nonsense.

Photo of Funafuti Atoll, Tuvalu: AP Images



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