Our capabilities

**Data access**
Access and download CoastWatch oceanographic satellite data

**Data portal**
Visualize CoastWatch oceanographic satellite data within the portal

**Training**
Learn how to maximize the use of CoastWatch oceanographic satellite data

**Collaborations**
Work with CoastWatch to incorporate oceanographic satellite data into products and tools

**Data monitoring**
Assess the state, availability and stability of oceanographic satellite data products

**Value-added products**
Leverage novel and innovative satellite data products developed and/or curated by CoastWatch

Our purpose

NOAA CoastWatch helps people access and make sense of satellite data for use in coastal and ocean applications.

The NOAA CoastWatch/OceanWatch/PolarWatch Program (“CoastWatch”) operates across a central hub and multiple regional nodes, See Page 3.

Updated April 4, 2024
Case studies

**TurtleWatch**

The **TurtleWatch** product was developed in 2006 to provide advice to Hawaii-based longline fishers targeting swordfish on areas they can avoid to reduce their probability of interacting with protected loggerhead turtles (Howell et al., 2008).

OceanWatch Central Pacific generates daily maps of sea surface temperature that highlight zones to avoid.

**EcoCast**

The **EcoCast** tool uses habitat suitability models and satellite data from our West Coast node to predict where broadbill swordfish and three bycatch species (leatherback turtle, blue shark and California sea lion) are likely to be each day. Daily EcoCast maps help fishers identify fishing spots, minimize fisheries bycatch and maximize fisheries target catch.

**Ice Breaking Operations**

In order to understand ice formation and the types of ice in the Great Lakes, the NOAA Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory (GLERL) and the U.S. Coast Guard use Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) data from the NOAA CoastWatch Great Lakes Node to monitor six different types of ice, ice thickness, and ice cover.

**Polar Regions**

The **PolarWatch Node** distributes data for the Antarctic and Arctic regions in projections suitable for high-latitude areas. All data catalog products may be viewed using the in-browser Portal, and accessed in ERDDAP.

**Harmful Algal Blooms**

Our **East Coast Node** monitors Harmful Algal Blooms in various regions of the US in order to protect human health and ensure safe drinking water.

**Hurricane Viewer**

Our Gulf of Mexico Node develops and maintains the Hurricane OceanViewer interface.

Updated April 4, 2024
Program structure

The origins of CoastWatch began in 1987 when satellite sea surface temperature data were used to diagnose events that led to an unusual harmful algal bloom in coastal North Carolina. Today, CoastWatch is a cross-NOAA program headquartered within NOAA National Environmental and Satellite Data and Information Service (NESDIS), Center for Satellite Applications and Research (STAR), Satellite Oceanography and Climatology Division with Regional Nodes housed in the other NOAA mission Line Offices. Four pillars underpin the success of CoastWatch:

- CoastWatch Central Operations
- Applications and Research
- Regional Nodes throughout the USA and embedded in different NOAA line offices
- Training and Outreach

The Regional Nodes are direct links to understand and address the needs and requirements of a wide range of stakeholders within and external to NOAA. Each Node has a federal manager and an operations manager tasked with distributing relevant data products, work with users on specific applications, and organize training courses to build capacity in each region. Access more information on the Nodes from the links in the figure right.

Program and organization

Satellites make routine observations from which several ocean parameters such as sea surface temperature, ocean color, sea level, ocean winds, visible imagery, water quality, and other ocean and inland water surface features can be derived.

Remotely-sensed observations from space have the advantage of broad spatial and temporal coverage that complement in-situ measurements.

NOAA routinely produces sustained ocean and coastal data products from both NOAA and non-NOAA, international satellites. These data products are freely and openly available through CoastWatch for government, academic, commercial, and general public users in addition to serving the mission requirements of NOAA’s fisheries, ocean, weather services and research.

Subscribe to our newsletter to stay informed about all the latest NOAA CoastWatch news!
Using CoastWatch data

Multiple ways to access data
- Data Portal: coastwatch.noaa.gov/cw_html/cwViewer.html
- ERDDAP: https://coastwatch.noaa.gov/erddap/info/index.html
- THREDDS: https://www.star.nesdis.noaa.gov/thredds/socd/coastwatch/catalog_coastwatch.html

Data parameters
CoastWatch serves data products for all major ocean satellite parameters:

- Sea Surface Temperature (temperatures and fronts)
- Ocean Color (chlorophyll, turbidity, harmful algal blooms)
- Sea Level Height (sea level anomalies, surface currents, wave heights, etc. from altimetry)
- Sea Surface Salinity
- Ocean Surface Winds
- Synthetic Aperture Radar (high spatial resolution surface conditions, e.g., winds, oil spills, ship detection, etc.)
- True Color Imagery (from polar-orbiting and geostationary satellites)

Data quality monitoring
The CoastWatch Quality and Data Availability Dashboard allows users to quickly monitor any delay or quality issues.

Operational services
Operational systems are managed by CoastWatch Central Operations. Routine and automated monitoring ensure optimal data availability for two levels of service depending on the type of product and the requirements of the user.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Best Effort</th>
<th>Moderate Assurance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data availability target</td>
<td>90% (e.g. 72 h outage in rolling 30 days)</td>
<td>96.7% (e.g. 24 h outage in rolling 30 days)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring frequency</td>
<td>business; 8 h per day by 5 days per week</td>
<td>extended; 12 h per day by 7 days per week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication of issues</td>
<td>Prolonged issues posted to website; emails to voluntary list subscribers when appropriate</td>
<td>Quick response (&lt;12 h) emails to select, identified, pre-approved users</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To report any service issues, please contact the CoastWatch Helpdesk:

getting assistance
If you have any question or request, please email our helpdesk:

costwatch.info@noaa.gov

We also encourage you to contact the CoastWatch Node in your region. Our staff can assist you in finding data products suitable to your application or will put you in contact with relevant resources.

You can also consult our user forum at: vlab.ncep.noaa.gov/web/coastwatch/coastwatch-knowledge-base/forum

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