

Research points to unprecedented and worrying rise in sea levels

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A new study led by Simon Fraser University's Dean of Science, Prof. Paul Kench, has discovered new evidence of sea-level variability in the central Indian Ocean.

The study, which provides new details about sea levels in the past, concludes that sea levels in the central Indian Ocean have risen by close to a meter in the last two centuries.

Prof. Kench says, "We know that certain types of fossil corals act as important recorders of past sea levels. By measuring the ages and the depths of these fossil corals, we are identifying that there have been periods several hundred years ago that the sea level has been much lower than we thought in parts of the Indian Ocean."

He says understanding where sea levels have been historically, and what happens as they rise, will provide greater insights into how coral reefs systems and islands may be able to respond to the changes in sea levels in the future.

Underscoring the serious threat posed to [coastal cities](#) and communities in the region, the [ongoing study](#), which began in 2017, further suggests that if such acceleration continues over the next century, sea levels in the Indian Ocean will have risen to their highest level ever in recorded history.

The [research paper](#) authored by Kench and others, and titled "Climate-forced [sea-level](#) lowstands in the Indian Ocean during the last two millennia" was published this week in the scientific journal *Nature Geoscience*.

More information: Paul S. Kench et al. Climate-forced sea-level lowstands in the Indian Ocean during the last two millennia, *Nature Geoscience* (2019). [DOI: 10.1038/s41561-019-0503-7](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41561-019-0503-7)

Provided by Simon Fraser University

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