

# How will Climate Change Affect the Southeast?

**Climate change means that the Southeast is exceptionally vulnerable to sea level rise, extreme heat events, stronger hurricanes, and water shortages.**

In addition to national data, the [Third National Climate Assessment](#) has chapters that explore how climate change will affect different regions of America.

## Among the National Climate Assessment’s [findings for the Southeast](#):

- The Southeast, which has a disproportionate number of the fastest-growing metropolitan areas in the country and important economic sectors located in low-lying coastal areas, is particularly vulnerable to some of the expected impacts of climate change.
- Temperatures across the Southeast and Caribbean are expected to increase during this century, with an already an observed increase in the number of days that reach **95 degrees Fahrenheit or above** that is expected to further increase.
- The number of Category 4 and 5 hurricanes in the Atlantic basin has increased substantially since the early 1980s, which can be attributed in part to climate change.

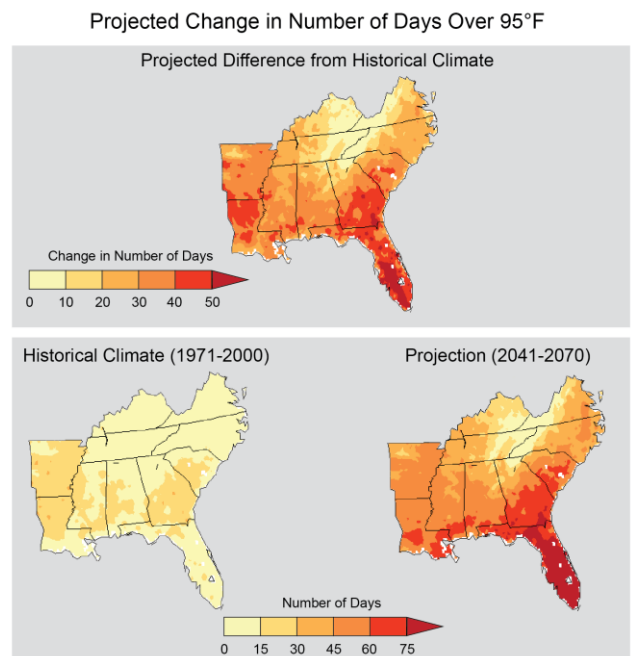
### On sea level rise:

- Sea level rise poses widespread and continuing threats to the Southeast and to its regional economy. **New Orleans** (with roughly half of its population living below sea level), **Miami, Tampa, Charleston,** and **Virginia Beach** are among those most at risk.
- In addition, three of America’s fastest-growing metropolitan areas -- **Palm Coast, Florida; Cape Coral-Fort Myers, Florida;** and the **Myrtle Beach area in South Carolina** -- are along the coast and are vulnerable to sea level rise and storm surge.
- The **North Carolina** Department of Transportation is raising the roadbed of U.S. Highway 64 across the Albemarle-Pamlico Peninsula by four feet, which includes 18 inches to allow for higher future sea levels.

### On drought:

- Water supply availability in the Southeast is expected to decline over the next several decades, particularly in the western areas.
- Summer heat stress is projected to reduce crop productivity, especially when coupled with increased drought.
- In **Georgia**, climate projections indicate corn yields could decline by 15 percent and wheat yields by 20 percent through 2020.

Want even more info? Check out these [state-by-state fact sheets](#) on the White House web site.



Source: National Climate Assessment