

## Climate at a Glance: Islands and Sea Level Rise

### **Bullet-Point Summary:**

- **Most islands** and atolls in the Pacific Ocean, **including Tuvalu, are growing, not shrinking.**
- As the sea gradually rises, **the sea brings sand and sediment** along **with it**, building up the height of islands along with it.
- Pacific Islanders know they are safe, [despite their claims of victimhood and demands for compensation](#), as shown by their actions. Some are [building new airports and resorts](#). The **populations of Tuvalu and other island nations are steadily growing, rather than shedding climate refugees.**

**Short Summary:** Objective scientific evidence debunks claims that climate change is causing small islands to disappear under rising seas. Rising seas bring sand and sediment, which build up coastal shorelines along with rising waters. Also, coral, as living organisms growing near sea level, build up their height along with the rising sea.

For example, climate activists often claim the island nation of Tuvalu is sinking under rising seas and spawning climate refugees. However, [a recent peer-reviewed study](#) found 8 out of Tuvalu's 9 coral atolls have grown in size during recent decades, and 3/4ths of Tuvalu's 101 reef islands have similarly grown in size. Also, Tuvalu's population [is consistently growing](#), not declining, with 20% more people living on Tuvalu now than 30 years ago. Tuvalu's population has doubled since 1970.

Additional peer-reviewed studies (see [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)) confirm the same processes are allowing – and will continue to allow – other Pacific islands to keep up with rising seas.

For example, 30 years ago, the *Canberra Times* claimed all 1196 islands that comprise the Maldives [could be completely underwater by now](#). Not only are all 1196 islands still there, but the Maldives population [has doubled during the past 20 years](#). People are flocking to the Maldives islands, not fleeing them. The Maldives are absorbing political refugees, not spawning climate refugees.

### **Further reading:**

1. *Sea level rise may not drown low-lying Pacific atolls*, Media Release, University of Auckland, July 2019: <https://www.scimex.org/newsfeed/sea-level-rise-may-not-spell-the-end-for-low-lying-pacific-atolls>
2. *Floating Islands*, Willis Eschenbach, January 2010: <https://wattsupwiththat.com/2010/01/27/floating-islands/>
3. *Patterns of island change and persistence offer alternate adaptation pathways for atoll nations*, Nature February 2018: <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-018-02954-1>
4. *11 new airports to be constructed in Maldives*, Maldives Tourism Update. Originally at <http://www.maldivestourismupdate.com/2009/07/11-new-airports-to-be-constructed-in.html#ixzz0wwSkVxzN> but has been “disappeared, and now is available of the “Wayback Machine” Internet archive here: <https://web.archive.org/web/20170102101310/http://www.maldivestourismupdate.com/2009/07/11-new-airports-to-be-constructed-in.html>