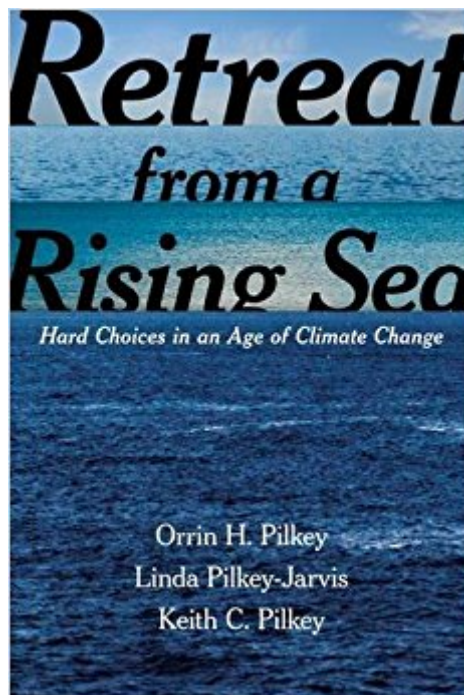




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# Retreat From A Rising Sea: Hard Choices In An Age Of Climate Change



## Synopsis

Melting ice sheets and warming oceans are causing the seas to rise. By the end of this century, hundreds of millions of people living at low elevations along coasts will be forced to retreat to higher and safer ground. Because of sea-level rise, major storms will inundate areas farther inland and will lay waste to critical infrastructure, such as water-treatment and energy facilities, creating vast, irreversible pollution by decimating landfills and toxic-waste sites. This big-picture, policy-oriented book explains in gripping terms what rising oceans will do to coastal cities and the drastic actions we must take now to remove vulnerable populations. The authors detail specific threats faced by Miami, New Orleans, New York, and Amsterdam. Aware of the overwhelming social, political, and economic challenges that would accompany effective action, they consider the burden to the taxpayer and the logistics of moving landmarks and infrastructure, including toxic-waste sites. They also show readers the alternative: thousands of environmental refugees, with no legitimate means to regain what they have lost. The authors conclude with effective approaches for addressing climate-change denialism and powerful arguments for reforming U.S. federal coastal management policies.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Retreat from a Rising Sea is a landmark work long overdue. The book offers deep analysis, case histories, and names villains of denial. It offers visions, solutions, and historic examples of how coastal cities and communities have dealt in the past and will need to cope in the future with rising

coastal risks. It is a must-read for coastal residents and policy makers alike. If this book had been written ten years ago, the world would be better off. (Klaus Jacob, Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, Columbia University Earth Institute) Retreat from a Rising Sea is a book that should be read by everyone concerned about our coasts. In its passion to explain the conclusion that science clearly indicates, it signals the urgency of our retreat from the coast. (Carl Hobbs, author of The Beach Book) In Retreat from a Rising Sea, the authors raise tough and crucial questions about living in coastal communities in an era of rising seas and more frequent superstorms. In highlighting the vulnerabilities of many cities and communities in the United States and around the world, they provide a sobering wake-up call for policy makers and planners – and for the billions of people on the front lines of a changing climate. (Vicki Arroyo, executive director, Georgetown Climate Center, and professor from practice, Georgetown University Law Center) This accessible, impassioned argument considers the scientific, political, and socioeconomic dimensions of climate change and fervently presses for Americans to come to terms with the disastrous changes to the world's oceans sooner rather than later. (Publishers Weekly) Clear and authoritative . . . If only our leaders would read this book. (Miami Herald) I recommend the book to young and old who are interested in making a better future by encouraging managed retreat from developed shores. (Journal of Coastal Research)

This big-picture, policy-oriented book explains in gripping terms what rising oceans will do to coastal cities and the drastic actions we need to take now to remove vulnerable populations. The authors detail specific threats faced by Miami, New Orleans, New York, and Amsterdam, concluding with effective approaches for addressing climate-change denialism and powerful arguments for changing U.S. federal coastal-management policies.

This is an excellent basic primer on the consequences of climate driven sea level rise for human coastal communities. The authors critique the denialism, short term thinking, and outright irresponsibility that pervades coastal development in the USA. And they have facts on their side: there is a "let the buyer beware" mentality, that is combined with the rampant use of taxpayer dollars to shore up repeated rescues of coastal homeowners from expensive floods and home-destroying surges. The authors do deserve praise for their honesty and clarity. It is impossible to dispute their contention that large numbers of people will be forced to retreat from the most vulnerable coastal stretches over future decades and centuries. It is indeed impossible to push back a rising ocean everywhere. I have only a couple of minor issues with the book. It could have been longer-

subtracting the copious notes it is under 170 pages, and there is more to say. In particular, I wanted to know more about the area of Hampton Roads/Norfolk Virginia which is only 100 miles east of me. I also felt that the writers should have paid more attention to the issue of the need to reduce carbon emissions. Bailing out the boat only works if you plug the leak at the same time, right? They do explain that it is already too late to avoid serious sea level rise. True! But reducing carbon emissions might be enough to avoid horrible and unbelievable sea level rise- which would be a great thing to avoid. Despite these quibbles, I see this as a very fine work that deserves a very large audience of readers.

Probably the most important book on the planet.

I agree with the author. The details in the book are excellent but I would like a lot more pictures especially before and after type pictures.

This book is packed with hard science and backed up by NASA observations; despite this it is extremely readable. In my personal experience there are still a few people making their money from fossil fuels who don't want to admit that the ice is melting and the sea is rising. Or if it is, they won't admit that there is or will be any problem. Would that were the case. The rest of the sane, educated, world is going to need this book. Author Orrin Pilkey tells us that the house where he grew up was flooded by Hurricane Camille in 1969 and was destroyed by Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Today he sees that house sites in that neighbourhood are still offered for sale. Why are we building in flood plains or below sea level in at-risk cities? Why do rich people get planning laws swayed so they can build sea walls around their homes, which are unsightly and don't address the real problem? Will the cost of temporarily saving Miami be met by a burdened populace as New York imports solutions from the Netherlands? I like that for every problem highlighted (literally highlighted on the pages) there are also researched solutions offered. These range from increasing salt marshes to shifting heritage collections, nuclear power plants, populations and waste dumps to inland sites. I like that ocean study terms are explained and how ocean levels are measured is described. I like the case studies, including the town of Norfolk, Virginia which has hired a Dutch engineer to help resolve the issue of Chesapeake Bay recently flooding the streets twice a month. As the glaciers have largely gone, and the polar ice caps are melting fast, other cities will have to take notice. Freshwater aquifers will be contaminated by salt, which has already caused the evacuation of islands, and trees will die. Storms will worsen, deltas flood and cliffs erode. We don't know how soon it will be before

global populations are on the move from rising seawater the way they already are from lack of rain. But it will happen. I recommend this excellent and thoroughly researched book to city planners, engineers, students of ocean science, and anyone with a home in sight of the sea or concerned about world geopolitics. I read a copy through Net Galley for an honest review. I also recommend on this topic: Planning for Coastal Resilience: Best Practices for Calamitous Times by Timothy Beatley Climate Peril: The Intelligent Reader's Guide to Understanding the Climate Crisis by John Berger The Disaster Profiteers: How Natural Disasters Make the Rich Richer and the Poor Even Poorer by John C. Mutter. (less)

For not only those of us living near the sea, but for everyone faced with paying for the astronomical storm damage through our insurance rates and taxes, RETREAT FROM A RISING SEA is a must read. Zeroing in on those areas most vulnerable to sea rise and focusing on New Orleans, Miami, New York City and the Netherlands as examples, Professor Orrin H. Pilkey, James B. Duke Professor Emeritus of Earth and Ocean Sciences, at Duke University; Linda Pilkey-Jarvis, geologist at Washington's Department of Ecology, and Keith C. Pilkey, an attorney with a longstanding interest in geoengineering and corporate influence on science policy argue that the most sensible action in the face of cities and populations at risk is to retreat from these areas, and in some cases trying preserve the environmental migrants former neighborhoods. They use these cities as examples but also cite those areas, for example atoll islands and populations living on river deltas, such as Bangladesh, are especially vulnerable. Using data collected from peer reviewed material, these authors make the unassailable case for action now, and point to those areas such as The Netherlands and New York City that have taken protective measures, and those areas such as Bangladesh and Miami that through lack of courageous leadership have remained blind to what is already for them, a crisis. RETREAT FROM A RISING SEA might have been the stuff of science fiction or fantasy a few decades ago, but it is no longer; the rising ocean is real; this book, that reads like a thriller, is a must read for all of us.

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