



Changes in the globally averaged sea level since the beginning of the TOPEX/Poseidon mission in 1992, with seasonal variations removed. The average indicated sea level rise rate is approximately 3.5 mm per yr. Note that El Niño events can temporarily change the global ocean volume, as seen in the large fluctuation in the time series during 1997–1998. With continued measurements from altimetry satellites, we will be able to say whether the sea level rise rate is accelerating and whether computer models of climate changes associated with global warming are accurately predicting the rise rate. (Data from the NASA Radar Altimeter on TOPEX/Poseidon and the Poseidon-2 altimeter on Jason-1.)