

7 things we learned researching climate change on Cape Cod

by Nestor Ramos, *The Boston Globe*, 9/26/2019

The Globe spent several months this summer crisscrossing Cape Cod to learn how the effects of climate change are being felt, and what it would mean for the future of the area. In short, we found that climate change is already threatening the Cape in tangible ways, accelerating natural processes like erosion and sea level rise.

Article highlights

1. **The Outer Cape now loses about 3 feet of beach a year on average — a rate nearly double what it had been for thousands of years.**
2. **The basin whose southern boundary is marked by the Cape is now warming faster than 99 percent of the world's oceans.**
3. **Wild shellfish populations are at 1 percent of historic levels** along the Cape, and commercial farms are struggling to contend with dramatic temperature swings.
4. **The population of migratory land birds near the Cape has dwindled to half what it was 50 years ago.**
5. **Salt marshes provide a powerful defense against climate change**, but sea level rise and other factors are eating away at them.
6. **Nor'easters are causing uncommon chaos on the Cape, and hurricanes that have hit the Cape in the distant past would today be catastrophic.** In 1938, a hurricane put much of the western edge of the Cape under several feet of water and killed 564 people.
7. **Massachusetts and the Cape have done more than almost anywhere else to prepare for the coastal effects of climate change, but some experts say it is only the beginning of what is needed.**

Cape Cod's unique geographic perch and geologic makeup leave it particularly vulnerable to climate change. But the effects already on display here are just the beginning. People like to say that the only constant on the Cape is change. But unless the world takes drastic action to reverse the planet's warming, change will give way to loss. [Read the full article here.](#)
