

The First COVID-19 Era
Hurricane Season is Here:
Are we ready?



Rachel Cleetus
July 24, 2020



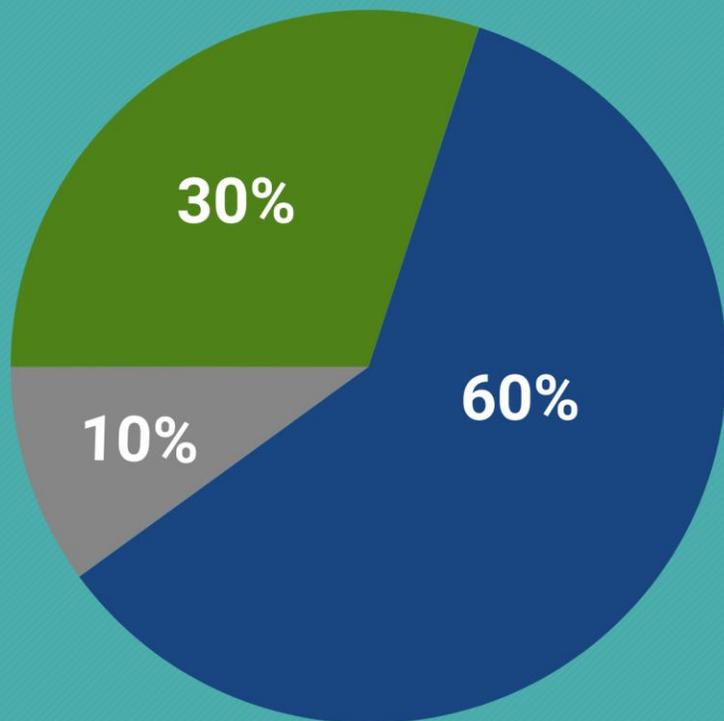
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Science for a
and healthy planet
safer world.





2020 Atlantic Hurricane Season Outlook



■ Above-normal ■ Near-normal ■ Below-normal season

Season probability

Named storms

13-19

Hurricanes

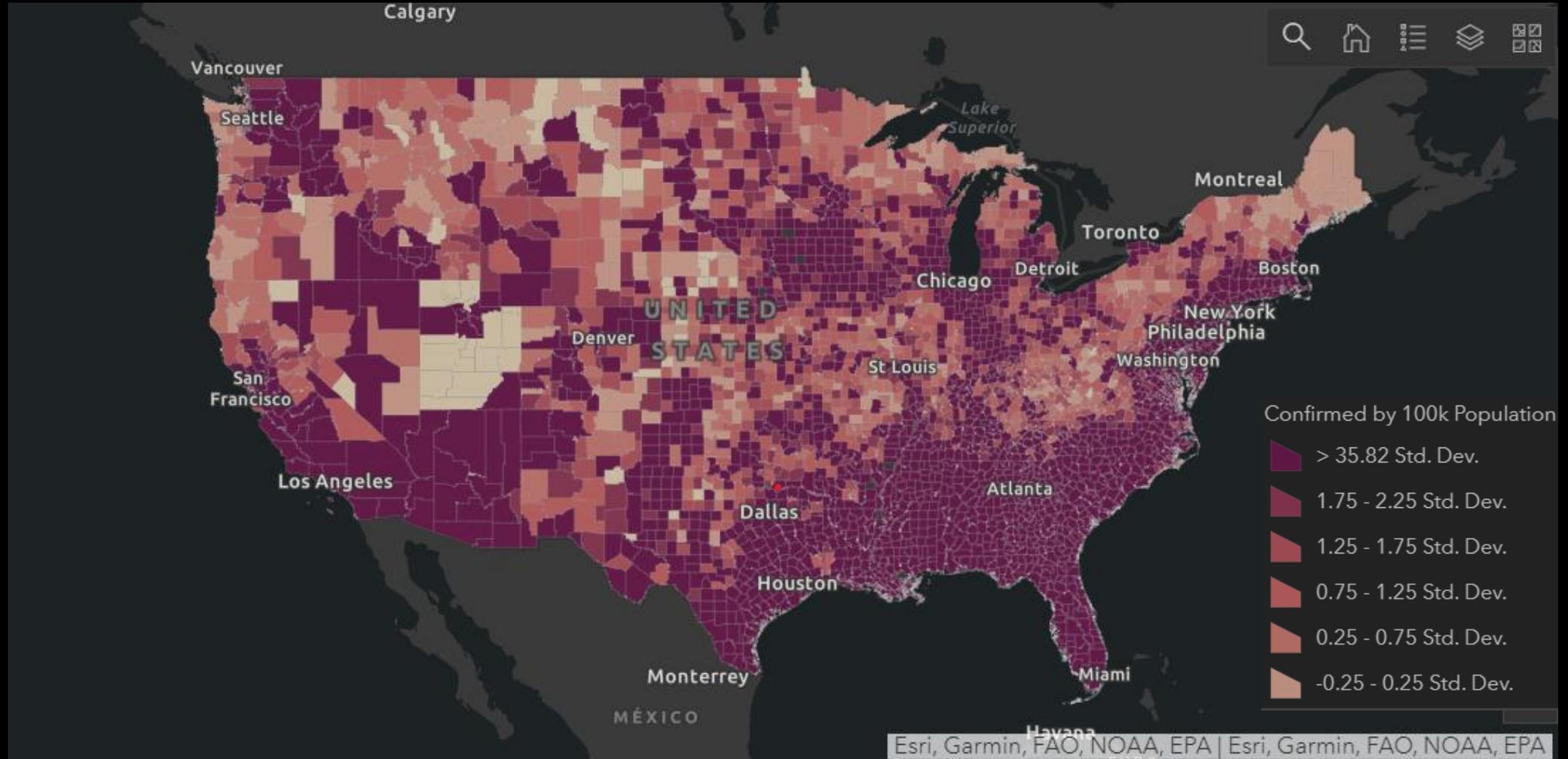
6-10

Major hurricanes

3-6

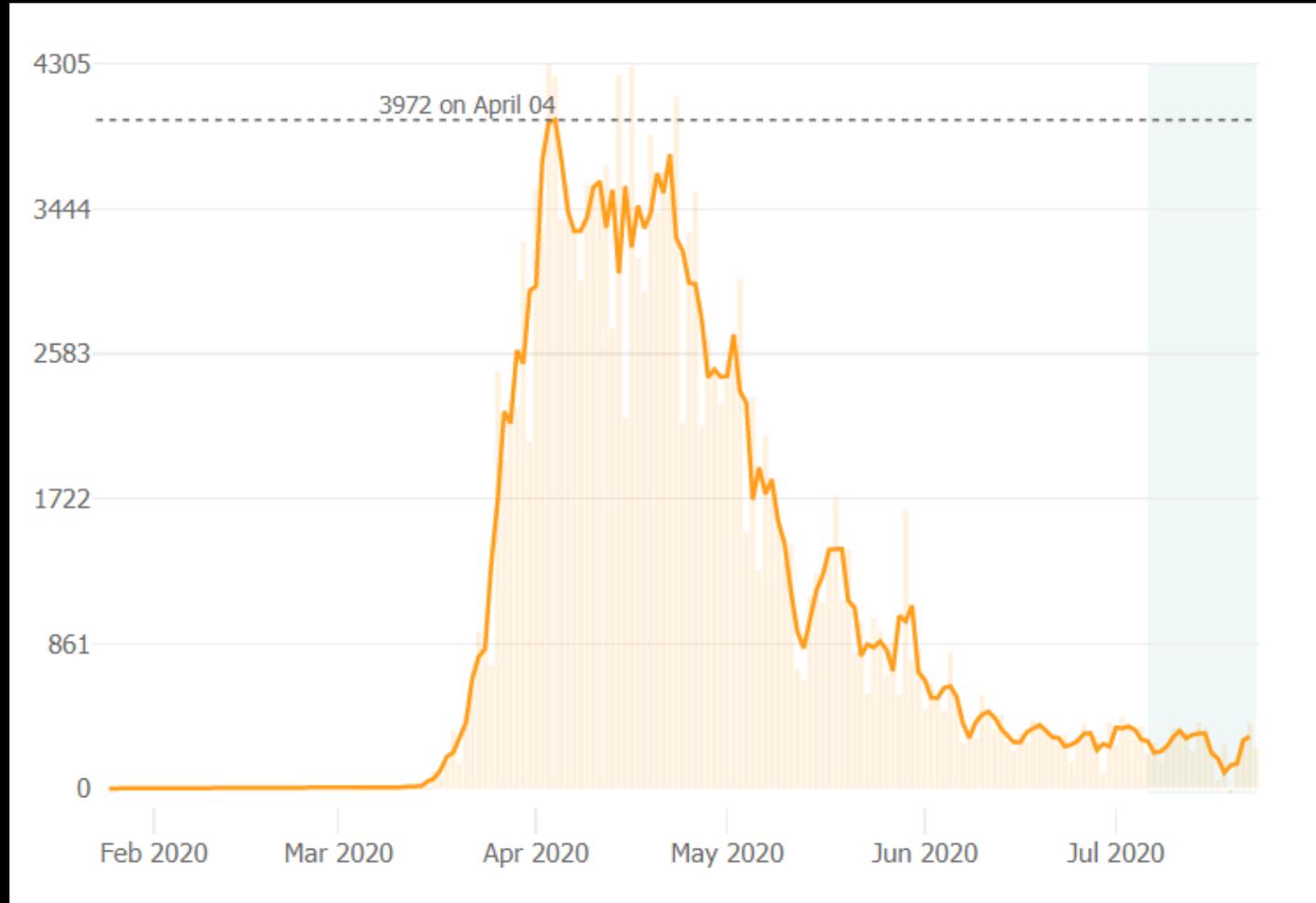
COVID-19 Cases by County per 100,000 pop

Johns Hopkins University



Source: Johns Hopkins University, 7/24/2020

[New Jersey's "flattened curve"



3-Day Moving Average of COVID-19 Cases

Source: Johns Hopkins University, 7/24/2020

Hurricanes in a warming world...



Warmer air holds more moisture for rainfall



Warmer oceans can increase hurricane power



Rising seas increase storm surge



[Latest science on hurricanes and climate change

Hurricanes are becoming stronger, wetter, slower, and more destructive, and all these trends have been linked to human-caused climate change. Hurricanes are also intensifying faster compared to historical records.

<https://blog.ucsus.org/astrid-caldas/dangerous-hurricane-season-to-open-amidst-covid-19>



Sea levels in the U.S. are rising **fastest** along the East Coast and Gulf of Mexico.



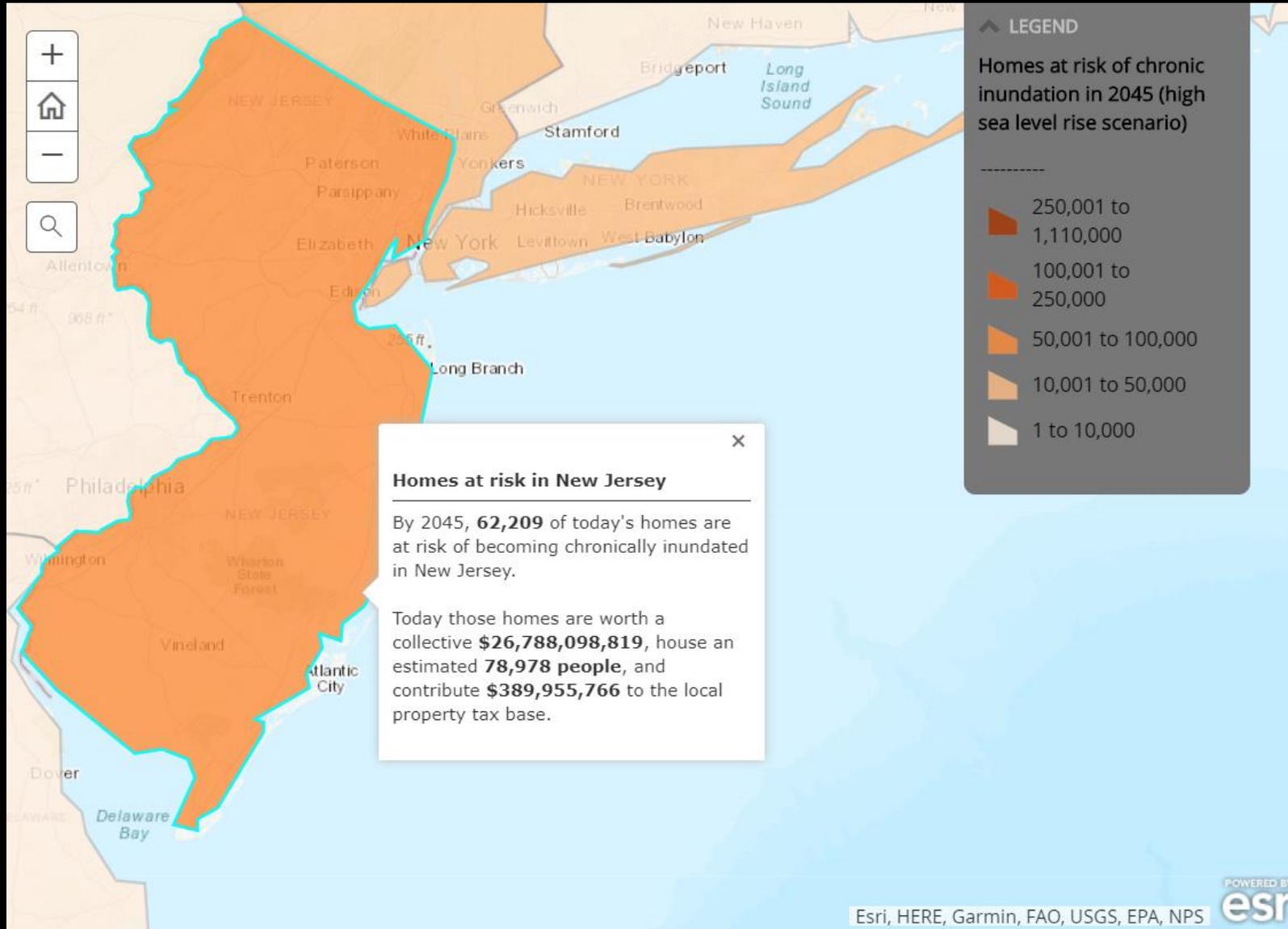
Global average sea level has increased 8 inches since 1880. The local rate varies depending on both global and local factors, including currents, ocean floor topography, variation in ocean density, and land uplift or subsidence due to geological processes or human activities.



Underwater: Rising Seas, Chronic Floods and Implications for Coastal Real Estate

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Concerned Scientists

[Risks to New Jersey Coastal Homes



Compound Climate Risks in the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic will be an unprecedented test of governments' ability to manage compound risks, as climate hazards disrupt outbreak response around the world.

These compound risks will exacerbate and be exacerbated by the unfolding economic crisis and long-standing socioeconomic and racial disparities, both within countries and across regions, in ways that will put specific populations at heightened risk and compromise recovery.

Nature Climate Change: <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41558-020-0804-2>

Who's most at risk (from climate change and COVID-19)?

- The elderly
- African Americans, Latinx, Native Americans and other POC
- Those with pre-existing health conditions
- Those who live in poverty
- The homeless
- The incarcerated
- Those who lack access to healthcare, safe housing, good nutrition

2020 Hurricane season challenges (a subset)

- FEMA is stretched thin
- State budgets are also stretched thin
- COVID-19 cases are continuing to rise in many states
- The economic crisis is worsening
- Not enough investment in equitable pre-disaster preparedness
- Lack of funding for communities to recover more resiliently

FEMA COVID-19 Operational Guidance for 2020 Hurricane Season

- *Emphasis on **remote disaster operations***
- *“Since **many aspects of disaster response may be conducted remotely** this year, SLTTs (state, local, tribal and territorial officials) should be prepared to coordinate through virtual communications and ensure the public is aware that the FEMA application process may be virtual and not in-person due to health and safety considerations.”*
- *“FEMA programs will continue to provide assistance to survivors, but many programs may require online or phone registration processes (in lieu of inperson), **remote assessments or inspections**, and adapted program delivery within impacted areas experiencing localized outbreaks or periods of peak COVID-19 activity.”*

What does this mean for communities?

- Advance planning is critical
- Know your options and make preparations in case you need to evacuate or shelter-in-place
- Always follow the guidance of local emergency authorities
- Monitor emergency alerts
- Make sure to check in on vulnerable family, neighbors, friends
- Red Cross Guidance on shelters (based on latest CDC guidance) could mean existing shelter capacity is cut by up to 60%
- Need for additional shelters and funding (CDC recommends hotel rooms, smaller shelters to limit spread of COVID-19)

Adaptation:
Keeping People Safe



Mitigation:
Net zero emissions by 2050



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[Renewable Energy Opportunities in New Jersey



- Executive Order to reach 100% clean energy by 2050
- Renewable Electricity Standard (21% RE by 2020; 35% by 2025 and 50% by 2030)
- 2018 law committing to 3,500 MW of offshore wind by 2030
- Goal of 600 MW of energy storage by 2021 and 2,000 MW by 2030.
- Energy Efficiency
- Community solar program

Federal Policies

Extend Clean Energy Tax Incentives and make them refundable



106,300 Clean energy employees returned to work in June

514,200 Remain jobless since COVID-19

E2 **ACORE** AMERICAN COUNCIL ON RENEWABLE ENERGY **E4** THE FUTURE

[Intersectional solutions for compound crises

- Climate resilience
- Clean Energy
- Good paying jobs
- Universal Healthcare Access
- Affordable Housing
- Adequate Nutrition
- Anti-poverty measures
- Addressing the cumulative burden of legacy pollution
- Addressing long-standing racial and socioeconomic inequities



[Thank you. Any questions?

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Additional resources:

<https://blog.ucsusa.org/rachel-cleetus/covid-era-hurricane-season-is-here-are-we-ready>

<https://blog.ucsusa.org/astrid-caldas/dangerous-hurricane-season-to-open-amidst-covid-19>

<https://blog.ucsusa.org/astrid-caldas/temporada-peligrosa-de-huracanes-comienza-en-medio-de-pandemia-covid-19>

<https://blog.ucsusa.org/rachel-cleetus/economic-recovery-depends-on-controlling-the-covid-19>