



This is the print version of the [Skeptical Science](http://sks.to/searise) article '[Sea level is not rising](http://sks.to/searise)', which can be found at <http://sks.to/searise>.

Doctoring sea level data

What The Science Says:

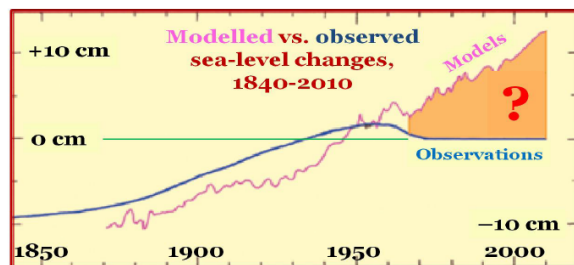
The claim sea level isn't rising is based on blatantly doctored graphs contradicted by observations.

Climate Myth: Sea level is not rising

"Together, these two unaltered [sea level] datasets indicate that global mean sea level trend has remained stable over the entire period 1992-2007, altogether eliminating the apparent 3.2 mm/year rate of sea-level rise arising from the "adjusted" data." ([Christopher Monckton](#))

We have a new entry in the contest for most bizarre "skeptical" argument. The "Science" and Public Policy Institute ("S"PPi) [Monthly CO2 Report for January 2011](#), edited by Christopher Monckton, claims on page 29: "Sea level is not rising."

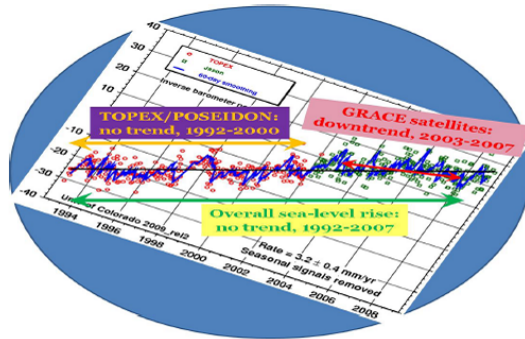
This is of course false. In fact, sea level is not only rising, but [the rise is accelerating](#). Immediately below this false claim, the document contains the following figure:



*Modeled and observed sea-level changes, 1840-2010. The pink curve, **Models**, represents the IPCC's combination of selected tide-gauge records and "corrected" satellite altimetry data. The blue curve, **Observations**, represents the observed sea level changes in the field up to 1960 according to Professor Mörner. After 1965, the two curves start to diverge, presenting two totally different views, separated by the orange region. Note the large discrepancy between prediction and reality.*

Notice that the caption claims the blue curve is observational sea level data "up to 1960 according to Professor Mörner." Of course, after 1960 (when the "observations" are apparently just made up) is not only when the "observations" supposedly diverge from the models, but also when they diverge from reality! Ah, but it gets even worse from here. On page 33, the document presents what may be my favorite figure of all time:

The evidence that sea level is not rising



The "calibrated" satellite altimetry record tilted back to match the original, uncorrected data. The original TOPEX/POSEIDON raw data for 1992-2000 (yellow arrowed trend-line) showed variability around a stable horizontal zero line. The GRACE raw satellite data show a gently falling trend for 2002-2007 (red arrowed trend-line). Together, these two unaltered datasets indicate that global mean sea level trend has remained stable over the entire period 1992-2007, altogether eliminating the apparent 3.2 mm/year rate of sea-level rise arising from the "adjusted" data.

33

Monckton and "S"PI have taken the [sea level graph from the University of Colorado at Boulder](#) which shows a 3.2 millimeter per year sea level rise trend (as is still visible in the bottom right of the graph), rotated it to make the trend look flat, and claimed that this is what the "unaltered" and "uncorrected" data looks like.

It boggles the mind that Monckton and the "S"PI think they can convince people that sea level has dropped since 1950 based on nothing more than their own unsubstantiated claims and blatantly doctored graphs which are completely contradicted by the actual observational data.

Basic rebuttal written by dana1981

Update July 2015:

Here is a related lecture-video from [Denial101x - Making Sense of Climate Science Denial](#)

[see video at [this link](#).]

This rebuttal was updated by Judith Matz on September 13, 2021 to replace broken links. The updates are a result of [our call for help](#) published in May 2021.



The Skeptical Science website by [Skeptical Science](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License](#).

 **Skeptical Science**.com



Skeptical Science explains the science of global warming and examines climate misinformation through the lens of peer-reviewed research. The website won the Australian Museum 2011 Eureka Prize for the Advancement of Climate Change Knowledge. Members of the Skeptical Science team have authored peer-reviewed papers, a [college textbook on climate change](#) and the book [Climate Change Denial: Heads in the Sand](#). Skeptical Science content has been used in university courses, textbooks, government reports on climate change, television documentaries and numerous books.



The [Skeptical Science](#) website by Skeptical Science is licensed under a Creative Commons [Attribution 3.0 Unported License](#).