

Scientists look at global sea level rise

Scientists from nine nations are involved in the Integrated Ocean Drilling Program's Tahiti Sea Level Expedition, investigating global sea level increases.

The researchers will take samples of fossil corals from the ocean seafloor to obtain information on changes in sea surface temperature that have occurred since the last glacial maximum, approximately 23,000 years ago. They will also be looking for information on climatic anomalies, including El Nino and the Southern Oscillation events.

The IODP scientists want to learn more about the timing and course of global sea level changes to better understand present and future sea level increases due to global greenhouse conditions.

Since the climax of the last ice age, global average sea level has risen by about 400 feet, primarily due to melting of large inland ice sheets and thermal expansion of the global body of ocean water, researchers said.

Tahiti was selected for the study since it's located in a tectonically stable region, therefore changes in sea level can be related solely to global effects.

More about the science party's activities will be posted during the expedition at ecord.org (general information) or iodp.de (expedition logbook).

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