



# Tonga Ocean Update

Issued: 10 February 2026

## Recent observation

**TONGA METEOROLOGICAL SERVICE**

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Domestic Terminal, Fua'amotu Airport, Tonga

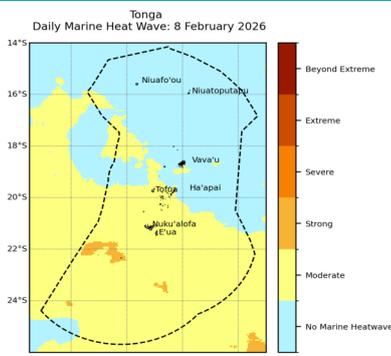
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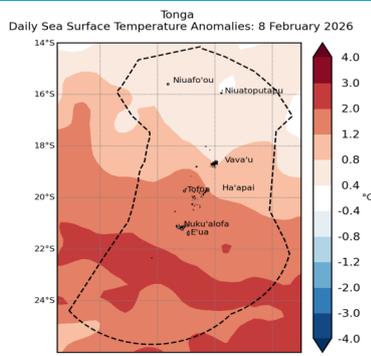
- Strong Marine Heat Wave experienced across Tonga waters..
- Significant increase in sea surface temperature anomalies observed.
- Sea level height has been above average in the past few weeks.
- Coral Bleaching has been at warning level for all of Tonga waters with alert level 1 at Tongatapu and southern Tonga waters. Concerns about bleaching on shallow reefs and nearshore fishing is being raised by local fishermen and tourism operators.

### Marine Heat Wave



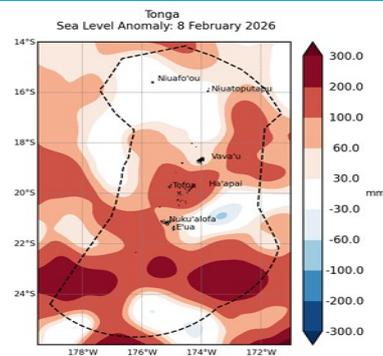
© Pacific Community (SPC) 2025 NOAA Coral Reef Watch (CRW)

### Sea Surface Temperature



© Pacific Community (SPC) 2025 Reynolds

### Sea-level height



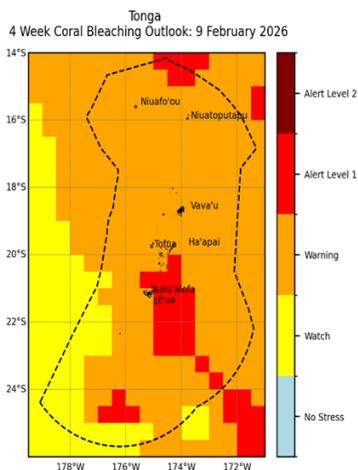
© Pacific Community (SPC) 2025 using E.U. Copernicus Marine Service Information; <https://doi.org/10.48670/moi-00349>

Daily monitoring shows that Tonga is experiencing a moderate to strong marine heat wave in the past few days and is continuing in the coming months. Marine heat wave combined with increasing temperature on land and sea were contributing to stress to marine ecosystems resulting in coral bleaching and dead fish as reported in the past days.

Significant increase in sea surface temperature has been observed across the country in the past few weeks with up to 3°C above average. Presence of warmer than average waters can be related to reports of dead fish found on coastal waters in some places in Tonga which is indication of heat stress on the marine ecosystem.

Sea level forecast shows above average (30-200mm) sea level height across Tonga waters. Stakeholders can use this forecast to make decisions about the protection of communities and infrastructure against coastal inundation, especially when there is extreme high tide.

### Coral Bleaching



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Coral bleaching was in warning level for Tonga EEZ as seen here in the map above with alert level 1 in parts of central and southern Tonga. Part of Ha'apai across to the north to the Niua were in a watch level. Combination of warmer than average land and sea surface temperature is a huge contribution to coral bleaching.

### 10 highest tides for 2026

Date	Time	Height (m)
26-Dec	9:21	1.89
27-Dec	10:17	1.88
05-Jan	9:08	1.87
25-Dec	8:25	1.87
04-Jan	8:12	1.86
06-Jan	10:02	1.85
28-Dec	11:14	1.85
03-Jan	7:14	1.84
03-Feb	8:53	1.84
27-Nov	9:38	1.84

### 10 lowest tides for 2026

Date	Time	Height (m)
18-Jun	4:16	0.21
17-Jun	3:22	0.21
16-Jul	3:06	0.21
17-Jul	3:59	0.21
19-Jun	5:11	0.24
15-Jul	2:13	0.24
16-Jun	2:29	0.24
20-May	4:33	0.25
18-Jul	4:49	0.25
19-May	3:39	0.25

Tidal predictions show the highest & lowest tides of the year for Nuku'alofa. The highest tide was on the 3rd February with the highest tide of 1.84m at 8.53 pm and the lowest tide was on the 3rd with the lowest tide at 0.38m at 2:17am. This information is very useful to everyone who wants to know these events especially to those stakeholders and people who are interested in tide predictions for guidance. Monitoring of highest tides is important as it can have negative impacts if occurred at the same time with high sea swell and wind. Process of watering and soaking of the beach hibiscus fibre (fau) for making waist mats, shallow fishing etc.



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## Ocean Outlook for March 2026

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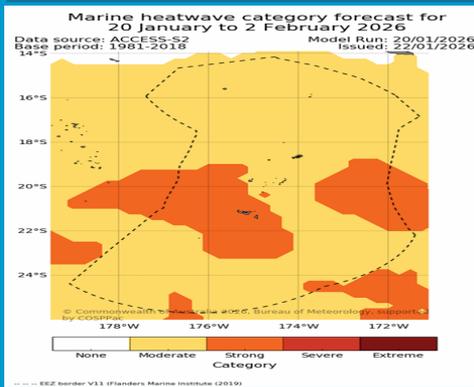
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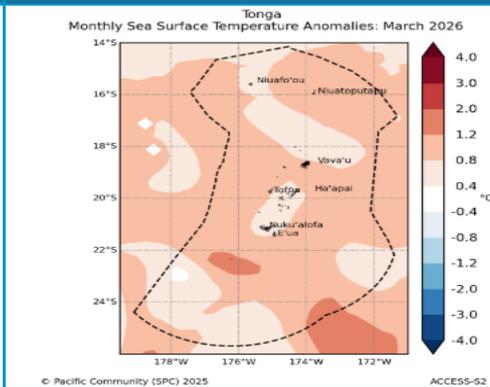
- Sea surface temperatures for Tonga remains above average for the forecast period.
- Increase in sea surface temperature anomalies is likely to continue in the coming months.
- A moderate to strong Heat Wave is likely to continue in the coming weeks.
- Sea level height is forecast to be above average to the southern Tonga waters.
- Coral Bleaching is at Alert level 2 for most of Tonga waters in the coming months.
- Public are advised to take preventive measures to reduce risks due to extreme air and sea surface temperatures.

### Marine Heat Wave Forecast



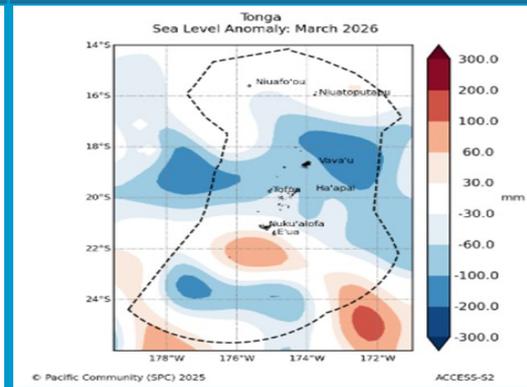
A moderate to severe marine heat wave condition is forecast to persist in Tonga waters for February 2026. Close monitoring is advised as during the forecast period as weekly variations can lead to higher than expected impacts.

### Sea Surface Temperature Forecast



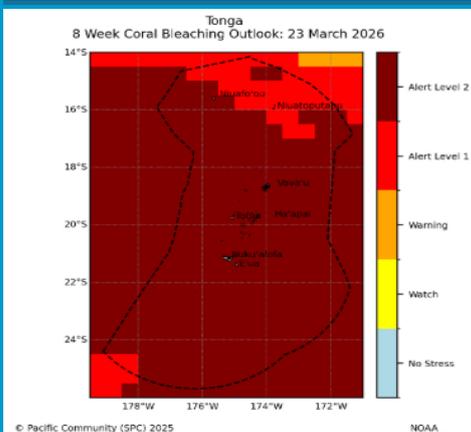
Above average sea surface temperature anomalies is predicted for the coming months. Presence of warmer than average waters intensifies stress of marine ecosystems and risks to fish and coral reefs. This information is important for communities awareness and close monitoring is therefore advised as daily and weekly variations may occur.

### Sea-level height



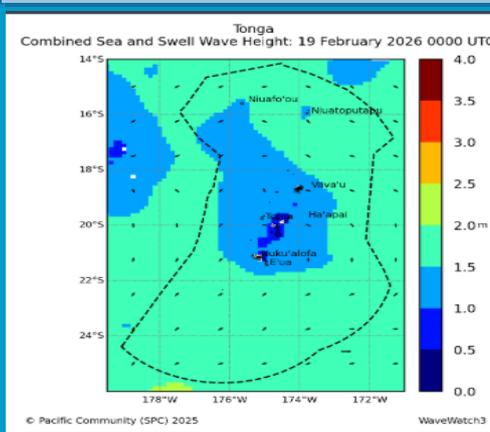
Sea level forecast shows above average (30-100mm) sea level to southern Tonga in the coming months. Stakeholders can use this forecast to make decisions about the protection of communities and infrastructure against coastal inundation, especially when there is extreme high tide.

### Coral Bleaching Outlook



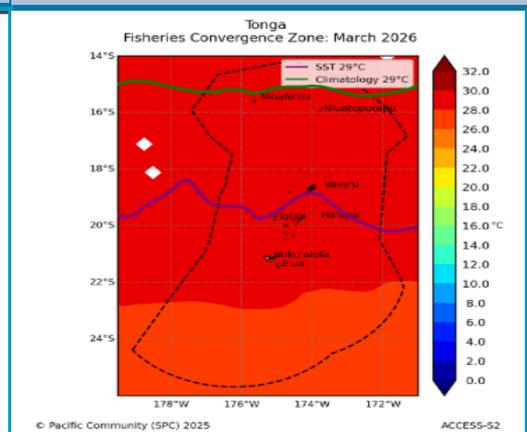
Coral bleaching shows Alert level 2 for most Tonga waters. Coral bleaching is a common signal of stress in coral reefs and marine ecosystems caused by warmer sea temperatures. Close monitoring is advised especially to Fisheries and related stakeholders.

### Combined Sea and Swell Wave Height



Tonga combined sea and swell wave height for February shows majority of the waves will come from the east and southeast. The average wave height in February will be 0.5 to 1.5m over most of Tongatapu, 'Eua, Ha'apai and Vava'u waters and stretching to the north-west. Elsewhere, wave heights will reach 1.5m.

### Fisheries convergence zone



The boundary between warm and cold ocean water is rich in nutrients and attracts Tuna. This convergence zone is normally located to the north but in March 2026, it is forecast to be displaced to the south and across central Tonga waters. This information can be used by stakeholders to know where tuna can be found during this time period.