



Tonga Ocean Update

Issued: 15 April 2026

Recent observation

TONGA METEOROLOGICAL SERVICE

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Domestic Terminal, Fua'amotu Airport, Tonga

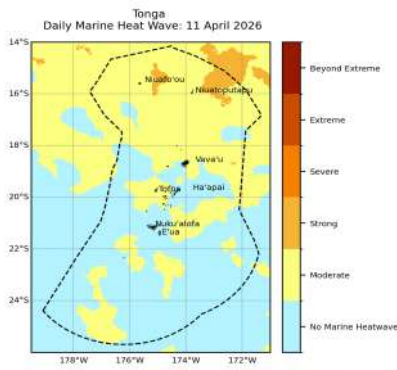
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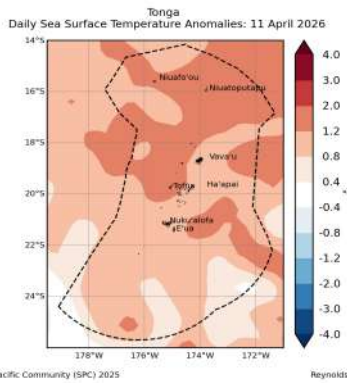
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- The 2025–26 La Niña has ended. Collectively, oceanic and atmospheric indicators of the El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO) reflect an ENSO-neutral state.
- Mostly moderate to strong Marine Heat Wave still exist across the Niuas and vava'u, while easing in the central and southern Tonga waters.
- Sea surface temperatures (SSTs) were generally 0.8 to 2.0°C warmer than average.
- Sea level anomalies has been significantly above average as of the 13th April.
- Coral Bleaching has been at Alert Level 2 in the past few days in just a small part of Tongatapu and Ha'apai, alert level 1 in part of northern waters of Vava'u through to the Niuas. The rest of Tonga waters are under watch level.

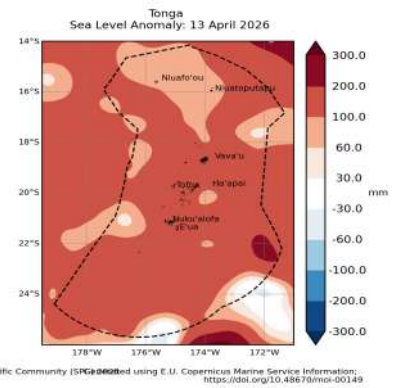
Marine Heat Wave



Sea Surface Temperature



Sea-level height

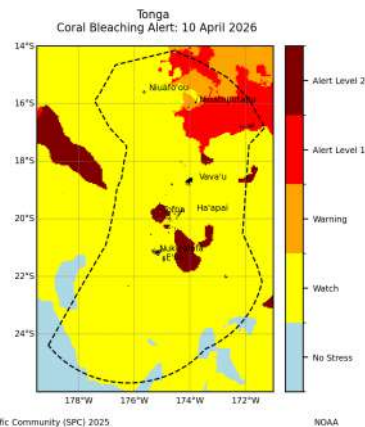


Daily monitoring shows that Tonga has been experiencing a moderate marine heat wave in the past few days but has eased in most of the central to southern Tonga waters. Marine heat wave combined with increasing temperature on land and sea are contributing to stress to marine ecosystems resulting in coral bleaching and marine .

Increase in sea surface temperature has been observed across the country in the past few weeks with up to 0.8 to 2.0°C above average. Presence of warmer than average waters can be related to stress on the marine ecosystem.

Sea level forecast shows above average (60-200mm) 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



Coral bleaching was in watch level for most of Tonga EEZ as seen here in the map above with alert level 2 in parts of Tongatapu and the Niuafoou. Combination of warmer than average land and sea surface temperature is a huge contribution to coral bleaching. This information is very useful for tourists and related stakeholders.

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 next highest tide is 19th April with the highest tide of 1.83m at 8.33 am and the next lowest tide was on the 20th April with the lowest tide at 0.33m at 3:49 pm. 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 May to July 2026

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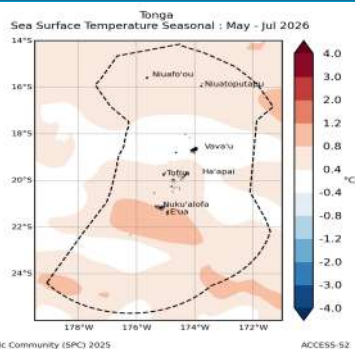
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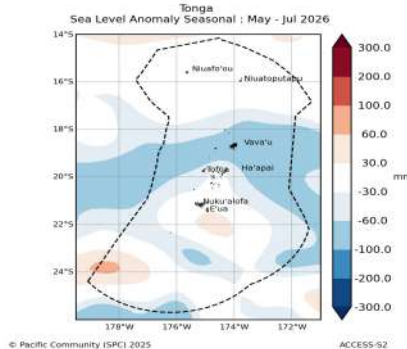
- A transition to **El Niño** is highly likely, with over a 60% chance of its development between May and July 2026. Majority of the climate models, forecast the tropical Pacific to continue warming in the coming months. **Neutral ENSO** conditions are expected to persist until at least late autumn (June), with all models indicating warming to levels consistent with El Niño by the end of winter (June-August). There is some variation across models in the rate at which El Niño thresholds may be reached. Ocean-atmosphere coupling (where the ocean and atmosphere act to reinforce each other) is required for a sustained El Niño state.
- A recent pulse of warming in the sub-surface suggests further warming of SSTs is likely in the coming weeks. Ocean temperatures around Tongatapu and 'Eua will be 0.8 to 1.2 oC warmer than average.
- Sea level height is forecast to be average to below average around Tonga waters.

Sea Surface Temperature Forecast



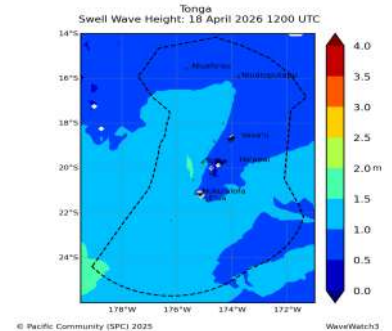
Above 0.4 to 1.2 sea surface temperature anomalies is predicted for the forecast period. Presence of warmer than average waters intensifies stress of marine ecosystems and risks to fish and coral reefs. This information is important for communities awareness and close monitoring is therefore advised as daily and

Sea-level height



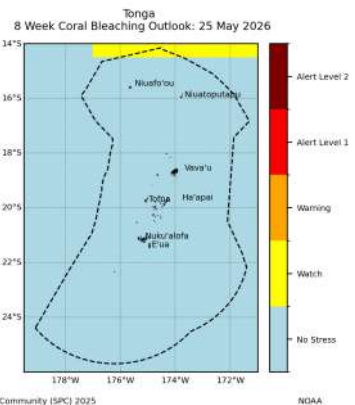
Sea level forecast shows average sea level across Tonga in the coming months. Stakeholders can use this forecast to make decisions about the protection of communities and infrastructure against coastal inundation, especially when there is extreme high tide.

Swell wave height Forecast



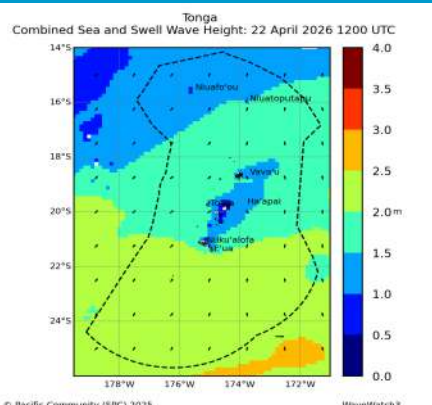
Swell wave height is forecast to be 0.5m in coastal waters of Tongatapu through to the north up to the Niua. The rest of Tonga waters with swell up to 1.5m in the coming month. Close monitoring is advised as during the forecast period is advised as this information is useful for mariners and especially fishermen.

Coral Bleaching Outlook



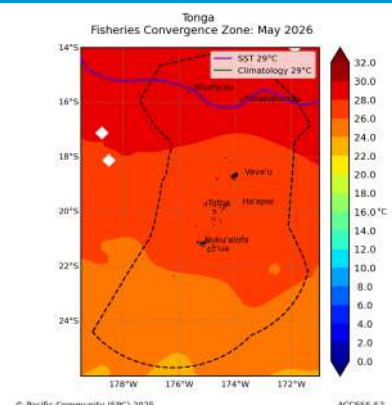
Coral bleaching shows no stress for Tonga for the coming month. Coral bleaching is a common signal of stress in coral reefs and marine ecosystems caused by warmer sea temperatures. Close monitoring is advised especially to Fisheries and related stakeholders.

Combined Sea and Swell Wave Height



Tonga combined sea and swell wave height for April shows majority of the waves will come from the south and south west. The average wave height in April will be 1.0 to 1.5m over most of the Niua to Tongatapu waters and reaching a maximum height of 1.5m over waters to the south of Tongatapu.

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 May 2026, it is forecast to be displaced a south along the waters of the Niua. This information can be used by stakeholders to know where tuna can be found during this time period.