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The United States Geological Survey (USGS) examined the probability of hurricane-induced coastal change on sandy beaches from Florida to New York in two first-ever studies released at the beginning of the month. Both reports – one examining beaches from Florida to North Carolina, the other beaches from Virginia to New York – can be used by community planners and emergency managers to make better informed decisions about coastline vulnerability and ways to deal with it. The reports include an online mapping tool that will enable users to model predicted coastal change in an area for any storm category.

Modeling data included in the reports indicate that a category 1 hurricane can increase water levels at the shoreline by about 150% above storm surge levels. Data also indicate that dune height and continuity have a strong correlation with coastal vulnerability, with northern beaches with higher average dune heights being less susceptible to overwash (the landward movement of sand and water) than southern beaches, with their long sections of continuous low dunes.
