



NOAA NATIONAL OCEANIC AND
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Caribbean Surface Current Data Now Available to Rescuers, Hazmat Crews

A new NOAA data feed will streamline search and rescue efforts and hazardous material cleanups in the Caribbean. Measurements of surface current speed and direction off the west coast of Puerto Rico are now feeding into a single Web site, making the information easily accessible and understandable to a broad user community of ocean rescuers and responders for the first time.

“Knowing what the current is doing is critical for tracking the probable path of people lost at sea or drifting survivor craft,” said Zdenka Willis, NOAA’s director of the Integrated Ocean Observing System. “This is about saving lives and protecting ocean resources.”

Operated by IOOS[®] Caribbean Region, users including the U.S. Coast Guard, NOAA, and other federal and state agencies can now access this new data in a consistent format. Existing IOOS efforts to make data available in standard formats eased efforts to get this data into the national server and fill an important geographical gap.

These data are collected with high frequency radar systems which bounce signals off the water to create a map of the surface currents. Scientists can make conclusions about water quality, assess our ecosystems and even make fisheries management decisions based on these surface current maps. The maps improve accuracy of predictions of how victims lost at sea or other objects will travel in the water.

These new data are available through a partnership effort among NOAA, the Mid-Atlantic and Caribbean regions of the U.S. IOOS, Clarkson University, Scripps Institution of Oceanography and the National Data Buoy Center.

IOOS is a federal, regional and private-sector partnership working to enhance our ability to collect, deliver and use ocean information. IOOS delivers the data and information needed to increase understanding of our oceans and coasts, so decision makers can take action to improve safety, enhance the economy and protect the environment.

NOAA understands and predicts changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and conserves and manages our coastal and marine resources. Visit us at <http://www.noaa.gov> or on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/usnoaa.gov>.

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On the Web: U.S. Integrated Ocean Observing System: <http://www.ioos.gov/>
Caribbean Regional Association: <http://cara.uprm.edu/>
National Data Buoy Center: <http://www.ndbc.noaa.gov/>
Scripps Institution of Oceanography: <http://scripps.ucsd.edu/>