



Coast Lines: How Mapmakers Frame the World and Chart Environmental Change

By Mark Monmonier

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In the next century, sea levels are predicted to rise at unprecedented rates, causing flooding around the world, from the islands of Malaysia and the canals of Venice to the coasts of Florida and California. These rising water levels pose serious challenges to all aspects of coastal existence—chiefly economic, residential, and environmental—as well as to the cartographic definition and mapping of coasts. It is this facet of coastal life that Mark Monmonier tackles in *Coast Lines*. Setting sail on a journey across shifting landscapes, cartographic technology, and climate change, Monmonier reveals that coastlines are as much a set of ideas, assumptions, and societal beliefs as they are solid black lines on maps.

Whether for sailing charts or property maps, Monmonier shows, coastlines challenge mapmakers to capture on paper a highly irregular land-water boundary perturbed by tides and storms and complicated by rocks, wrecks, and shoals. *Coast Lines* is peppered with captivating anecdotes about the frustrating effort to expunge fictitious islands from nautical charts, the tricky measurement of a coastline's length, and the contentious notions of beachfront property and public access.

Combing maritime history and the history of technology, *Coast Lines* charts the historical progression from offshore sketches to satellite images and explores the societal impact of coastal cartography on everything from global warming to homeland security. Returning to the form of his celebrated *Air Apparent*, Monmonier ably renders the topic of coastal cartography accessible to both general readers and historians of science, technology, and maritime studies. In the post-Katrina era, when the map of entire regions can be redrawn by a single natural event, the issues he raises are more important than ever.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Coastlines take on a completely different meaning after reading Mark Monmonier's five-century-long odyssey on the challenges and tricks that mapmakers have used to tell us where land and sea meet. That line is far from obvious, it turns out. With the prospect of rising global sea levels, the technique of mapping changing bays, estuaries, and deltas requires imagination as much as mathematics. By using history and humor, Monmonier's fascination with mapping our coastlines is highly infectious."

(Christopher Hallowell, author of *Holding Back the Sea*)

"A very useful (and fairly quick) read on the topic of changing coastlines. . . . Anyone interested in an informative and entertaining read on climate change via the science of cartography and map-making should peruse Monmonier's geographic treatise on coastlines."

(Randy Cerveny *Weatherwise*)

"An interesting commentary on how mapmakers represent the changing nature of nautical coastlines. Writing in nontechnical language aimed at a general or undergraduate readership, the author extensively uses maps, figures, charts, footnotes, and diagrams to illustrate effectively how cartographers and mapmakers depict historical and time-series data."

(*Library Journal*)

An interesting overview of some of the most fundamental problems faced by all cartographers in map construction.... I highly recommend the work."

(Colin V. Marray-Wallace *The Journal of the Australian Map Circle*)

"*Coastlines* is no exception to what we have come to expect from this exceptional scholar: well researched and referenced, captivating and engaging, with detailed stories set in a broader context of understanding, and a balance between scholarly thought and nontechnical writing for a public audience. His books are simply a delight to read."

(Sally Hermansen *H-Net*)

"Mark Monmonier is a cartographer, distinguished professor, and writer extraordinaire. . . . This volume, on mapping shorelines, is yet another excellent contribution."

(Klaus J. Meyer-Arendt *Technology & Culture*)

"[*Coast Lines*] provides an excellent grounding for a full understanding of the complexity of all factors involved with the historical and current mapping and charting of the world's coastlines. . . . This was an enjoyable read."

(Charles A. Burroughs *Imago Mundi*)

"By using coast lines on maps as examples, the book provides an interesting overview of some of the most fundamental problems faced by all cartographers in map construction. In this sense the book is thought-provoking. The book is written in a very readable style and should be of wide appeal, irrespective of one's degree of technical expertise or familiarity of maps."

(Colin V. Murray-Wallace *The Globe*)

About the Author

Mark Monmonier is distinguished professor of geography at Syracuse University's Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs and the author of many books, including most recently, *From Squaw Tit to Whorehouse Meadow*, also published by the University of Chicago Press.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Christopher Rayes:

The knowledge that you get from *Coast Lines: How Mapmakers Frame the World and Chart Environmental Change* could be the more deep you digging the information that hide into the words the more you get enthusiastic about reading it. It does not mean that this book is hard to be aware of but *Coast Lines: How Mapmakers Frame the World and Chart Environmental Change* giving you thrill feeling of reading. The copy writer conveys their point in certain way that can be understood through anyone who read that because the author of this book is well-known enough. This specific book also makes your own personal vocabulary increase well. That makes it easy to understand then can go along with you, both in printed or e-book style are available. We propose you for having this *Coast Lines: How Mapmakers Frame the World and Chart Environmental Change* instantly.

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