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By the time Sandy struck the Northeast, it had killed 72 people in the Caribbean. It was no longer a hurricane—but it was a thousand miles wide, with 80-mile-an-hour winds that drove the sea onto the coast in lethal surges. The final death toll was 147. As the world warms, it may see more storms like Sandy. It will certainly see higher seas.



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Photograph by Stephen Wilkes

Superstorm Sandy narrowed New Jersey's beaches by more than 30 feet on average. At Seaside Heights it swept away the pier under the roller coaster.

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Photograph by Iwan Baan, Reportage by Getty Images

In Manhattan, Sandy's surging tide knocked out a Con Ed substation, darkening the city below Midtown. Private generators provided some light, including the blue glow of the new World Trade Center, whose base is three feet above sea level.

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Photograph by Davina Grincevicius

After a long day of organizing relief efforts, Brandon d'Leo, a surfer and sculptor, rests in his candlelit apartment in the Rockaway Beach neighborhood of Queens, New York. Like many of his neighbors, d'Leo lost electricity for a few days—and heat and hot water for more than two months—after Sandy pounded the community.

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BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

Photograph by Kirsten Luce, New York Times/Redux

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PATH STATION, HOBOKEN, NEW JERSEY

Photograph by Port Authority of New York & New Jersey, AFP Photo

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Photograph by Steve Earley, Virginian-Pilot

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STATEN ISLAND, NEW YORK

Photograph by Michael Kirby Smith, New York Times/Redux

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Photograph by Ricardo Rojas, Reuters

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Photograph by Mark Thiessen, NGM Staff

An orange line sprayed on this condemned house—and on Robb Braidwood of the Chesapeake, Virginia, Office of Emergency Management—marks the typical flood height in the neighborhood. “It doesn’t take a major storm,” says Braidwood. “Heavy rain and the right wind during a high tide will do it.”

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