

Saturday, 19 January 2008, 01:07 GMT

### **Warning on rising Mediterranean Sea levels**

Scientists noted sea temperatures had also risen significantly  
The level of the Mediterranean Sea is rising rapidly and could increase by up to half a metre in the next 50 years, scientists in Spain have warned.

A study by the Spanish Oceanographic Institute says levels have been rising since the 1970s with the rate of increase growing in recent years.

It says even a small rise could have serious consequences in coastal areas.

The study noted that the findings were consistent with other investigations into the effects of climate change.

The study, entitled Climate Change in the Spanish Mediterranean, said the sea had risen "between 2.5mm and 10mm (0.1 and 0.4in) per year since the 1990s".

If the trend continued it would have "very serious consequences" in low-lying coastal areas even in the case of a small rise, and "catastrophic consequences" if a half-metre increase occurred, the study warned.

### **Global climate change**

Scientists noted that sea temperatures had also risen significantly by 0.12 to 0.5C since the 1970s.

Sea level rise is a key effect of global climate change. There are two major contributory effects: the melting of ice, and expansion of sea water as the oceans warm.

Last month, a study by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change said the world's sea levels could rise twice as much this century as UN climate scientists had previously predicted.

The Nobel Prize-winning IPCC predicted a maximum sea level rise of 81cm (32in) this century.