

# <sup>1</sup> eo-tides: Tide modelling tools for large-scale satellite Earth observation analysis

<sup>3</sup> **Robbi Bishop-Taylor**  <sup>1</sup>¶, **Claire Phillips**  <sup>1</sup>, **Stephen Sagar**  <sup>1</sup>, **Vanessa Newey**<sup>1</sup>, and **Tyler Sutterley**  <sup>2</sup>

<sup>5</sup> 1 Geoscience Australia, Australia  <sup>2</sup> University of Washington Applied Physics Laboratory, United States of America  ¶ Corresponding author

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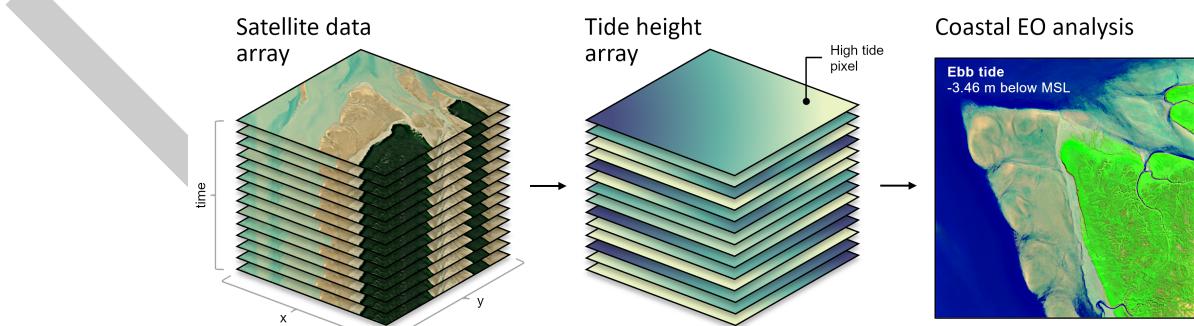
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## Summary

The eo-tides package provides powerful parallelized tools for integrating satellite Earth observation (EO) data with ocean tide modelling. The package provides a flexible Python-based toolkit for modelling and attributing tide heights to a time-series of satellite images based on the spatial extent and acquisition time of each satellite observation (Figure 1).

eo-tides leverages advanced tide modelling functionality from the pyTMD tide prediction software ([Sutterley et al., 2017](#)), combining this fundamental tide modelling capability with EO spatial analysis tools from odc-geo ([odc-geo contributors, 2024](#)). This allows tides to be modelled in parallel automatically using over 50 supported tide models, and returned in standardised pandas ([McKinney, 2010](#); [pandas development team, 2020](#)) and xarray ([Hoyer & Joseph, 2017](#)) data formats for further analysis.

Tools from eo-tides are designed to be applied directly to petabytes of freely available satellite data loaded from the cloud using Open Data Cube's odc-stac or datacube packages (e.g. using [Digital Earth Australia](#) or [Microsoft Planetary Computer's SpatioTemporal Asset Catalogues](#)). Additional functionality enables evaluating potential satellite-tide biases, and validating modelled tides using external tide gauge data — both important considerations for assessing the reliability and accuracy of coastal EO workflows. In combination, these open source tools support the efficient, scalable and robust analysis of coastal EO data for any time period or location globally.



**Figure 1:** A typical eo-tides coastal EO workflow, with tide heights modelled into every pixel in a spatio-temporal stack of satellite data (for example, from ESA's Sentinel-2 or NASA/USGS Landsat), then combined to derive insights into dynamic coastal environments.

## <sup>26</sup> Statement of need

<sup>27</sup> Satellite remote sensing offers an unparalleled method to examine dynamic coastal environments  
<sup>28</sup> over large temporal and spatial scales (Turner et al., 2021; Vitousek et al., 2023). However,  
<sup>29</sup> the variable and sometimes extreme influence of ocean tides in these regions can complicate  
<sup>30</sup> analyses, making it difficult to separate the influence of changing tides from patterns of true  
<sup>31</sup> coastal change over time (Vos et al., 2019). This is a particularly challenging for continental-  
<sup>32</sup> to global-scale coastal EO analyses, where failing to account for tide dynamics can lead to  
<sup>33</sup> inaccurate or misleading insights into coastal processes observed by satellites.

<sup>34</sup> Conversely, information about ocean tides can also provide unique environmental insights that  
<sup>35</sup> can greatly enhance the utility of coastal EO data. Conventionally, satellite data dimensions  
<sup>36</sup> consider the geographical “where” and the temporal “when” of data acquisition. The addition  
<sup>37</sup> of tide height as a new analysis dimension allows data to be filtered, sorted and analysed with  
<sup>38</sup> respect to tidal processes, delivering a powerful re-imagining of traditional multi-temporal EO  
<sup>39</sup> data analysis (Sagar et al., 2017). For example, satellite data can be analysed to focus on  
<sup>40</sup> specific ecologically-significant tidal stages (e.g. high, low tide, spring or neap tides) or on  
<sup>41</sup> particular tidal processes (e.g. ebb or flow tides; Sent et al. (2025)).

<sup>42</sup> This concept has been used to map tidally-corrected annual coastlines from Landsat satellite  
<sup>43</sup> data at continental scale (Bishop-Taylor et al., 2021), generate maps of the extent and elevation  
<sup>44</sup> of the intertidal zone (Bishop-Taylor et al., 2019; Murray et al., 2012; Sagar et al., 2017), and  
<sup>45</sup> create tidally-constrained imagery composites of the coastline (Sagar et al., 2018). However,  
<sup>46</sup> these approaches have been historically based on bespoke, closed-source or difficult to install  
<sup>47</sup> tide modelling tools, limiting the reproducibility and portability of these techniques to new  
<sup>48</sup> coastal EO applications. To support the next generation of coastal EO workflows, there is a  
<sup>49</sup> pressing need for new open-source tools for combining satellite data with tide modelling.

<sup>50</sup> eo-tides aims to address these challenges by providing a set of performant open-source Python  
<sup>51</sup> tools for attributing satellite EO data with modelled ocean tides. This functionality is provided  
<sup>52</sup> in five main analysis modules (utils, model, eo, stats, validation) described briefly below.

## <sup>53</sup> Features

### <sup>54</sup> Setting up tide models

<sup>55</sup> The `eo_tides.utils` module simplifies the setup of global ocean tide models, addressing a  
<sup>56</sup> common barrier to coastal EO workflows. Tools like `list_models` provide feedback on available  
<sup>57</sup> and supported models (Figure 2), while `clip_models` can improve performance by clipping  
<sup>58</sup> large model files to smaller regions of interest, significantly reducing processing times for  
<sup>59</sup> high-resolution models like FES2022. Comprehensive documentation is available to [assist](#)  
<sup>60</sup> [setting up commonly used tide models](#), including downloading, uncompressed, and organizing  
<sup>61</sup> data files.

	Model	Expected path
✓	EOT20	tide_models/EOT20/ocean_tides
✗	FES2014	tide_models/fes2014/ocean_tide
✓	HAMTIDE11	tide_models/hamtide
...	...	...

Summary:  
Available models: 2/50

**Figure 2:** An example output from `list_tides`, providing a useful summary table which clearly identifies available and supported tide models.

## 62 Modelling tides

63 The `eo_tides.model` module is powered by advanced tide modelling functionality from the  
 64 pyTMD Python package ([Sutterley et al., 2017](#)).

65 pyTMD is an open-source tidal prediction software that aims to simplify the calculation of ocean  
 66 and earth tides. Tides are frequently decomposed into harmonic constants (or constituents)  
 67 associated with the relative positions of the sun, moon and Earth. pyTMD.io contains routines for  
 68 reading major constituent values from commonly available ocean tide models, and interpolating  
 69 those values to spatial locations. pyTMD.astro contains routines for computing the positions  
 70 of celestial bodies for a given time. For ocean tides, pyTMD computes the longitudes of  
 71 the sun (S), moon (H), lunar perigee (P), ascending lunar node (N) and solar perigee  
 72 (PP). pyTMD.arguments contains routines for combining the astronomical coefficients with the  
 73 “Doodson number” of each constituent, along with routines for adjusting the amplitude and  
 74 phase of each constituent based on their modulations over the 18.6 year nodal period. Finally,  
 75 pyTMD.predict uses results from those underlying functions to predict tidal values at a given  
 76 location and time.

77 The `model_tides` function from `eo_tides.model` wraps pyTMD functionality to return tide  
 78 predictions in a standardised pandas.DataFrame format, enabling integration with satellite  
 79 EO data and parallelized processing for improved performance. Parallelisation in eo-tides  
 80 is automatically optimised based on available workers and requested tide models and tide  
 81 modelling locations. This parallelisation can significantly improve tide modelling performance,  
 82 especially for large-scale analyses run on a multi-core machine ([Table 1](#)). Additional functions  
 83 like `model_phases` classify tides or determine flow/ebb tides, critical for interpreting satellite-  
 84 observed coastal processes like changing turbidity and ocean colour ([Sent et al., 2025](#)).

**Table 1:** A [benchmark comparison](#) of tide modelling performance with parallelisation on vs. off, for a typical large-scale analysis involving a month of hourly tides modelled at 10,000 modelling locations using three tide models (FES2022, TPXO10, GOT5.6).

Cores	Parallelisation	No parallelisation	Speedup
8	2min 46s ± 663 ms	9min 28s ± 536 ms	3.4x
32	55.9 s ± 560 ms	9min 24s ± 749 ms	10.1x

## 85 Combining tides with satellite data

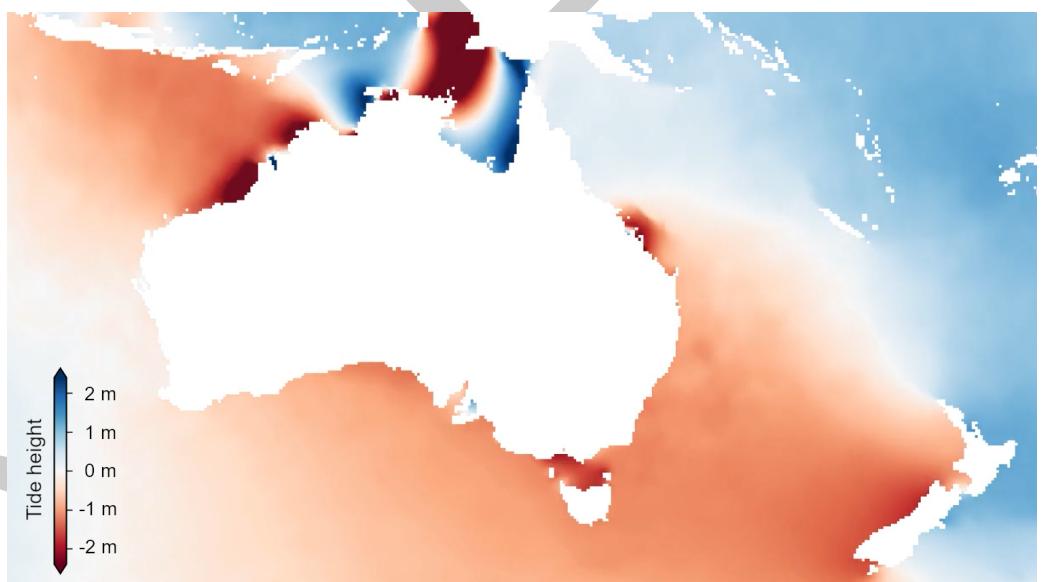
86 The `eo_tides.eo` module integrates modelled tides with xarray-format satellite data. For  
 87 tide attribution, eo-tides offers two approaches that differ in complexity and performance:  
 88 `tag_tides` assigns a single tide height per timestep for small-scale studies, while `pixel_tides`

<sup>89</sup> models tides spatially and temporally for larger-scale analyses, producing a unique tide height  
<sup>90</sup> for each pixel in a dataset {tab:tide\_stats}.

<sup>91</sup> These functions can be applied to free and open satellite data for any coastal or ocean location  
<sup>92</sup> on the planet, for example using data loaded from the cloud using the [Open Data Cube](#) and  
<sup>93</sup> SpatioTemporal Asset Catalogue ([STAC contributors, 2024](#)).

**Table 2:** Comparison of the tag\_tides and pixel\_tides functions.

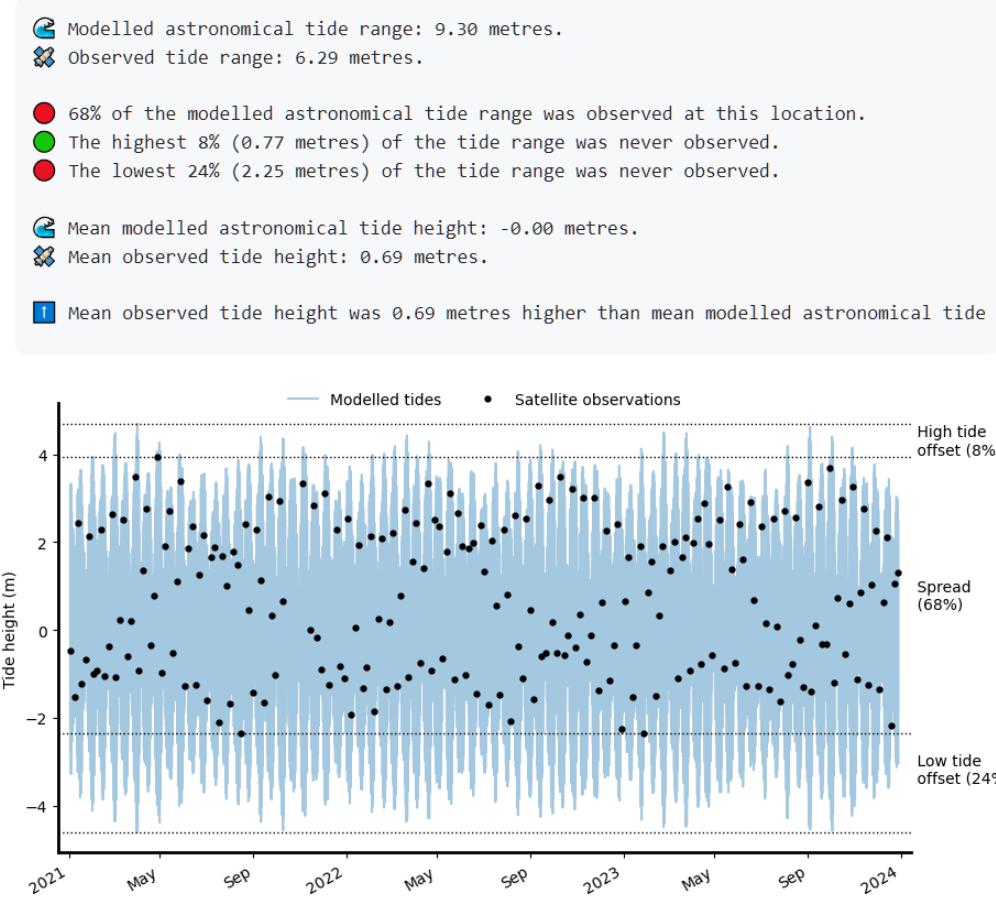
tag_tides	pixel_tides
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assigns a single tide height to each timestep/satellite image</li> <li>- Ideal for local or site-scale analysis</li>   <li>- Fast, low memory use</li> <li>- Single tide height per image can produce artefacts in complex tidal regions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assigns a tide height to every individual pixel through time to capture spatial tide dynamics</li> <li>- Ideal for regional to global-scale coastal product generation</li>   <li>- Slower, higher memory use</li> <li>- Produce spatially seamless results across large extents by applying analyses at the pixel level</li> </ul>



**Figure 3:** An example tide height output produced by the pixel\_tides function, showing spatial variability in tides across Australasia for a single timestep.

#### <sup>94</sup> Calculating tide statistics and satellite biases

<sup>95</sup> The `eo_tides.stats` module identifies biases caused by complex tide aliasing interactions  
<sup>96</sup> interactions between tidal dynamics and satellite observations. These interactions can prevent  
<sup>97</sup> satellites from observing the entire tide cycle ([Eleveld et al., 2014; Sent et al., 2025](#)), and  
<sup>98</sup> cause coastal EO studies to produce biased or misleading results ([Bishop-Taylor et al., 2019](#)).  
<sup>99</sup> The module produces a range of useful statistics that summarise how well a satellite time series  
<sup>100</sup> captures real-world tidal conditions, include spread (coverage of tide range) and high/low-tide  
<sup>101</sup> offsets (missed tidal extremes). Automated reports and plots provide insights further insights  
<sup>102</sup> into potential biases affecting the analysis.



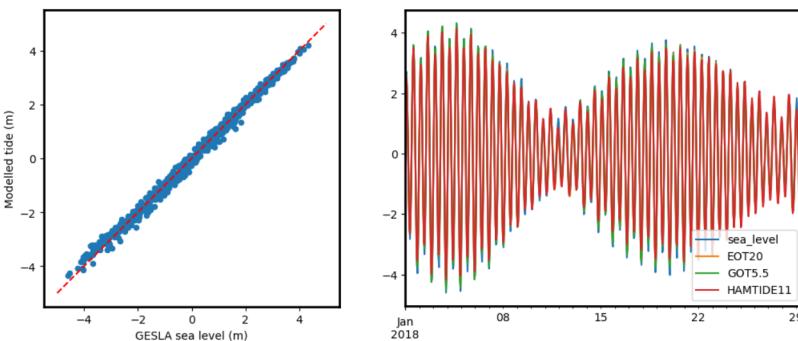
**Figure 4:** An example of tidally-biased satellite coverage, where the sensor only observes ~68% of the modelled astronomical tide range and never observes the lowest 24% of tides. Satellite bias plots show satellite observed tides as black dots, overlaid over the full range of modelled tides (blue lines).

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### Validating modelled tides

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The `eo_tides.validation` module validates modelled tide heights using high-quality sea-level measurements from the GESLA Global Extreme Sea Level Analysis (Haigh et al., 2023) archive, providing error metrics like RMSE and MAE (Figure 5). It enables comparison of multiple tide models against observed data, allowing users to choose optimal tide models for their specific study area or application (Figure 5).



**Figure 5:** An example comparison of modelled tides from multiple global ocean tide models (EOT20, GOT5.5, HAMTIDE11) against observed sea level data from the Broome 62650 GESLA tide gauge, Western Australia.

## 109 Research projects

110 Early versions of eo-tides functions have been used for continental-scale intertidal zone  
 111 elevation and exposure mapping ([Bishop-Taylor et al., 2024](#)), multi-decadal shoreline mapping  
 112 across Australia ([Bishop-Taylor et al., 2021](#)) and [Africa](#), and to support tide correction for  
 113 satellite-derived shorelines as part of the CoastSeg Python package ([Fitzpatrick et al., 2024](#)).

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 118 edits. This paper is published with the permission of the Chief Executive Officer, Geoscience  
 119 Australia. Copyright Geoscience Australia (2025).

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