

Measurement of Background Gamma Radiation in the Northern Marshall Islands

Sixty-seven nuclear tests were conducted on two atolls in the northern Marshall Islands between 1946 and 1958. These tests produced radioactive fallout, which even today gives rise to radiation measurable above naturally occurring background levels. Rather than obtain new data, recent estimates of contamination levels in the northern Marshall Islands use measurements made decades ago to calculate present radiation levels. In contrast, this study reports on timely measurements on three different atolls, and also provide detailed fits and simulated maps across several islands, including the islands of Bikini and Rongelap. Bikini and Rongelap Islands are of particular interest as they are relevant to the discussion of human resettlement; indeed, the study measured radiation values for Bikini Island are higher than those previously reported. See the related paper here: <http://www.pnas.org/content/113/25/6833.abstract>

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