

In 2011, Thailand suffered its worst flooding in half a century. The flooding far surpassed the seasonal norm. Provinces, districts and various kinds of land and landuses across central Thailand became submerged.

Flooding in Thailand comes with the seasonal monsoon weather. The water flows from northern Thailand down the Chao Praya River and other water sources before spilling into the Gulf of Thailand. However, heavy raining and inadequate preparation in 2011 led to widespread flooding across Thailand and a national emergency.

A comparison between the extreme flooding of 2011 with the average flooding of 2010 to 2011 shows the extended reach of the 2011 floods. The flooding spread to places usually safe from the seasonal flooding like the capital, Bangkok. The massive floods caught the Thai people unprepared and caused unfortunate destruction across the country. With a greater area affected by flooding, more people and ways of life would suffer.

The flooding touched a population unaccustomed to dealing with a natural disaster. According to the analysis, an estimate of 1,453,193 people were affected by the 2011 flooding in comparison to an estimate of 1,129,529 people typically affected by flooding. The difference in total population is not great but the cities and villages hit were unprepared and, thus, more vulnerable to the floods.

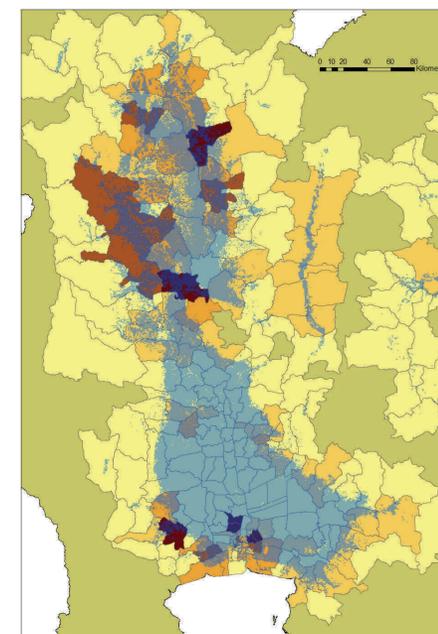
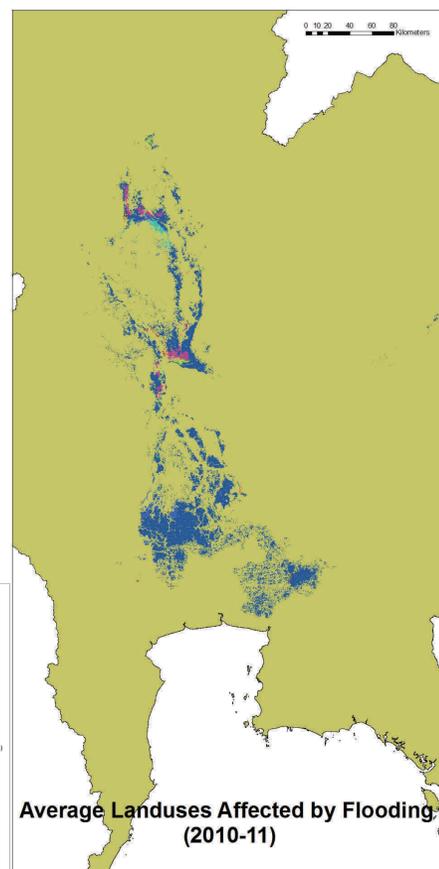
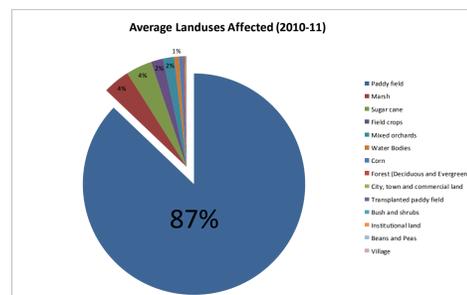
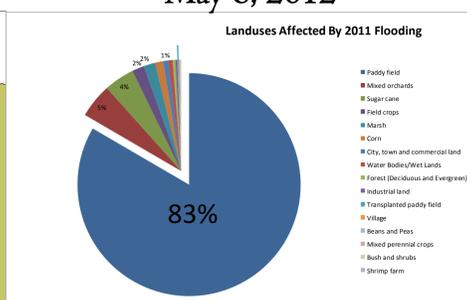
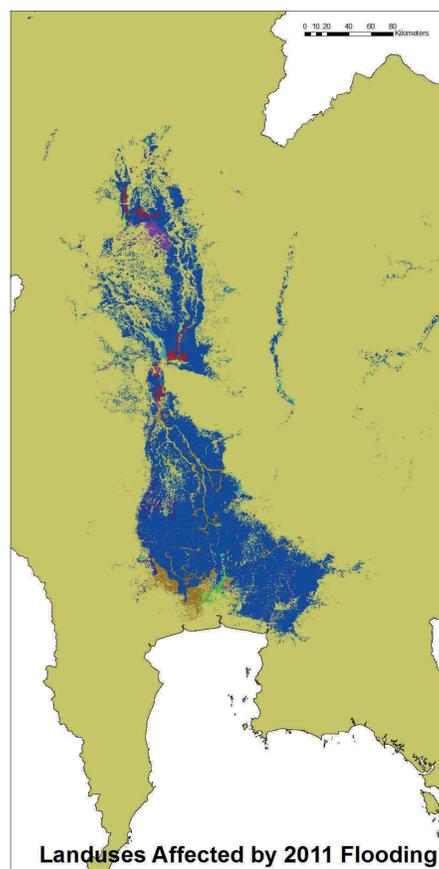
In addition to the affected population, various forms of land and landuses were inundated. Historically, rice paddies are planted to take advantage of seasonal flooding as the primary method of irrigation. However, while rice paddies typically account for 87% of total landuses affected by flooding, in 2011, rice paddies only represented 83% of the total. The difference means that landuses like orchards, corn fields, industrial land and urban areas received huge amounts of water. The unusual landuses impacted by the flood resulted in a submerging of the Thai economy.

While the average flood in Thailand has great consequences, the flood of 2011 left an indelible watermark. Understanding the vulnerability of people, places and possessions in Thailand to flooding will ensure that the country recovers from this disaster and floats back to the surface.



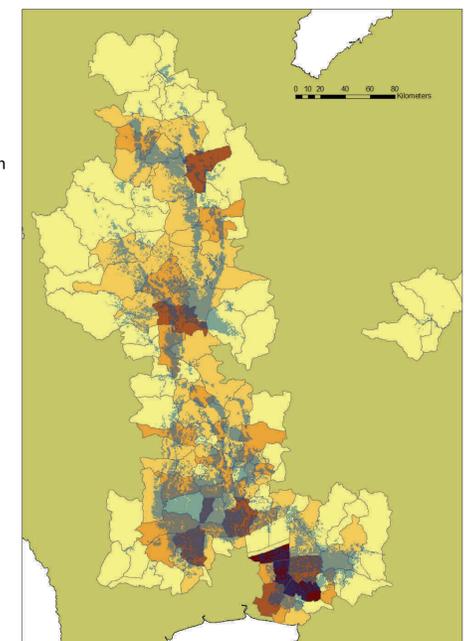
Flooding in Thailand: A Vulnerability Analysis

By: Ivan Boekelheide
May 8, 2012



Most Affected Districts by Flooding (2011 and 2010-11)

District	Population Affected (2011)	District	Population Affected (Average 2010-11)
Muang Nonthaburi	67777	Muang Chachoengsao	44761
Muang Phitsanulok	43183	Lam Luk Ka	43558
Bangkapi	40749	Nong Chok	43274
Muang Nakhon Pathom	39290	Muang Nakhon Sawan	33552
Bungkum	35831	Phra Nakhon Si Ayuttaya	31823
Muang Nakhon Sawan	35261	Bang Len	30368
Pak Kret	32085	Bang Sai	28273
Krathum Baen	28039	Bang Nam Priet	25602
Khlong Khluang	25161	Bang Phli	25161
Muang Sukhothai	25038	Bang Pa-in	24422



Sources: Statistical Information Service and Dissemination Group, Forecasting Bureau, National Statistical Office, Thailand, 2012; Thailand Flood Monitoring System, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), <http://photoblog.msnbc.msn.com/>, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>
File:Helicopter_survey_of_flooding_in_suburban_Greater_Bangkok_22_October_2011.jpg