

# Arctic Report Card: Update for 2015

Tracking recent environmental changes



[Home](#) [About](#) [Printouts](#) [Previous Report Cards](#) [NOAA Arctic Theme Page](#) [Contacts](#)

## HOME

[Executive Summary](#)

## VITAL SIGNS

[Air Temperature](#)  
[Terrestrial Snow Cover](#)  
[Greenland Ice Sheet](#)  
[Sea Ice](#)  
[Sea Surface Temperature](#)  
[Ocean Primary Productivity](#)  
[Tundra Greenness](#)

## INDICATORS

[River Discharge](#)  
[Walruses](#)

## FROSTBITES

[Borealization of the Fish Community](#)  
[Community-based Observing in the Arctic](#)  
[Greenland Ice Sheet Surface Velocity: New Data Sets](#)

### What's new in 2015?

**Maximum sea ice extent** on 25 February was 15 days earlier than average and the lowest value on record (1979-present). **Minimum ice extent** in September was the 4th lowest on record. Sea ice continues to be younger and thinner: in February and March 2015 there was twice as much first-year ice as there was 30 years ago.

Changes in sea ice alone are having **profound effects on the marine ecosystem** (fishes, walruses, primary production) and **sea surface temperatures**.



### Highlights

**Air temperatures** in all seasons between October 2014 and September 2015 exceeded 3°C above average over broad areas of the Arctic, while the annual average air temperature (+1.3°) over land was the highest since 1900.

**Walruses** are negatively affected by loss of sea ice habitat but positively affected by reduced hunting pressure, while sea ice loss and rising temperatures in the Barents Sea are causing a **poleward shift in fish communities**.

The 2nd lowest **June snow cover extent** on land continued a decrease that dates back to 1979, while **river discharge** from the great rivers of Eurasia and North America has increased during that time.

Widespread positive **sea surface temperature and primary production** anomalies occurred throughout the Arctic Ocean and adjacent seas as sea ice retreated in summer 2015.

Melting occurred over more than 50% of the **Greenland Ice Sheet** for the first time since the exceptional melting of 2012, and glaciers terminating in the ocean showed an increase in ice velocity and decrease in area.

**Terrestrial vegetation** productivity and above-ground biomass have been decreasing since 2011.

[NOAA Press Release](#)  
[Graphics from Climate.gov](#)  
[Photos and animations for the media](#)



[DOC](#) | [NOAA](#) | [NOAA Arctic Research Program](#)  
[Disclaimer](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Webmaster](#)

<http://www.arctic.noaa.gov/Report-Card>