

‘Birthplace of Ice’ in Russia’s Arctic Sees Record-Breaking Start to Melting Season

June 02, 2021



The Laptev Sea plays a crucial role in generating ice coverage for the entire Arctic. **Lev Fedoseyev / TASS**

A sea in Russia’s Arctic known as the “birthplace of ice” could break ice melt records for a second consecutive year in 2021, climatologist Zachary Labe of Colorado State University [tweeted](#) Tuesday.

In 2020 the Laptev Sea [stayed](#) ice-free until November for the first time in documented history. The sea, which plays a crucial role in generating ice coverage for the entire Arctic, has broken another record with its annual ice melt starting earlier in the spring than ever before.

Embed:

Yikes! We are off to a record-breaking start to the sea ice melt season in the Laptev Sea (again) ☒

[This region is located in the Siberian [#Arctic](#). Data from [@NSIDC](#) [pic.twitter.com/2UlQS3Mik4](#)

— Zack Labe (@ZLabe) [June 2, 2021](#)

“We are off to a record-breaking start to the sea ice melt season in the Laptev Sea (again),” Labe tweeted, citing data from the U.S. National Snow & Ice Data Center (NSIDC).

The ice-free season in the Laptev Sea, located between the Kara and East Siberian seas, has grown longer in recent decades, a pattern that is likely to continue for the rest of the century, Labe [told](#) The Guardian in October.

Scientists have warned that summer sea ice in the Arctic, a region which is [warming](#) three times faster than the rest of the planet, could [disappear](#) completely by 2035.

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If the Laptev Sea’s ice-free season continues to get longer, newly formed sea ice will not be able to [spread](#) to other parts of the Arctic Ocean before another melting season starts, threatening the region’s ecosystem, scientists say. A loss of ice from the Laptev Sea could also cause ice in other regions to melt faster by exposing more dark ocean surface to sunlight and creating a feedback loop of accelerating warming.

The latest record comes amid a series of abnormal heatwaves and extreme weather events like wildfires and droughts in Siberia and the Arctic that have been [linked](#) to climate change. During last month’s [heatwave](#) along Russia’s Arctic coast, the shores of the Barents Sea saw hotter temperatures than beaches in Italy and southern France.

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