



Written by [Rebecca Terrell](#) on January 13, 2010

Arctic Ice Melts as Earth Cools

The cold snap gripping the nation right now is only the tip of the iceberg, according to an article by David Rose in the UK's Daily Mail. Rose quotes a top climate modeler with the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Mojib Latif, who recently predicted cooler temperatures for the next two or three decades, as reported by The New American last week. He also cites data from the U.S. National Snow and Ice Data Center (NSIDC) in Colorado reporting an increase in Arctic summer ice by 26 percent since 2007.



What he fails to mention is the [NSIDC report](#) concludes — though 2009 saw slight recovery — Arctic sea ice is melting a rate of 11.2 percent per decade. The report goes on to explain the new ice is thin and, being young (less than two years old), is more vulnerable to melting. Remarking on the data, NSIDC Director Mark Serreze said, "We still expect to see ice-free summers sometime in the next few decades," and NSIDC scientist Ted Scambos warned, "A lot of people are going to look at that graph of ice extent and think that we've turned the corner on climate change. But the underlying conditions are still very worrisome."

So it is odd that Rose would cite this report, since the rest of his otherwise well-researched article provides further proof that leading scientists expect 20 or 30 more years of cooler global temperatures. For example, Rose quotes the head of the University of Wisconsin Atmospheric Sciences Group, Anastasios Tsonis, who agrees with Latif that oceanic cycles of warming and cooling, not man-made greenhouse gases, are the most influential factors affecting global temperatures. The cycles are called "multi-decadal oscillations" or MDOs.

However, the incongruity between melting summer ice and decreasing temperatures raises a question about true conditions in the world of Arctic ice. An answer may be found in a July 2009 article published in [The Star Canadian](#): "Vast areas of the Arctic are still scientific black holes, where researchers have yet to gather hard data." This is according to Jane Eert, an oceanographer and science coordinator of a Canadian federal oceanic study. Eert agrees the Arctic is losing ice but attributes much of the loss to shifting winds (caused by climate change), which have exported "enormous amounts of ice" from the area. She said this could have a counter-effect on the global climate and poses an additional factor researchers should consider. Then, she made the amazing assertion:

The guys who are running the long-term climate models have a tough problem. They're looking at really long time scales, and as result they can't look at a lot of details for each year. In order to get the results before you die, you have to fudge some things. And what they fudge is the small-scale stuff. But it turns out that probably the small-scale stuff is important, and fudging it gives you wrong answers.

How many wrong answers has their "fudging" produced? [Satellite pictures](#) published by the University of Illinois show only a slight decline in the current expanse of Arctic sea ice compared with pictures



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taken 30 years ago. Certainly, the images do not indicate age or thickness, but the same university also published 2009 data demonstrating while Arctic sea ice reached a minimum in 2007, Antarctic sea ice reached a [30-year maximum](#) the same year. Interestingly, the school's [chart of global sea ice extent](#) in the past 30 years shows practically no trend whatsoever, with 2008 and 2009 peak sea-ice seasons equivalent to the 1979–2000 mean.

It would seem recent declines in Arctic summer ice are merely being exploited by scientists who have otherwise been unable to prove the efficacy of their climate models. As Kevin Trenberth, head of the Climate Analysis Section at the National Center for Atmospheric Research, said in a [Climategate](#) e-mail, "The fact is that we can't account for the lack of warming at the moment and it is a travesty that we can't." Trenberth scoffed at the idea of ocean cycles impacting global temperatures, but many scientists, such as Latif and Tsonis, agree MDOs regularly dictate warm and cold trends in 20- to 30-year cycles. They insist we are entering a cold mode, and Tsonis predicts in the *Daily Mail* article that climate scientists will start predicting another ice age "by the early 2030s, just as the MDOs shift once more and temperatures begin to rise."



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