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Sea Ice Maximum Second Lowest on Record

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Scientists at the National Snow and Ice Data Center just announced the Arctic Sea Ice maximum – which is the second lowest on record. You can see the official announcement here: <http://nsidc.org/arcticseaicen>

The extent of sea ice in the Arctic typically reaches its maximum for the winter in March. March of 2015, 2016 and 2017 represented three consecutive record lows.

Now, 2018 sea ice maximum is the second lowest on record and represents a profound indicator of Arctic unraveling. Decade by decade (see chart below) the sea ice maximum has been in decline regularly setting new records. As a critical component of the earth's climate system, sea ice reflects sunlight back into space. The loss of sea ice increases the dark surface of the ocean. Dark oceans absorb more energy, which raises the temperature of the Arctic Ocean. This self-reinforced cycle further exacerbates the melting and creates a cycle.

The Arctic is warming twice as fast as the rest of the planet. The rapidly warming Arctic accelerates ice loss from Greenland and Arctic glaciers that contribute globally to the rate of sea level rise impacting low-lying states like Florida. The fate of the Arctic is the fate of Florida.

Numerous scientists have concluded that we are witnessing profound changes in mid latitude weather due to the loss of winter sea ice. Polar-driven changes to our jet stream are creating more extreme weather throughout the northern hemisphere reaching as far south as Florida.

Finally, a warmer Arctic means a faster thawing of permafrost that in turn means the release of vast amounts of carbon dioxide and methane leading to additional warming and increases in sea level. The loss of permafrost is a self-reinforcing cycle that amplifies the urgency of the need to correct our course before it is too late.

