

# Climate Alarmists are Rescued from Antarctic Summer Sea Ice

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By Ken Gregory

A collection of climate alarmist tourists and scientists have been rescued from their boat, trapped by record high Antarctic summer sea ice. The climate scientists aboard the Russian research vessel, the Akademik Shokalskiy, expected to find evidence of melting sea ice, but instead encountered record high Antarctic sea ice.

The [Antarctic 2013 year-average sea ice area](#) is the highest ever recorded during the satellite era which began in 1979 and the present sea ice area is near the record high. Global sea ice area at year-end 2013 is the highest ever recorded for the date and the [global 2013 year-average sea ice area](#) is the highest since 1996.

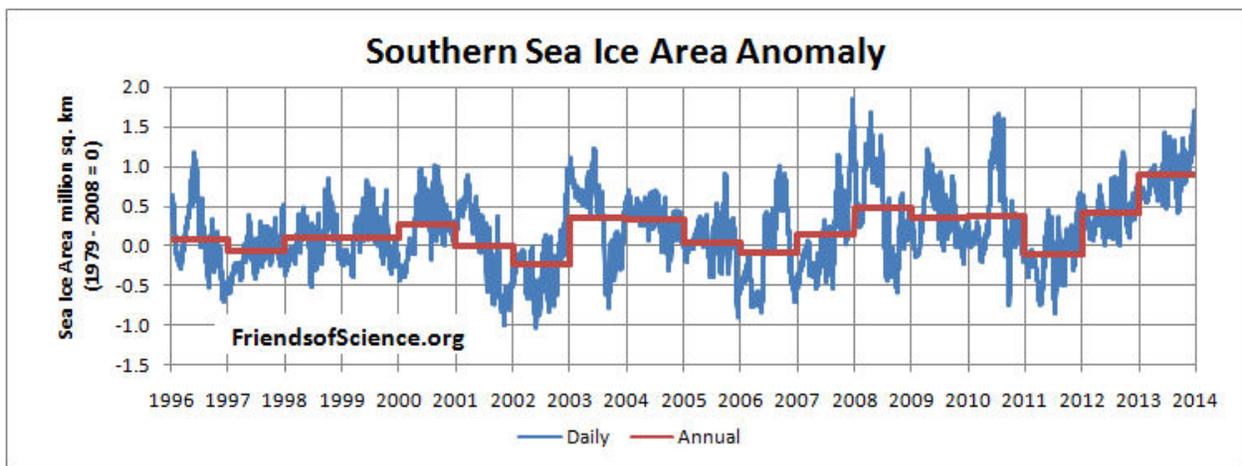


Figure 1. The southern sea ice area anomaly showing daily and annual sea ice around the continent of Antarctica. The display of area anomalies removes the seasonal signal found in the 30-year reference period.

The purpose of the [Australasian Antarctic Expedition 2013](#) to Antarctica was to study the effects of climate change since explorer Douglas Mawson was there, 1911 to 1914, and communicate the effects of global warming to the public. One of the aims was to track how quickly the Antarctic's sea ice was disappearing. The expedition leader Chris Turney, a professor of climate change at Australia's University of New South Wales, told Fox News "We're stuck in our own experiment. Sea ice is disappearing due to climate change, but here ice is building up."

Global warming alarmists were quick to try and back-up the mission as achieving its intended purpose. Claiming "[Arctic Confusions](#)" psychological sciences professor Stephan Lewandowsky tries to make the case that the global warming science mission

achieved its objective by being stuck in the ice – saying that's what they were there to study in the first place.

This argument is unconvincing in light of the facts revealed by blogger [Pierre Gosselin](#). He asks why the expedition organizers used a cheap "ice strengthened" boat. The Shokalskiy is not an ice breaker. The organizers sold berths to 26 inexperienced tourists and sailed into the world's harshest environment with dangerous sea ice. Many ships have been crushed by Antarctic sea ice.

Too bad lead climate scientist Chris Turney didn't look at the Friends of Science [Polar Region Sea Ice](#) page before starting the expedition. If he had he would know that [Antarctica temperatures](#) have declined slightly over the last 35 years, and that Antarctica sea ice area is now 1.5 million sq. km greater than the 30-year average (1979 - 2008).

With all the modern technology available, including satellite imaging of Antarctic sea ice, GPS, internet and satellite communications, questions are being asked why the Russian vessel got stuck in the first place. The captain and passengers knew that bad weather and ice were coming on December 23 and that a "[blizzard had been forecast](#)". Ignoring the danger, the passengers went ashore using Argos all-terrain-vehicles and Zodiac inflatable boats on a sight-seeing expedition. One Argo was almost sunk which delayed their return to the ship despite warnings from the captain "that we needed to get everyone back on board ASAP because of the coming weather and the ice closing in."

The Akademik Shokalskiy was trapped on Christmas Eve by thick ice. In addition to the Russian crew of 22, the 52 passengers included the expedition team of 18 professional scientists from Australia and New Zealand, 22 volunteer science assistants and 4 journalists. The \$1.5 million Australian expedition was largely a Catastrophic Anthropogenic Global Warming (CAGW) propaganda exercise. Journalists from the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), the U.K.'s Guardian Newspaper and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) were on board to prepare documentaries and reports promoting climate alarmism.

The first rescue ship, the Chinese icebreaker Xue Long or "Snow Dragon" had to turn back December 27 because the ice was too thick for it to get through. A second rescue vessel, the Australian icebreaker [Aurora Australis](#), was having difficulty getting through the ice, and came within 11 nautical miles of the trapped Russian vessel before abandoning its mission on December 30. "The ice became too thick for us to penetrate. Some of the floes are up to two metres of ice with a metre of snow on top and very compact. There was just nowhere for us to go," Captain Doyle said.



Figure 2. The Australasian Antarctic expedition to promote CAGW alarmism is trapped in record high sea ice. Cartoon by [Josh](#) used with permission.

The US Coast Guard icebreaker Polar Star received a message from the trapped ship requesting weather and wind information for Antarctica. That request got relayed on December 31 to meteorologist Anthony Watts who runs the climate skeptic website "Watts Up With That?". He knew exactly where to find the information and maps of wind patterns for the area that the ship is trapped in was sent to the Shokalskiy. A planned helicopter rescue was delayed due to strong winds.

It is ironic that data from a prominent climate skeptic was used to rescue global warming activists using fossil fueled icebreakers when there was record high sea ice area around Antarctica.

On January 2, 2014, the helicopter on board the Chinese vessel Xue Long successfully [rescued](#) 52 passengers from the Shokalskiy, leaving the 22 crew members behind. Then all 52 passengers were transferred by barge from the Xue Long to the Aurora Australis. The Aurora Australis started breaking through thick ice at only one-quarter knot speed (0.5 km/h) on January 3 towards open water. The Aurora Australis was ordered to remain in the area because the Chinese icebreaker Xue Long (the Snow

Dragon) which provided the helicopter [became stuck](#) in the growing ice on January 3. Meanwhile, the fate of the trapped Shokalskiy crew members remains uncertain.

The Australasian Antarctic expedition planners might have learned from history by making a quick review of the fate of the [Shackleton mission](#) and how their ship the Endurance was crushed by ice, and the crew exposed to a near disastrous end.

Climate models, not evidence, appear to be a culprit in the incident. The climate scientists apparently believed climate model predictions of declining sea ice instead of looking at actual sea ice data as measured by satellites. The southern 2013 year-average sea ice area is the highest during the satellite era which began in 1979. The southern annual average sea ice area increased by 527,000 sq. km in 2012, and increased by another 468,000 sq. km in 2013. The southern 2013 year-average sea ice area was 890,000 sq. km above the (1979 to 2008) 30-year average. The December 31, 2013 southern sea ice area was 1,513,000 sq. km above the 30-year average.

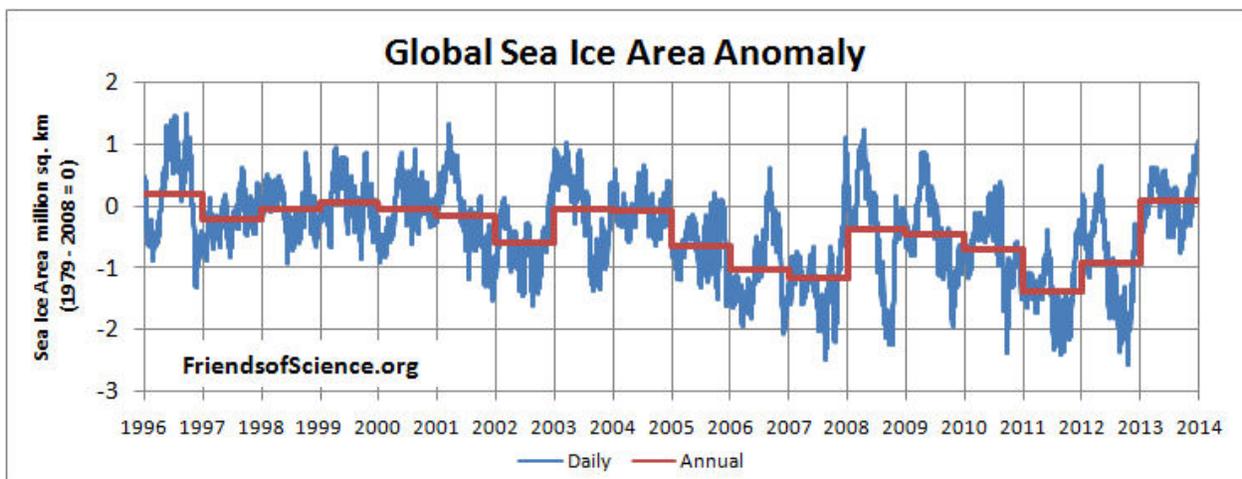


Figure 3. The global sea ice area anomaly showing daily and annual sea ice at both polar regions. The global 2013 year-average sea ice area is the highest since 1996.

The global annual average sea ice area increased by 455,000 sq. km in 2012, and increased by another 1,008,000 sq. km in 2013. The global 2013 year-average sea ice area was 104,000 sq. km above the (1979 to 2008) 30-year average. The December 31, 2013 global sea ice area was 1,016,000 sq. km above the 30-year average, which is the highest for that date during the satellite record starting in 1979.

## **About Antarctica**

Antarctica is a mostly ice-bound land mass, the fifth largest and most southerly continent, about twice the size of Australia. Polar bears inhabit the Arctic while penguins inhabit the Antarctic. The north Arctic pole is different than the south Antarctic pole. The north Arctic is an ice cap floating on ocean seawater surrounded by land, subject to the warming and cooling ocean streams underneath it and modulating effects of surrounding land.

By contrast, on Antarctica ice cover is at least 1.6 km (1 mile) thick over most of its land area with sea ice extending into the southern ocean. The environmental conditions are brutal. Known as the windiest and driest land, Antarctica is also the coldest with temperatures of  $-89\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $-129\text{ }^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) having been reached. Antarctica is considered a desert. There are no permanent human residents, but there are research stations that are occupied year-round.

## **Data Source**

[Southern sea ice data](#)

[Global sea ice data](#)