

Arctic sea ice cover to be second-lowest recorded

Arctic sea ice cover is set to reach to the second-lowest extent since satellite observations began in 1979, according to scientists from Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS).

“Based on an Arctic sea prediction system developed by our research team, the ice cover is expected to shrink to 4.1 million square kilometers in September, 2017,” said Liu Jiping from the Institute of Atmospheric Physics of CAS.

In general, the Arctic sea ice reaches its minimum extent in September each year, and global climate change has brought significant changes to the sea ice cover, with nearly 50 percent of losses since 1979, according to Liu.

The Arctic sea ice cover shrank to 3.41 million square kilometers in September, 2012, the lowest summer minimum in history, according to the World Meteorological Organization.

Scientists from the CAS said that the shrinking will make it possible for vessels to sail along the Arctic’s Northeast Passage, a path across the top of Siberia, Russia.

Liu said that the loss of the Arctic sea ice in autumn and winter will affect atmospheric circulation, and that the north part of China may suffer from worse air quality.

“The prediction of the growing and melting seasons of the Arctic sea ice will also be helpful in analyzing the extreme weather events in winter,” said Liu.