Robert Grumbine, Xingren Wu, Wangiu Wang; NOAA/NWS/NCEP:

   The statistically estimated September month average extent as
computed by NSIDC is 4.41 million km^2, with standard error on the
estimate of 0.5 million km^2.

   The physical basis of the statistical method is to model the growth
of open water as a feedback process analogous to population growth under
constraint. This produces a logistic curve. The statistics are used to
estimate the three parameters for such curves. All parameter sets whose
fit to observation in the previous N years is within 0.5 million km^2
standard error are used in the ensemble. The final estimate is the
average of all ensemble members.

   The results of the last two years suggest that this approach is more
accurate for estimating the minimum day's extent than for the monthly
averaged ice extent. Even against the latter, however, the estimates
have been within the method's 1 standard deviation estimate.