

Sea Ice (Pan-arctic) Outlook for 2012
July Report based on June Data

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1. Extent Projection

Our estimate is 4.7 million square kilometers with a standard deviation of 0.3 million square kilometers.

2. Methods/Techniques

We ran the CFSv2 model with 40 June 2012 revised-initial conditions. The initial conditions were modified from real time CFSv2 initial conditions by thinning the ice pack by 60 cm, similar to what we did in making our 2011 sea ice outlook (SIO) estimate. If this thinning would have eliminated ice from areas observed to have sea ice, a minimum thickness of 20 cm was left in place for the ice initial condition.

3. Rationale

In our 2010 SIO estimate, it was found that the CFSv2 sea ice extent seemed too excessive (due to too thick ice in the initial condition), and the extent confined within 60 cm of ice thickness matches the real time observation. Based on last year's estimate, the initial condition change (thinning the ice pack by 60 cm) did appear to have improved the model's behavior and skill.

4. Executive Summary

The projected Arctic sea ice extent from NCEP CFSv2 model with revised-initial condition using 40-member ensemble forecast is 4.7 million square kilometers with a standard deviation of 0.3 million square kilometers. The maximum and minimum Arctic sea ice extent from the 40-member ensemble prediction is 5.2 and 4.1 million square kilometers, respectively.