



Melting sea ice, exposing huge parts of the ocean to the atmosphere, explains extreme weather both hot and cold.

Climate scientists have linked the massive snowstorms and bitter spring weather now being experienced across Britain and large parts of Europe and North America to the dramatic loss of Arctic sea ice.

Both the extent and the volume of the sea ice that forms and melts each year in the Arctic Ocean fell to an historic low last autumn, and satellite records published on Monday by the National Snow and Ice Data Centre (NSIDC) in Boulder, Colorado, show the ice extent is close to the minimum recorded for this time of year.

"The sea ice is going rapidly. It's 80% less than it was just 30 years ago. There has been a dramatic loss. This is a symptom of global warming and it contributes to enhanced warming of the Arctic," said Jennifer Francis, research professor with the Rutgers Institute of Coastal and Marine Science.

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