



Climate change is expanding Antarctica's sea ice, according to a scientific study in the journal *Nature Geoscience*. The paradoxical phenomenon is thought to be caused by relatively cold plumes of fresh water derived from melting beneath the Antarctic ice shelves.

This melt water has a relatively low density, so it accumulates in the top layer of the ocean. The cool surface waters then re-freeze more easily during Autumn and Winter.

This explains the observed peak in sea ice during these seasons, a team from the Royal Netherlands Meteorological Institute (KNMI) in De Bilt says in its peer-reviewed paper.

Climate scientists have been intrigued by observations that Antarctic sea ice shows a small but statistically significant expansion of about 1.9% per decade since 1985, while sea ice in the Arctic has been shrinking over past decades.

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