

How Will Climate Change Affect Alaska?

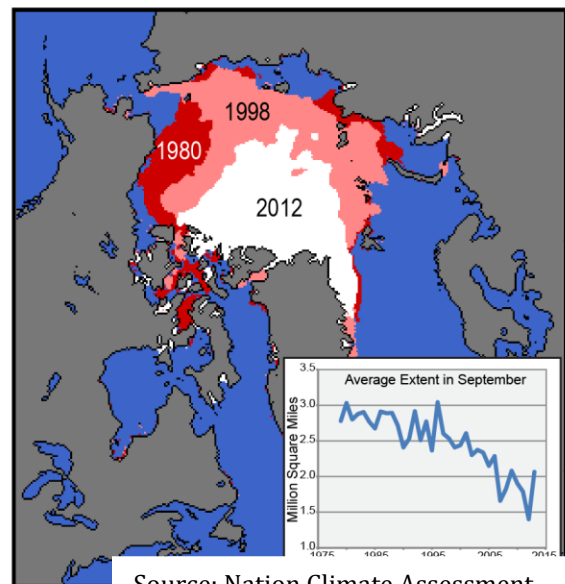
Climate change means shrinking glaciers, receding sea ice and thawing permafrost in Alaska.

In addition to national data, the [Third National Climate Assessment](#) has chapters that explore how climate change will affect different regions of America.

Among the National Climate Assessment’s [findings for Alaska](#):

- Alaska has warmed twice as fast as the rest of the country.
- Over the past 60 years, Alaska has **warmed more than twice as fast** as the rest of the United States. Average annual temperatures have increased by **3 degrees Fahrenheit** and average winter temperatures by **6 degrees Fahrenheit**.
- Alaskans are already seeing earlier spring snowmelt, widespread glacier retreat, drier landscapes, and more insect outbreaks and wildfires because of climate change.
- Arctic summer sea ice is receding faster than previously projected and is expected to **virtually disappear** before mid-century.
- There is now only about **half as much sea ice** in the month of September as at the beginning of the satellite records in 1979 for that month.

Declining Sea Ice Extent



Source: Nation Climate Assessment

- With the late-summer ice edge located farther north than it used to be, storms produce larger waves and **more coastal erosion**. One Alaskan village has already started to relocate to escape erosion, and several others are trying to.
- Alaska is home to some of the largest glaciers and **fastest loss of glacier ice** on Earth.
- Permafrost temperatures in Alaska are rising. **Thaw is already occurring** in interior and southern Alaska and in northern Canada, and will like continue.
- Uneven sinking of the ground in response to permafrost thaw is estimated to add as much as **\$6 billion** to the costs of buildings, pipelines, roads, and other infrastructure over the next 20 years.
- The increased frequency of warm dry summers and associated thunderstorms, along with the drying out of wetlands, have led to **more large fires in Alaska in the last ten years** than in any decade since record-keeping began in the 1940s.

Want even more info? Check out these [state-by-state fact sheets](#) on the White House web site