

Know Your Ice



POLAR ICE

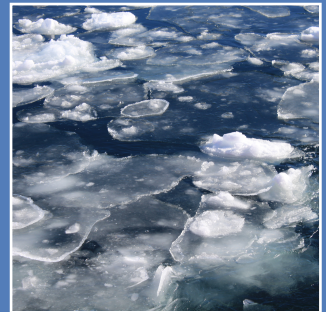


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Sea Ice Keeps it Cool

Saltwater freezes at about -1.8°C (28.8°F). Most Antarctic sea occurs annually meaning it forms in the winter and melts during the summer. Sea ice regulates exchanges of heat, moisture and salinity in the polar oceans. It insulates the warm ocean water from the cold polar atmosphere except in cases where the ice has cracks or leads. Here, the heat and water vapor from ocean exchange with the atmosphere in winter. The frequency of these leads determines where and how much heat and water are lost to the atmosphere, which affect local cloud cover and precipitation.