

U.S. National Ice Center

PRESS RELEASE

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Arctic Sea Ice Reaches Maximum Extent

25MAR2024, Suitland, MD — The U.S. National Ice Center (USNIC) has determined the 2024 maximum Arctic sea ice extent occurred in mid-March 2024 with an area of 15.14 million square kilometers. This estimate is based on analysis from the USNIC’s Interactive Multisensor Snow and Ice Mapping System (IMS), used in the Multisensor Analyzed Sea Ice Extent (MASIE) product, and is created jointly with the National Snow and Ice Data Center (NSIDC).

Analyses for the 2023/2024 winter season indicated a maximum 3-day average of 15.14 million square kilometers between 11 March and 13 March. USNIC maximum ice extent is determined based on a 3-day average to account for short-term spatial variability in the sea ice edge location. The 2024 Arctic sea ice extent maximum is the seventh highest recorded since 2006 when this metric from IMS was first tracked consistently. The 2024 maximum Arctic sea ice extent occurred close to the 18-year average date for the maximum Arctic sea ice extent, which is 09 March.

The USNIC analyst-driven IMS MASIE estimate is corroborated by the NSIDC, who announced that Arctic sea ice likely reached its maximum extent for 2024 at 15.01 million square kilometers on 14 March. The NSIDC estimate, which is slightly different from the USNIC estimate, is based on a 25-kilometer resolution ice concentration product from satellite microwave radiometers. USNIC’s IMS uses a variety of satellite observations that are interpreted by an analyst to determine the presence of ice at a 1-kilometer resolution. The slight differences between the two estimates may also stem from the varying missions of each institution, the methodology, and the spatial resolution of the data sources used to identify the presence of sea ice.

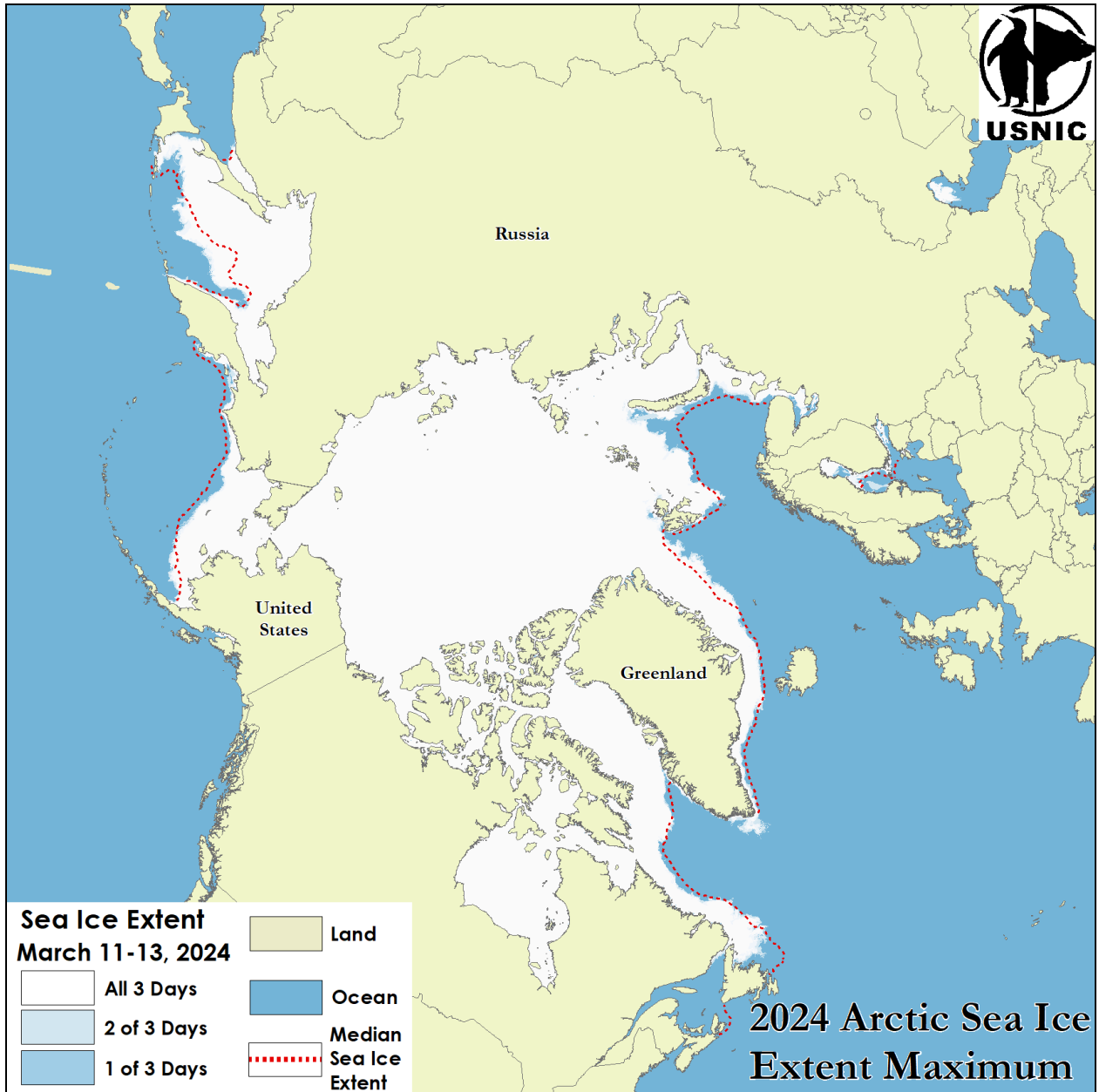


Figure 1: Maximum sea ice extent for 11 March - 13 March, 2024 as analyzed by USNIC's IMS at 1km resolution. The red dashed line shows the 1981-2010 median extent for 12 March as calculated by NSIDC.

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The U.S. National Ice Center is a multi-agency center operated by the Navy, NOAA, and Coast Guard and provides global to tactical scale ice and snow products, ice forecasting, and related environmental intelligence services for the United States government.