

**September 2015 sea ice outlook (from August 1, 2015):  
Pan-arctic and all Arctic regions**

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**Prediction type:** Dynamic model: **Pan-Arctic Ice-Ocean Modeling and Assimilation System (PIOMAS, Zhang and Rothrock, 2003)**, with coupled sea ice and ocean components.

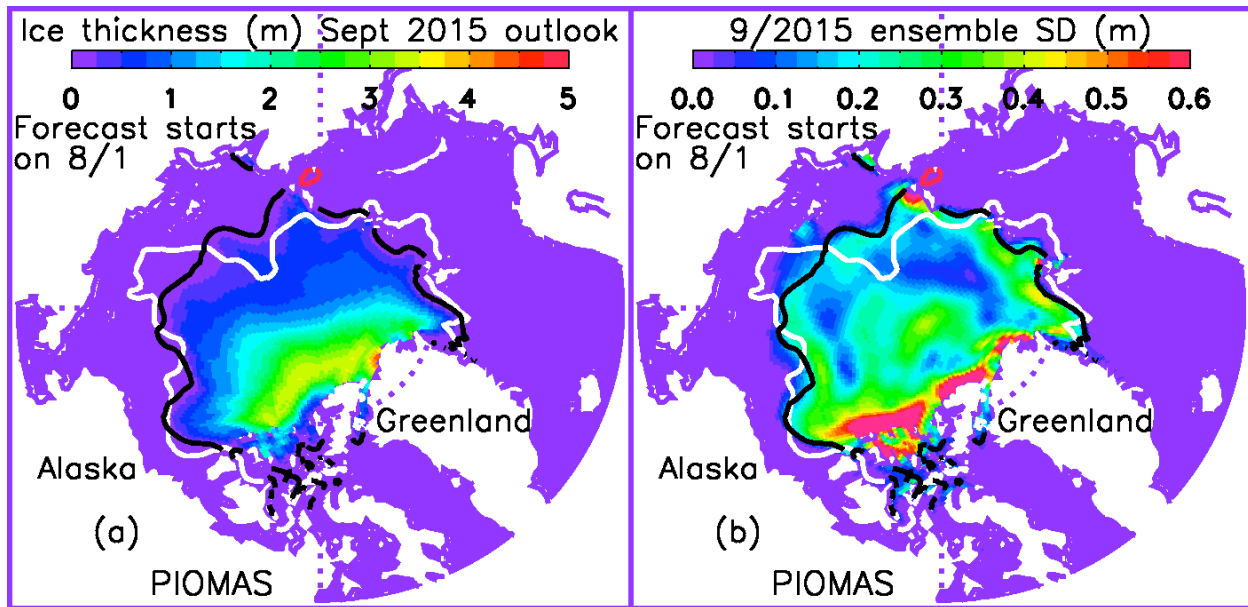
**Pan-arctic outlook:** The September 2015 Arctic sea ice extent predicted from August 1, 2015 is **5.2 ± 0.6 million square kilometers**.

**Outlook of all Arctic regions:** The September 2015 Arctic sea ice thickness field and ice edge location are predicted and presented here (Figure 1).

**Method:** These results are obtained from a numerical ensemble seasonal forecasting system. The forecasting system is based on a synthesis of PIOMAS, the NCEP/NCAR reanalysis data, and satellite observations of ice concentration and sea surface temperature. The ensemble consists of seven members each of which uses a unique set of NCEP/NCAR atmospheric forcing fields from recent years, representing recent climate, such that ensemble member 1 uses 2008 NCEP/NCAR forcing, member 2 uses 2009 forcing ..., and member 7 uses 2014 forcing. These seven years of the reanalysis atmospheric forcing fields are used to represent the climate variability expected for 2015. If the current or near future climate is close to any of the last seven years, it would be captured by the forecast system. Each ensemble prediction starts with the same initial ice–ocean conditions on 1 August 2015. To obtain the “best possible” initial ice-ocean conditions for the forecasts, we conducted a retrospective simulation that assimilates satellite ice concentration and sea surface temperature data through the end of May using reanalysis forcing data from this year. More details about the ensemble prediction procedure can be found in Zhang et al. (2008).

**Uncertainty:** The uncertainty of the predicted September 2015 Arctic sea ice extent is **± 0.6 million square kilometers** and the uncertainty of the predicted ice thickness field is reflected in the ensemble standard deviation (SD) of ice thickness field (Figure 1b). These uncertainties are derived from the 7 prediction ensemble members.

**Executive summary:** Driven by NCEP/NCAR reanalysis data, PIOMAS is used to predict the total September Arctic sea ice extent as well as ice thickness field and ice edge location, starting on August 1. The predicted ice extent is 5.2± 0.6 million square kilometers.



**Figure 1.** (a) Ensemble median prediction (outlook) of September 2015 mean sea ice thickness and edge location, and (b) ensemble standard deviation (SD) of ice thickness which shows the uncertainty of the prediction. The white line represents the satellite-observed mean September 2014 ice edge defined as the line of 0.15 ice concentration, while the black line is the model predicted September 2015 ice edge.

#### References:

Zhang, J., and D.A. Rothrock: [Modeling global sea ice with a thickness and enthalpy distribution model in generalized curvilinear coordinates](#), *Mon. Wea. Rev.*, 131(5), 681–697, 2003.

Zhang, J., M. Steele, R.W. Lindsay, A. Schweiger, and J. Morison, [Ensemble one-year predictions of arctic sea ice for the spring and summer of 2008](#). *Geophys. Res. Lett.*, 35, L08502, doi:10.1029/2008GL033244, 2008.