

Climate change consequences in Polar regions



Polar regions

Melting snow and ice cover

Antarctica had an unusually cold winter this year, but over the past few decades the most northerly parts of the continent have warmed five times faster than the global average, faster than anywhere else in the Southern Hemisphere.

The location of Antarctic penguin colonies is changing as the sea ice disappears, and melting of perennial snow and ice cover has meant an increase in plants.

Emperor penguins are predicted to become “quasi-extinct” by 2100 if sea ice declines at the projected rate. There is also a long-term decline in the abundance of Antarctic krill, which may be associated with reduced ice cover.

Climate change is also altering Arctic habitats: the region continues to warm two to three times faster than the average for the rest of the world.

Summer ice cover is shrinking, coastlines are eroding and animals like polar bears and walruses are losing their habitat. This year land temperatures in the Arctic Circle reached peaks of 48 degrees during a heatwave in Siberia.

Source: <https://www.smh.com.au/interactive/2021/how-the-world-ran-out-of-time/>