



Drumbeat: July 13, 2011

Posted by [Leanan](#) on July 13, 2011 - 9:55am

[Mexico's 1st half oil production down 1 percent, continuing 6-year slide](#)

MEXICO CITY — Mexico's state-owned oil company says crude production fell by about 1 percent in the first half of 2011, as compared to same period last year.

Petroleos Mexicanos says the steady decline in oil output that began around 2005 "has begun to be reversed."

[Fuse lit for a shale gas boom](#)

HOUSTON-BASED ConocoPhillips has emerged as the first of the big overseas oil and gas groups to back the idea that the US shale gas boom can be brought to Australia.

The group has struck a farm-in deal with locally listed junior New Standard Energy (NSE) under which it could fund \$US109.5 million (\$A103.2 million) in exploration work at NSE's Goldwyer shale gas project in Western Australia's Canning Basin.

[Peak Oil: Tighter Supply Ahead](#)

For how long will the Saudis be able to bail out global production?

[Chevy Volt newest New York City police car](#)

NEW YORK (CNNMoney) -- The New York City Police Department has a new cruiser that will be silently plying the city streets very soon.

Among 70 new electrically-driven vehicles purchased by the City of New York will be 50 Chevrolet Volts that will be used for, among other things, police work.

[Saudi Arabia Said to Seek Iran Crude Supply Share to India](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Saudi Arabia is seeking to benefit from a payment dispute between Iran

and India by selling additional cargoes of crude oil to refiners in the South Asian nation, two people with direct knowledge of the talks said.

Saudi Arabian Oil Co., the state producer based in Dhahran, has told refiners in India it can replace some of the Iranian crude, the people said, asking not to be identified because the talks are private. A spokesman for Saudi Aramco who asked not to be identified said the company doesn't comment on speculation.

[EIA: Higher US Gas Production Expected for 2011](#)

The U.S. Energy Information Administration raised its forecast for natural-gas production for 2011, and said inventories are expected to come close to last year's record levels this fall.

The EIA also expects demand for gas to be slightly stronger than previously expected.

[Boone Pickens says still buying shale acreage](#)

(Reuters) - Energy investor T. Boone Pickens said he has been buying up U.S. shale acreage, and he could consider signing joint ventures to develop the properties, or some property sales.

"I'm in two big shale plays and one of them is the Marcellus," Pickens said in an interview, referring to the massive natural gas field that stretches from West Virginia and Ohio across Pennsylvania and into New York.

[T. Boone Pickens bullish natgas in 2015](#)

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Billionaire energy investor T. Boone Pickens who has urged the United States to move toward vehicles fueled by natural gas instead of gasoline, said on Tuesday he was not a huge holder in gas futures.

Pickens, who has been buying up acreage in U.S. land rich with gas deposits, said he is bullish on 2015 natural gas prices, pegging them above \$6 per million British thermal units, but has a "somewhat minor position" in them, holding options that convey the idea that gas will rise above \$6, but not above \$8.

"I'm not a big holder of natural gas," he told Reuters, referring to his position in financial futures. "I'm a big holder in clean energy."

[Gov. Regulates Marcellus Drilling Activities](#)

Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin, joined by West Virginia Department of Environmental

Protection (DEP) Cabinet Secretary Randy Huffman, Legislators, and natural gas industry representatives announced the filing of an executive order that directs the DEP to promulgate additional environmental regulations governing Marcellus Shale drilling activities.

[Halliburton to tap Poland shale for Chevron](#)

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Oilfield services company Halliburton Co said it had won a contract to help oil giant Chevron Corp tap into Poland's vast shale rock formations in search of natural gas.

Halliburton is the leading player in hydraulic fracturing of shale in the United States, where the controversial technology has been used to unlock huge quantities of gas that were too difficult and expensive to tap only a decade ago.

[Iran establishes international crude oil exchange on island in Persian Gulf](#)

TEHRAN, Iran — Iran has established an international exchange for crude oil in a free trade zone on the Persian Gulf island of Kish.

During a ceremony marking the launch, Ali Salehabadi, who oversees Iran's exchanges, said the market would supply crude in the Middle East. He invited international traders to participate.

[Gadhafi running low on cash and fuel, US intelligence reports say](#)

Stalemate in Libya is giving way to building rebel pressure against the regime of Moammar Gadhafi, according to new U.S. intelligence reports.

While the battle is far from won, the officials point to three key indicators: dwindling fuel supplies, a cash crisis and reports of low morale among regime troops, U.S. officials told The Associated Press.

[Why the no no no chorus has it wrong in oil](#)

Last Friday, we discussed what happens when one adopts a my-way-or-the-highway approach to energy development, in this case opposition to Canadian oil sands. You get what we already have, which is projections of \$150-a-barrel oil and \$4.50-a-gallon gasoline, the product of a belief that, starting next year or soon thereafter, oil demand will start to exceed supply. This state of affairs vexes Christophe de Margerie, the CEO of France's Total oil company, who met with a small group over breakfast this morning at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. "If you say no to shale oil, no to heavy oil, no to Iran -- no, no, no, no -- what about life?" de Margerie said. Oil companies must be responsible in how they work, but everyone else must grasp that

they actually need oil, and will for many decades to come, he said.

[Argentina: Gov't rules out gas hikes, denies energy crisis](#)

Federal government assured today that gas tariffs will remain as they are and that there is not such a thing as an "energy crisis." Enargas regulator's head, Antonio Pronsato, affirmed that "no price readjustment have been made on gas prices since 2009, not on the stoves, neither on transport and distribution."

['Energy crisis can end in 18 hours'](#)

PAKISTAN'S energy crises can be solved in 18 hours rather than by 2018 as it is purely a matter of financial management rather than lack of generation capacity.

Over 41 per cent of the world's power is generated through coal and Pakistan has 187 billion ton coal that can be used to serve long term future goals. The current installed and workable generation capacity is enough to serve the prevailing demand. However, for future preparedness coal and hydle generation should be cited as the primary source for cheap power.

[UK watchdog lets Centrica buy more gas storage space](#)

LONDON (Reuters) - Britain's Competition Commission allowed gas producer Centrica to increase the share of capacity it can buy at its own huge North Sea Rough storage site in the 2012-13 gas year to 25 percent from 15 percent, the body said.

In January the authority had provisionally rejected the utility's bid to relax rules, also called undertakings, dating from 2003 on operating Britain's largest gas storage site in a way that did not infringe competition laws.

[Russia's Gazprom wants control of Belarus' gas pipeline network](#)

Moscow/Minsk - Russian energy giant Gazprom is in talks with the Belarusian government to take control of the country's gas transportation network, the company announced Wednesday.

Belarusian Prime Minister Mikhail Myasnikov and Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin will discuss details of the proposed deal in September, said Gazprom chairman Aleksei Miller in a statement.

[Pipeline protesters hit Montana governor's office](#)

HELENA, Mont. — More than 100 environmental activists from across the country descended Tuesday on the Montana Capitol to demand Gov. Brian Schweitzer rescind his support for the Keystone XL oil pipeline and ExxonMobil's megaload transportation project.

[Doug Casey on Self Immolation – Individual and National](#)

Peak oil is a geological concept. It basically holds that all the low-hanging fruit has been picked. Now, philosophically, it rubs me the wrong way, in that I have total confidence that human ingenuity will find scores of ways to produce new hydrocarbon fuels – and lots of totally new energy sources in addition. Furthermore, the higher oil prices go, the more will be found – and the more it will be economized. So, in a free-market world, oil is a non-problem.

But we don't currently live in that kind of world. In the meantime – let's say the next 10-20 years – oil is an issue, for simple geological reasons. And also because, even though consumption has been basically flat in the advanced world for decades, consumption is going to grow radically in "Chindia" and the rest of the developing world. The biggest problem though is likely political, especially because of the increased political risk in the Middle East, where most of the world's oil reserves are. You've got to be bullish on oil.

[Panel: Nuke plants need to prepare for disaster](#)

(AP) WASHINGTON - Calling the Japan nuclear disaster "unacceptable," an expert task force convened by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission has concluded that nuclear power plants in the U.S. need better protections for rare, catastrophic events.

The series of recommendations, included in portions of a 90-page report obtained Tuesday by The Associated Press, will reset the level of protection at the nation's 104 nuclear reactors after the worst nuclear disaster since Chernobyl by making them better prepared for incidents that they were not initially designed to handle.

[Toyota betting big on growing Prius family](#)

Betting that it's better late than never, Toyota is readying the roll-out of the second hybrid to carry the name Prius out onto the U.S. market. The move is expected to be followed by the introduction of an entire "family" of Prius-badged offerings.

Some skeptics warn that the strategy could wind up confusing consumers. Toyota planners contend that the well-known and widely accepted Prius name will make it easier to sell new hybrid offerings to buyers who have proved surprisingly reluctant to embrace the fuel-saving technology, even while gasoline prices have been nudging record levels.

[AEP, Walmart open electric vehicle charging station](#)

Columbus, OH - Electric vehicle owners should get a jolt from a free public charging station that opened Wednesday as the result of a partnership between American Electric Power Company Inc.

[FedEx Field goes solar](#)

The Washington Redskins has signed a deal with Princeton, N.J.-based NRG Energy to install solar power systems at FedEx Field that will generate enough power to cover all of the stadium's needs on non-game days and a portion of it on game days.

[Japan to shoot lasers from the moon to solve power crisis](#)

Simple really -- just cover our neighbor in solar panels and let the sun do the work.

[Jeff Rubin: Oil markets face production shortfall in second half](#)

The International Energy Agency may not have a solution but no one can accuse them of no longer understanding the gravity of the problem.

In their June report, the IEA warned that unless OPEC could increase production by at least 1.5 million barrels a day, world oil demand is going to surpass available supply during the second half of the year.

[Oil demand set to increase in 2012, IEA says](#)

Global oil demand will increase further next year, the International Energy Agency (IEA) has predicted.

The IEA, which represents the main oil consuming nations, said the increase in crude usage would continue to be driven by emerging economies.

[Opec under more pressure as it raises oil demand estimate](#)

Opec has raised its estimate of demand for its oil by 100,000 barrels a day (bpd), strengthening the case for lifting the group's production ceiling.

Yesterday Opec economists said demand for its crude would increase to 30 million bpd in the second half of the year and would grow to 30.3 million bpd next year in spite of high prices and a shaky economic outlook.

"An unsteady world economy is negatively affecting the oil market," Opec wrote in yesterday's report, adding that sustained high prices could hurt market growth.

[Oil hovers below \\$98 as US crude supplies jump](#)

SINGAPORE – Oil prices hovered below \$98 a barrel Wednesday in Asia after a report showed U.S. crude supplies unexpectedly rose last week, suggesting demand is weak.

[Refinery capacity additions 'back with a boom' in 2012- IEA](#)

(Reuters) - The next year will see around 2.4 million barrels per day of crude distillation capacity added globally led by growth in China, the International Energy Agency said on Wednesday.

The largest share of investment will come from China with an addition of 600,000 barrels per day (bpd), or 25 percent of the total.

[Why Gas Prices Are Going Back Up](#)

To all motorists: be prepared for higher gasoline prices ... coming soon to a pump near you.

For six weeks, the national average for regular self-serve gasoline has fallen. It all started May 11, when prices peaked at \$3.965 per gallon in the United States, according to GasBuddy.com data. Oil prices then slid, resulting in a drop in average gasoline prices--hitting a low of \$3.558 per gallon on June 29. However, as the old saying goes, "All good things must come to an end", and this saying appears to hold true for gasoline prices as well.

[China June oil demand growth slowest in 27 months](#)

BEIJING (Reuters) - Chinese implied oil demand rose 1.1 percent in June from a year earlier, the slowest growth in more than two years, as oil plants underwent heavy maintenance amid poor refining margins and Beijing's tightening policy cut into oil use.

But analysts said real oil use may not be as bearish as the figures show as oil firms may have been drawing on oil inventories, which were not reported by the government, to ease the pain of negative refining margins.

[Russia to put 2 mln T of fuel in reserves -minister](#)

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Russian oil companies will put up to 2 million tonnes of oil products into reserves for future use in market interventions to fight off price rises and fuel shortages, the country's energy minister said on Wednesday.

Several Russian regions suffered a severe fuel deficit in spring largely due to rising exports triggered by domestic prices caps.

[US blog: Peak oil?](#)

For investors, we suggest that peak oil is something to keep in the back of your mind but that it plays little relevance for tactical positioning. Energy markets move with much shorter term events in mind, such as global conflicts, economic conditions, and currency movements. Finally, it is not an inevitability that we run out of oil. There will almost certainly be a response as prices rise in the form of new energy sources and reduced demand for oil. As a result of all of these factors, we encourage investors to take the predictions of a dire future for energy production with a grain of salt, and focus more on things that are more visible and concrete. With demand still likely to remain relatively robust, although growing at a more subdued rate, we don't believe a further downgrade of the sector is warranted but are remaining at marketperform for the time being.

[Still Mad About Gas Prices? Your Conspiracy Theories Are True](#)

SHARON—Whatever you're paying for gas these days—likely just shy of \$4 a gallon—you're right to be angry about the causes of the gouging.

Forget supply and demand; budget-busting high oil prices are the result of speculation on “paper” barrels of oil—and manipulation.

Those are the conclusions of author, political commentator and retired commodities trader Raymond Learsy, who takes on big oil again in his latest book, “Oil and Finance: The Epic Corruption.”

[Majors Buy SPR Crude as Supply Continues to Slide](#)

Late last month, the International Energy Agency announced it was releasing 60 million barrels of crude oil into world markets.

Obama graciously pledged 30 million of it from our own Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR).

You should find our wanton oil disbursement a bit peculiar, especially since your own government defines the SPR as the “nation's first line of defense against an interruption in petroleum supplies.” So tapping it inherently implies we're facing an interruption in petroleum supply.

[Nigeria: Shell fixes pipeline, resumes oil exports after 2-week force majeure](#)

LAGOS, Nigeria — Royal Dutch Shell PLC says it has lifted a two-week export block after stabilizing production in Nigeria's oil-rich southern delta.

Shell spokesman Precious Okolobo said Wednesday that Shell's Nigerian subsidiary lifted a "force majeure" on its Bonny Light crude shipment on July 1. The term is used when an oil company cannot cover the promised supply from the field.

[Fire damages gas pipeline in eastern Syria](#)

BEIRUT (AP) - Fire damaged a natural gas pipeline in eastern Syria, the Oil Ministry said Wednesday, but it was unclear if the blaze was accidental or sabotage. No casualties were reported.

Syria's state-run news agency said production continued using other pipelines. Syria produces about 350,000 barrels of oil per day as well as natural gas.

[West needs to treat sanctions against Syria with caution](#)

Oil sanctions on Syria should be ready for use. But they have to be used, not to salve the consciences of western activists, but to give the final push to a tottering tyranny.

[Iraq Hopes For National Oil Co Law By End-2011 - Aide](#)

LONDON -(Dow Jones)- The Iraqi parliament is expected by the end of this year to pass a long-sought law re-establishing the Iraqi National Oil Company, or INOC, which former leader Saddam Hussein's regime invalidated in the 1980s, a top energy advisor to Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki said.

Thamer al-Ghadhban said that the company would be involved in supervising Iraq's producing oil and gas fields, under-development fields and exploration blocks.

[Iraq Kurdish June Oil Exports 175,000 B/D - Minister](#)

LONDON -(Dow Jones)- Iraq's crude oil exports from the northern Kurdistan region in June hit a peak of 175,000 barrels a day, up from 75,000 barrels a day in February, Ashti Hawrami, oil minister for the Kurdistan Regional Government, said Wednesday.

Revenues from oil sales from the Kurdistan region over the five months since the KRG resumed exports in February has reached \$2 billion.

[A foot on the front line of oil security in Iraq](#)

(Reuters) - An AK-47 slung over his shoulder, a member of the oil police walks beside a pipeline stretched like a silver thread across the vast, burning desert of southern Iraq, stopping now and then to brush sand aside with his foot.

He is looking for bombs.

[Oil partners look to future](#)

ExxonMobil, the world's biggest oil company, is vying to stay in Abu Dhabi after the emirate's main onshore concession expires in 2014.

[China says oil spills not fully controlled](#)

SHANGHAI (AP) — China has ordered ConocoPhillips to immediately halt output at two offshore platforms in the Bohai Bay off its northeast coast, saying recent oil spills were not fully under control.

[Montana questions Exxon's estimate of oil spilled](#)

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — State environmental regulators have asked Exxon Mobil to justify its estimate for how much oil spilled into the Yellowstone River, citing the company's changing timeline on how long it took to stop a leaking pipeline.

[Hearing set in Miss. attorney general's lawsuit against administrator of BP oil spill fund](#)

JACKSON, Miss. — A hearing has been scheduled in the Mississippi attorney general's lawsuit against the administrator of BP's \$20 billion oil spill fund over access to claims filed by coastal residents.

Jim Hood said Tuesday he's tried to negotiate with the fund's administrator, Washington lawyer Kenneth Feinberg. He says he's seeking to make the process more transparent so people will know if Feinberg is looking out for the best interests of oil spill victims or BP.

[Fracking Water Killed Trees, Study Finds](#)

A study that argues for more research into the safe disposal of chemical-laced wastewater resulting from natural gas drilling found that a patch of national forest in West Virginia suffered quick and serious loss of vegetation after it was sprayed with hydraulic fracturing fluids.

The study, by researchers from the United States Forest Service, was published this month in the Journal of Environmental Quality. It said that two years after liquids were legally spread on a section of the Fernow Experimental Forest, within the Monongahela National Forest, more than half of the trees in the affected area were dead.

[Radioactive meat circulating on Japanese market](#)

Tokyo (CNN) -- A Japanese health official downplayed the dangers Tuesday after cesium contaminated meat from six Fukushima cows was delivered to Japanese markets and probably ingested.

[Japan PM wants less reliance on nuclear power](#)

TOKYO (AP) — Japan's prime minister said Wednesday he wants his country to learn from its ongoing crisis and become less reliant on nuclear energy.

Prime Minister Naoto Kan told a news conference that the risks are too high and renewable energy sources such as solar, wind and biomass should eventually replace nuclear as a new pillar of Japan's energy supply, along with conservation.

[Heatstroke Deaths Quadruple as Japan Shuns Air Conditioners](#)

Deaths from heatstroke in Japan quadrupled in the early part of summer as temperatures rose and air conditioners were switched off in line with government appeals to curb electricity usage to avoid power blackouts.

[Task Force Recommends Improvements for Nuclear Plants](#)

WASHINGTON — The Fukushima Daiichi meltdowns show that it is time for “redefining the level of protection that is regarded as adequate” at American nuclear plants, a special task force of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission has concluded.

[Carmageddon predicted for L.A.'s 405 closing](#)

A road closing may seem a routine inconvenience elsewhere and hardly worth noting in cities devastated recently by floods, fires and tornadoes. But in car-dependent Los Angeles, the I-405 closing is being touted as not just the biggest traffic disruption in decades but also as an almost apocalyptic event that will be felt for miles and miles.

Call it Carmageddon.

[\\$2.4 million message: Drive slower to spare the earth](#)

If you want to lose weight, you record what you eat and track your calories.

If you want to reduce your greenhouse gas emissions, you record how you drive, then use it to figure out how to curb your bad habits.

At least, that's the premise behind a proposal from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, which is considering a variation on the dieter's notebook as a way to help Bay Area drivers get a handle on their fuel consumption and other ways they contribute to greenhouse gases.

[With Tiny Cans, a New Trash Equation](#)

Reaching for a petite dessert dish instead of the mixing bowl may help you curb your ice cream consumption. Grabbing a basket rather than a shopping cart helps control how many "necessities" you pick up at the store.

Similarly, trading your office garbage can for a daintier disposal bin may remind you to send less trash to the landfill.

In June 2010, faculty, staff and administrators at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire had their desk trash cans replaced with six-inch-tall cartons. One year later, Dartmouth has sent 200 less tons of trash to the landfill, and recycling is up by one third.

[Energy efficiency still elusive](#)

The European Commission has published a new draft directive on energy efficiency, but the targets are voluntary rather than binding, and many critics fear it will be as toothless as those measures that went before it.

[Nissan works on recharging Leaf with solar power](#)

YOKOHAMA, Japan (AP) — Japanese automaker Nissan is testing a super-green way to recharge its Leaf electric vehicle using solar power, part of a broader drive to improve electricity storage systems.

Nissan's Leaf went on sale late last year, but the automaker is looking ahead to about five years time when aging Leaf vehicles may offer alternative business opportunities in using their lithium-ion batteries as a storage place for electricity.

[GM helps electrify city buses](#)

General Motors (GM) has gotten lots of buzz for its Chevy Volt, but the automaker's

most important electric vehicle contribution may not have anything to do with autos at all.

GM today announced a partnership with Proterra Inc., a Golden, Colo.-based maker of "zero-emission commercial transit solutions." More specifically, Proterra makes fast-charge electric buses and automated bus charging station (10 minute recharges). Its initial vehicles were rolled out to Pomona, Calif. last September, and both San Antonio and Tallahassee have signed up for later this year.

[Green jobs pay better as clean-tech sector booms](#)

Clean-tech jobs offered median wages 20% higher across the United States in 2010, according to a report released today from researchers Brookings and Battelle. Such green jobs span industries ranging from solar-panel manufacturers to wind- and ocean-based energy production to electric-vehicle technologies.

[The trouble with green product ratings](#)

FORTUNE -- Two years ago this month, Wal-Mart CEO Mike Duke dropped a bomb on the retailing world by announcing that the company would spearhead an audacious effort to create a "sustainability index" that would reassure the environmental and social impact of every product sold in its stores. Though the move was generally praised by environmentalists, Wal-Mart had not suddenly turned green -- it turns out a vast amount of money is to be made by reducing energy and waste up and down the supply chain. As the world's largest company, Wal-Mart had the clout to enforce its implied threat, later made explicit by Duke's lieutenants: Treat the planet well and get prime access to its 200 million customers each week; pollute and despoil, and you will be shunned.

[6 'green' products: How green are they?](#)

he trouble with consumer scoring systems is that consumption is really about give and take. All products - no matter how 'green' - impact the planet in some way.

[G.O.P. Bid to Void Light Bulb Law Fails](#)

WASHINGTON — House Republicans on Tuesday failed to advance a measure that would repeal regulations that increase efficiency standards for light bulbs, rules that they have assailed as an example of government overreach.

[Light bulb ban draws fire](#)

The so-called light bulb ban, set to begin in 2012, has become a rallying point for conservatives, libertarians, and various free-market activists who deride what they see

as unnecessary government interference in the marketplace.

[The myth of baseload](#)

While it is true that some renewable resources have different operating characteristics than current utility plants, some of those differences are positive, while others will require different operating procedures. The problem is not the variability or reliability of the renewable resources, but rather the desire by utilities to not change the way they operate their systems.

[EPA says all Texas plants will get new air permits](#)

HOUSTON (AP) — The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency says all 136 Texas plants and refineries operating with permits that violated the Clean Air Act have applied for new paperwork.

The EPA ruled last year that the so-called "flexible permits" violated federal law. The agency had said it was impossible to accurately measure air emissions at those facilities, which include some of the nation's largest refineries.

[Japan May Miss Greenhouse Gas Targets If All Nuclear Plants Shut](#)

Japan's greenhouse gas emissions may rise by as much as 16 percent from 1990 levels should the country's nuclear reactors be shut down, raising questions about its ability to meet carbon-dioxide reduction targets.

[The great carbon tax secret: who are the Misfortune 500?](#)

Listen to talkback for 30 seconds and you'll pick up what the general presumption is - a sort of vague impression that Big Polluters and Big Business are pretty much the same thing.

But who are these 500 big polluters, exactly - this Misfortune 500, who are to be history's martyrs to the answering of our generation's greatest moral challenge?

[Al Gore's Reality Show](#)

Al Gore, the former vice president, Nobel Prize winner and climate campaigner-in-chief, is opening a new global climate change activism program called the Climate Reality Project.

The group's first program will be a live-streamed event called 24 Hours of Reality and held on Sept. 14-15. According to a press release from the organization, "people all

around the globe living with the impacts of climate change will connect the dots between recent extreme weather events — including floods, droughts and storms — and the man-made pollution that is changing our climate.”

[Climate change could kill one in 10 species by end of the century](#)

Climate change is speeding up the rate at which animals and plants are becoming extinct. By the end of the century, one in 10 species could be on the verge of extinction because of the effects of global warming, a study has found.

The findings support the view that the earth is currently experiencing a global mass extinction where the rate at which species are being lost is many times greater than the historical extinction rate. It is the sixth great mass extinction in the history of life on earth. Scientists said that previous predictions of how fast species are being lost because of climate change match the actual observed losses. They calculate that around 10 per cent of species alive today could be facing extinction by 2100.

[More Arctic shipping will up local pollution: Study](#)

With two to four months of ice-free conditions forecast for the Northwest Passage by 2030, scientists are now looking at what more shipping traffic will mean for the circumpolar region.

"The melting of Arctic sea-ice will effectively unlock the Arctic Ocean, leaving it increasingly open to human activity — particularly oil and gas extraction and shipping," say scientists at the Oslo, Norway-based Center for International Climate and Environment Research, the Det Norske Veritas foundation and Statistics Norway.

[Arctic may be ice-free within 30 years](#)

What concerns polar scientists is that thicker ice which does not melt in the summer is not being formed fast as the ice is melting. On average each year about half of the first year ice, formed between September and March, melts during the following summer. This year, says Jeff Masters, founder of the Weather Underground climate monitoring website, a high pressure system centred north of Alaska has brought clear skies and plenty of ice-melting sunshine to the Arctic.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 United States License](#).