

A Response to Forbes.com article: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/jamestaylor/2015/05/19/updated-nasa-data-polar-ice-not-receding-after-all/>

In the article, "Updated NASA Data: Global Warming Not Causing Any Polar Ice Retreat", James Taylor writes "updated data contradict one of the most frequently asserted global warming claims - that global warming is causing the polar ice caps to recede." The author implies that since the most recent two years of polar sea totals are near the long-term average, that global warming is not causing the polar ice caps to recede. Wikipedia defines *cherry-picking* as: the act of pointing to individual cases or data that seem to confirm a particular position, while ignoring a significant portion of related cases or data that may contradict that position ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cherry_picking_\(fallacy\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cherry_picking_(fallacy))).

Global sea ice totals vary from one year to the next. When looking for impacts of global warming, climate scientists take a longer-term view. The long-term record of global sea ice (illustrated below) shows a long-term decline of global sea ice of about 5.5%. One is free to argue whether this decline in global sea ice is important, or whether it is a result of human impacts on the climate; however, it is misleading to claim that polar sea ice has not decreased over the historic record. In his last paragraph, Taylor correctly asserts that receding polar ice caps are an expected result of a warming planet. In fact, the data shows that this is exactly what is happening. The rest of Taylor's article is just whitewash intended to distract readers from these facts.

Cherry-picking limited data to illustrate a point on climate change is not a compelling argument, whether it is done by those who advocate for a warming planet, or those who advocate for the opposite. Publications including arguments of this type either lack a basic understanding of science or are intentionally misleading in order to promote an agenda. Indeed, the last time global sea ice ventured into positive territory for a more than a few months (2008), a

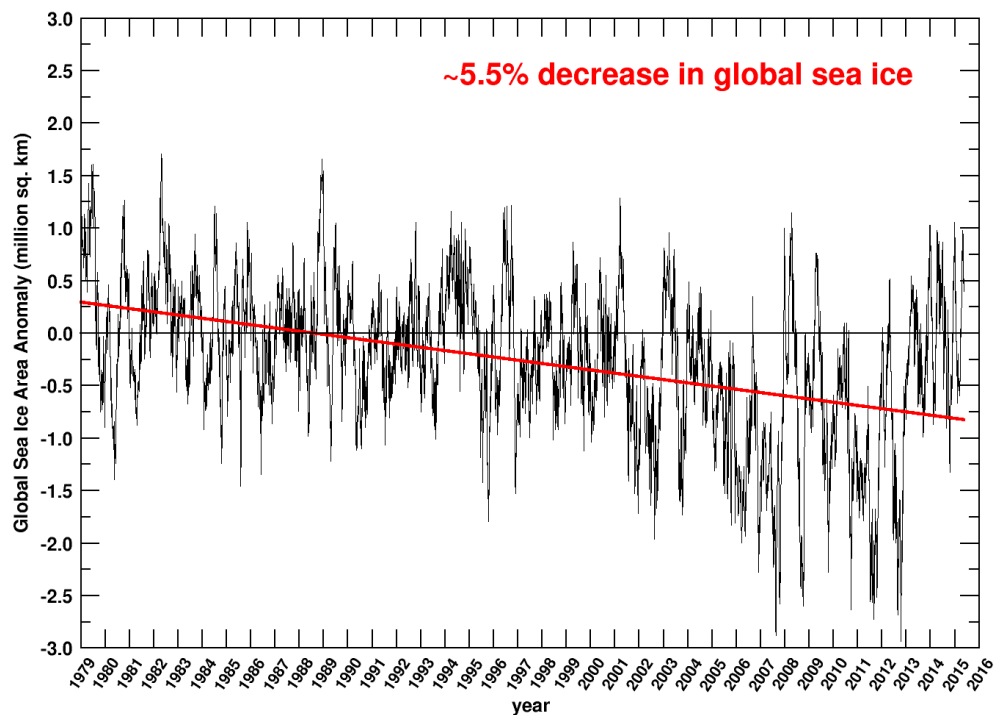


Illustration: Global sea ice area anomalies from 1979-2008 average (black) processed from Sea Ice Concentrations from NASA's Nimbus-7 SMMR and DMSP SSM/I-SSMIS Passive Microwave Data distributed by the National Snow and Ice Data Center (<http://nsidc.org/data/nsidc-0051>) . Linear regression of data shown in red.

similar article was published in the Washington Post declaring that there was no reduction in global sea ice. Soon after, the Washington Post Ombudsman published a letter suggesting that the Post should avoid distorting facts to bolster arguments: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/02/27/AR2009022702334.html?sid=ST2009031302712>. Forbes and other media outlets would be well-served by following the Washington Post's advice on this.