

Arctic Yearbook 2022

Year in Review

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2021

November

A study utilizing data from the EU's Copernicus satellites Sentinel-1 and Sentinel-2 finds that melting permafrost will affect 55% of the Arctic's coastal zone infrastructure by 2050.

Russia criticizes the Norwegian navy for a voyage taken by the Norwegian *KNM Thor Heyerdahl* to the Arctic Archipelago, Svalbard, citing the excursion as another example of "hidden militarization" within the region.

AY 2021 is launched virtually at the Calotte Academy 2021 in Inari, Finland

December

The first plenary meeting of the Arctic Council under the Russian Chairmanship takes place from December 1-2, 2021 in Salekhard. The meeting features 180 delegates from the Arctic Council's member states and 38 observer states.

Russian government aid Yuri Ushakov confirms Russian interest in strengthening Arctic energy cooperation with India, including joint development of hydrocarbon fields in the Russian Far East.

2022

January

The Norwegian government shuts down its main military base, located in Bodø, Northern Norway, as part of the Norwegian government plan to decommission the F-16 fighter jets used by the *Royal Norwegian Air Force* and transition to a fleet of new F-35 jets out of the larger Ørland Air Base to the south.

The Finnish meteorological services firm *Vaisala* reports that the high Arctic experienced over four times the number of lightning strikes in 2021 compared to 2020. *Vaisala* linked the spike in strikes to increasing regional temperatures.

The International Maritime Organisation (IMO) adopts the Inuit Circumpolar Council's (ICC) policy recommendation on reducing underwater noise pollution. This adoption marks the first time the ICC has directly impacted IMO policy.

Antarctic sea ice shrinks to near-record low as January 2022 ranks as the sixth-warmest January on record.

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February

Russian President Vladimir Putin signs a \$117.5B oil and gas contract with Chinese leader Xi Jinping.

Russia launches an invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022.

Three warships from the Arctic division of the Russian navy, the *Northern Fleet*, are utilized in Russia's military invasion of Ukraine.

Russian companies Rosneft and Lukoil are suspended from the Norway's Oil and Gas Association in response to Russia's unlawful attack on Ukraine.

March

The remaining seven Arctic Council member states formally condemn Russia over the conflict in Ukraine and 'pause' their work at the Arctic Council, of which Russia holds the Chairmanship of.

India releases its Arctic Policy titled "India and the Arctic: Building a Partnership for Sustainable Development." India currently holds an "Observer" status within the Arctic Council.

More than 2,300 troops from Finland and Sweden take part in NATO's bi-annual *Cold Response* drill in northern Norway, marking the first time non-aligned Finnish and Swedish troops have participated in the drill.

Arctic Science Summit Week (ASSW) 2022 takes place in Tromsø, Norway from March 26 – April 1, 2022.

More than 7.2 million cubic feet of natural gas escaped in a leak at an Alaskan oilfield operated by ConocoPhillips, forcing workers to evacuate and production to be cut.

Norway announces plans to expand Arctic oil and gas drilling

April

Canada's 2022 FY budget includes funding for affordable housing in Canada's North, support for the critical minerals industry, construction of the High Arctic Research Station in Nunavut, and a hydroelectric project in Yukon.

The hybrid High North Dialogue 2022 conference takes place April 6-7, 2022 both in-person in Bodø, Norway and virtually. The theme centers around "Business in the Arctic – The Great Shifts" with special emphasis on green technology development and implementation.

The 6th 'Arctic: Territory of Dialogue' International Arctic Forum takes place April 11-13, 2022 in St. Petersburg.

The Russian Ambassador at Large for Arctic Cooperation, Nikolai Korchunov, expresses concern about the increase in NATO military activity in the Arctic.

The Woodwell Climate Research Center, the Arctic Initiative at the Harvard Kennedy School, and the Alaska Institute for Justice announce the launch of *Permafrost Pathways*, a \$41M multi-year research program seeking to provide policy recommendations that will mitigate permafrost thaw.

May

Despite increasing likelihood of European sanctions and reevaluation from key partners, Russia's largest oil producer, Rosneft, continues developing its Vostok Oil mega-project. The project is expected to produce over 100 million tons of oil and natural gas each year by 2030.

The Arctic Mayors' Forum appoints its first Secretary-General.

The US Army of Alaska is rebranded to the 11th Airborne Division, making it the first Arctic-specific operational division.

Finland and Sweden officially apply to become full members of NATO.

Russian Ambassador at Large for the Arctic Cooperation, Nikolai Korchunov, announces that Russia is ready to resume dialogue with the other seven Arctic Council members.

The Russian Ministry of Defence announces a successful test-launch of a hypersonic *Zircon* cruise missile capable of traveling at nine times the speed of sound. The fast speed, technical maneuverability, and long ranges of hypersonic missiles make them difficult to counter with traditional missile defense systems.

June

Canada and the Kingdom of Denmark resolve the 51-year territorial dispute over Hans Island, finalizing the maritime border between Canada and Greenland

The 3rd UArctic Assembly meeting is held June 1-3, 2022 in Portland, Maine, USA. The UArctic network now includes 176 participants.

The Arctic 7 – Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and the United States – announce they will resume limited internal cooperation with projects that do not involve the participation of the Russian Federation.

The Ted Stevens Center for Arctic Security Studies is established in Anchorage, Alaska by the U.S. Department of Defense

The Inuit Circumpolar Council releases its protocols for the Equitable, Ethical Engagement of Inuit in the Circumpolar world, aimed at all decision and policy makers, researchers and others operating in the Arctic.

The 31st Calotte Academy took place from 10-19 June in Sapmi and northernmost parts of Finland, Norway, Sweden

July

Pope Francis makes a brief visit to Iqaluit, Nunavut as his last stop on a 6-day visit to Canada to apologize for the abuse of Indigenous peoples at government residential schools run by the Catholic church

US Coast Guard Commandant Admiral Linda Fagan calls for a larger icebreaker fleet before the US House Committee on Homeland Security's Subcommittee on Transportation and Maritime Security.

Facebook announces that Inuktitut is a new official language setting on the social media platform

August

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg joins Canada Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on a tour of a military radar site in Cambridge Bay, Nunavut, marking the first time any NATO chief has paid a visit to Canada's Arctic.

President Biden announces plans to establish a new Ambassador at Large position focused solely on the Arctic region. The Ambassador will engage with the other seven Arctic states including Russia, Indigenous groups, and other regional stakeholders.

Iqaluit, Nunavut declares a local state of emergency over water drought

September

Svalbard records the hottest summer on record with the average temperature of June, July, and August measuring at 7.4 °C, which is 0.2 degrees above the previous temperature record from 2020.

26 energy companies seek Norway's permission to drill for oil and gas in Norway's predefined areas licensing round.

The Arctic Council's Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP) releases its landmark report "AMAP Assessment 2021: Mercury in the Arctic" which reveals how increased mercury levels are putting wildlife and Indigenous communities at risk.

Russia conducts military exercises at Cape Chelyuskin and on the Chukchi Sea coast, demonstrating its Arctic military capabilities

October

The Biden-Harris Administration releases the United States' National Strategy for the Arctic Region. The strategy emphasizes four pillars: 1) security; 2) climate change and environmental protection; 3) sustainable economic development; 4) international cooperation and governance.

Tromsø ends its friendship/twin city agreements with Russian cities Arkhangelsk, Murmansk, and Nadym in response to Russia's ongoing war in Ukraine.

Russia announces plans to launch nine polar-orbiting satellites to monitor the Arctic by 2026 in support of its Northern Sea Route development plans

The 10th annual Arctic Circle Assembly takes place from 13-16 October in Reykjavik, Iceland. For the first time, three Indigenous leaders take the Arctic Circle Assembly stage as main speakers during the opening session – Mary Simon, Governor General of Canada, Múte B. Egede, Prime Minister of Greenland, and Sara Olsvig, International Chair for the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC).