

THE RECENT SEA ICE CONDITIONS IN THE SEA OF OKHOTSK (ABSTRACT)

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Systematic sea ice observations in Japan were started by the Hokkaido prefectural office in 1892. The observational stations were located at Abashiri, Nemuro and Sôya along the Sea of Okhotsk coast of Hokkaido. Observations of aircraft were started in 1935, and coastal radars and satellites in the 1960's. The Japan Meteorological Agency analyzes these sea ice observation data and announces the sea ice forecast and information. Results of this study are summarized below.

1) The amount of sea ice at the observational stations along the Sea of Okhotsk coast of Hokkaido has been rather below normal for the consecutive 4 years since 1989. 2) Maximum sea ice area for one ice season in the Sea of Okhotsk was rather below normal in 1984 and 1991. In these years Aleutian depressions followed more southerly paths than in normal years. And so expansion of sea ice area was suppressed by the strong easterly wind. 3) Maximum sea ice area for one ice season was rather above normal in 1978 and 1988. In these years Aleutian depressions followed more northerly paths than in normal years. And so expansion of sea ice area was facilitated by the strong westerly wind. 4) Together with the amount of sea ice at the observational stations along the Sea of Okhotsk coast of Hokkaido, the maximum sea ice area for each ice season in the Sea of Okhotsk has been below normal since 1989. 5) In recent years, the earliest records of the first date of drift ice in sight of the coast and the latest records of the last date of drift ice in sight of the coast has been renewed after 1989 under the influence of warm winter.

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