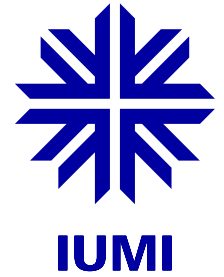


Arctic sea ice level reach record low – ships arrive



5th August 2020

The Northern Sea Route is now completely open, reports the *Barents Observer*.

There has been a spike in shipping along the remote Russian Arctic shipping route as a result of sea ice melting over the past few weeks.

According to the National Snow and Ice Data Centre, ice levels on July 15th stood at 7.51m sq/km, which is 330,000 sq/kms below the previous record for the time of year, which was set in 2011.



A heat wave in May and June swept along the Russian Arctic coast, leading to very low sea ice extent in the Laptev and Barents Seas.

By mid-July the Northern Sea Route (NSR) was almost ice-free and by July 20th these waters were completely open across the vast seaway.

Ice maps from the Russian Arctic and Antarctic Research Institute show that also the Vilkitsky Strait and the East Siberian Sea, the most icy and difficult parts of the sea route, has easy passage for ships.

More than 50 vessels are currently sailing on the route, according to figures from the Northern Sea Route Administration. Several of them are tankers bringing petroleum products from Arctic fields to Asian markets. The first LNG carriers made it across the route in late May, the earliest voyages on the route ever.

LNG tanker [Christophe De Margerie](#) (IMO 9737187) left Arctic terminal Sabetta on May 19th. It was soon followed by another LNG tanker, Teekay Shipping's [Vladimir Voronin](#) (IMO 9750737) and several more carriers. The Christophe De Margerie was accompanied by an icebreaker, but the subsequent vessels sailed most of the route independently without an icebreaker as escort.

By July 26th there were 16 tankers sailing on the eastern part of the Northern Sea Route, some of them small tankers that had sailed up the great Siberian rivers and into Arctic waters. There were also several cargo vessels on the route.

In 2019 a total of 31.5m tons of goods were shipped on the route, an increase of almost 60% from the previous year.

2016-built. Cyprus-flagged, 128,806 gt Christophe De Margerie is owned by Zelitiko Shipping Co Ltd care of manager Yamal LNG OAO of Moscow, Russia. ISM manager is SCF Management Services Dubai of Dubai, UAE. It is entered with UK Club (Area Group E2 EMEA) on behalf of Zelitiko Shipping Co Ltd (Cyprus).

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