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A red banner for Netflix. On the left is the Netflix logo. In the center, the text "Rent Movies From Netflix" is displayed. To the right of the text are three movie covers: "Charlie Sheen: The Contender", "Bolt", and "Twilight". On the far right, there is a yellow circular badge that says "FREE TRIAL" and a blue button with a white arrow and the text "Click here".

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## Study finds ice-free Arctic possible within 30 years

by Rich Bowden - Apr 5 2009, 21:30



Img: Icebergs around Cape York, Greenland. Credit: Mila Zinkova.

A joint [study](#) by the [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration](#) (NOAA) and the University of Washington has made the dire warning that the world could experience an ice-free Arctic during summer in

as little as 30 years.

The study, published Friday in the journal [Geophysical Research Letters](#), comes ahead of a summit in Washington involving 47 countries to discuss the state of the North and South poles.

"The Arctic is changing faster than anticipated," said James Overland, an NOAA oceanographer who co-authored the report. "It's a combination of natural variability, along with warmer air and sea conditions caused by increased greenhouse gases."

Overland and Muyin Wang, a University of Washington [research scientist](#) with the Joint Institute for the Study of the Atmosphere and Ocean in Seattle, "...analysed projections from six computer models, including three with sophisticated sea ice physics capabilities. That data was then combined with observations of summer sea ice loss in 2007 and 2008," according to a NOAA statement.

The report found that the area currently covered by ice is expected to reduce in size from its current 4.6 million square kilometres (about 1.8 million square miles) to about 1 million square kilometres (about 390,000 square miles) -- a loss approximately two-fifths the size of the continental U.S., outlined the statement.

"The Arctic is often called the 'Earth's refrigerator' because the sea ice helps cool the planet by reflecting the sun's radiation back into space," said Wang. "With less ice, the sun's warmth is instead absorbed by the open water, contributing to warmer temperatures in the water and the air."

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton will host the Washington-based poles summit from this coming Monday.

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