



# ICAS MARITIME AFFAIRS HANDBILL

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## Recent News in Global Maritime Affairs

### [1] Climate Change and Blue Carbon Economy [1]

#### [UMAS: Cost of IMO 2050 Target Could Reach \\$1.4 Trillion](#)

September 23 - *The Maritime Executive*  
[Global]

According to a new report released by the University Maritime Advisory Services (UMAS), a UK maritime consultancy, to successfully meet the International Maritime Organization (IMO) 2050 decarbonization goal, the global shipping industry will require US\$1.4 trillion in capital expenditure.

#### [The Nature Conservancy Announces Its Third Global Debt Conversion in Barbados](#)

September 21 - *The Nature Conservancy*  
[Caribbean, Global]

The Nature Conservancy (TNC), the “world’s leading conservation organization,” has announced a new financial deal which will unlock about US\$50 million to contribute to environmental and sustainable development activities in Barbados. This project is the most recent addition to the TNC’s “Blue Bonds for Ocean Conservation” global strategy.

#### [Mitsubishi Heavy readies launch of compact carbon capture units](#)

September 18 - *Nikkei Asia* [Paywall]  
[Japan]

In 2023, Japan’s Mitsubishi Heavy Industries is preparing to release a line of “compact carbon capture units” amidst a growing demand for carbon capture, utility, and storage (CCUS) technology, which is mostly used to trap carbon dioxide released by large factories so that it can be stored or repurposed.

### [In a First Study of Pakistan's Floods, Scientists See Climate Change at Work](#)

September 15 - *The New York Times* [Paywall]

[Middle East, South Asia]

Amidst a summer of abnormally high levels of heavy rain in Pakistan, rivers have become lakes and “villages have become islands” as residents could be waiting months for the flood waters to recede. A group of 26 climate scientists affiliated with World Weather Attribution have since connected the extreme floods to global warming caused by greenhouse-gas emissions.

### [Chair Grijalva, Committee Members Introduce Bill to Align Public Lands and Waters with Biden Climate Targets, Announce Hearing Next Week](#)

September 13 - U.S. House Natural Resources Committee

[United States]

On September 13, the U.S. House of Representatives Natural Resources Committee introduced the *Public Lands and Waters Climate Leadership Act*. This Act directs the U.S. Department of the Interior and the U.S. Forest Service to jointly manage U.S. public lands and oceans “in accordance with the Biden administration’s ambitious greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction goals.”

### [Rising seas could swallow millions of U.S. acres within decades](#)

September 8 - *The Washington Post* [Paywall]

[Global, United States]

New analytical research conducted by the U.S. nonprofit Climate Central shows that by 2050 rising seas will shift coastlines and consume as many as 4.4 million acres of land along the U.S. coast. The analysis also showed that changes could come gradually and then quickly.

### [Ministry unveils new-fangled strategies in blue economy at G20 event](#)

September 6 - *Antara News*

[Indonesia, Southeast Asia]

At the recent G20 event focused on ecological and economic considerations in the maritime realm, Indonesia’s Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (KKP) Ministry introduced three blue economy strategies and action plans. The first of these plans is to expand conservation areas, with a target of 30 percent of the total area of Indonesian waters.

### [Blue Carbon strategy to clean underwater](#)

September 6 - *PS News*

[Australia]

Australia’s Department of Planning and Environment has released the New South Wales Blue Carbon Strategy which plans to simultaneously restore coastal biodiversity of the “underwater forests” and reduce emissions. Australia’s coastline currently stores 5-11% of global blue carbon stocks.

### [BAMS report: Record-high greenhouse gases, sea levels in 2021](#)

August 31 - NOAA

[Global, United States]

According to NOAA's 32nd annual State of the Climate report, greenhouse gas concentrations, global sea levels and ocean heat content reached record highs in 2021. "[I]t shows that the climate crisis is not a future threat but something we must address today," noted NOAA Administrator Rick Spinrad.

### [Bahamas to sell blue carbon credits](#)

August 30 - WPBF News

[Atlantic Ocean, West Indies]

Bahamas Prime Minister Philip Davis announced that his country plans on being "the first country in the world to trade blue carbon credits." The Bahamas is home to more than 1,600 square miles of maritime ecosystems that can become carbon sinks but they would require much protection.

## [2] Maritime Economy and Shipping [2]

### [Environmental technologies in focus on World Maritime Day 2022](#)

September 26 - Hellenic Shipping News

[Global]

This year's World Maritime Day, which will be celebrated on September 29, will focus on "New technologies for greener shipping." As described by IMO Secretary-General Kitack Lim, it will provide a platform to "open up a larger conversation about...how technology can be harnessed for a more sustainable future" and "how digitalization and automation can support shipping."

### [China's shipbuilding progress threatens South Korea's long-held tech dominance in the industry](#)

September 23 - South China Morning Post [Paywall]

[China, South Korea, Global]

Since 2020 China has remained the leading country in container vessel production, outpacing South Korea. But South Korea still holds the technological edge in shipbuilding, making more advanced and expensive carriers, though some analysts say that China is catching up in this regard as well.

### [Chinese Cargo-Data Network Poses Growing Risks, U.S. Analysis Says](#)

September 20 - The Wall Street Journal [Paywall]

[China, United States, Global]

In a new report by the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, an advisory body to the U.S. Congress, Chinese cargo-data network Logink is labeled as a concerning party and warns against the U.S. "embracing China's unbridled participation in global logistics data exchange."

### [Iran counting on knowledge-based companies to develop maritime fleet](#)

September 18 - *Tehran Times*

[Middle East]

The Managing Director of the Iran Shipbuilding and Offshore Industries Complex (ISOICO) explained the competitive importance of Iran expanding its sea transport capabilities, also noting that domestic-based companies should not be ignored in Iran's plans to develop a maritime fleet.

### [Shanghai Reopening Ports, Resuming Flights as Typhoon Passes](#)

September 15 - *Bloomberg* [Paywall]

[China, East Asia]

Coastal ports in Shanghai, one of the busiest shipping hubs in the world, were temporarily closed as Typhoon Muifa skirted the northeastern coastline of China across three days. The typhoon was projected to be the largest to hit the Yangtze River Delta in a decade, prompting some evacuations.

### [Administration awards Gulf of Mexico drilling leases to oil giants](#)

September 14 - *The Washington Post* [Paywall]

[United States, Gulf of Mexico]

The Biden administration's Bureau of Ocean Energy Management granted 307 oil and gas leases amounting to \$190 million to companies wanting to explore for oil and gas in the Gulf of Mexico. Among other statements, Washington stressed the sale will "protect biologically sensitive resources."

### [Chinese shippers face abyss as freight rates plummet 60 per cent from 'unprecedented' highs at height of coronavirus pandemic](#)

September 9 - *South China Morning Post* [Paywall]

[China, Global]

Since January 2022, there has been a 60% decline in shipping freight rates; a decline that is expected to continue the rest of the year. Analysts have linked this decline to the Covid-19 pandemic, simultaneously explaining that the "high shipping rates arising from the disruption in supply and demand created by the pandemic will never come back."

### [Container shipping record \\$63.7bn Q2 profits, no collapse imminent says report](#)

September 5 - *Seatrade Maritime News*

[Global]

The estimated amount of earnings in global public-listed container lines in Q2 of 2022 is US\$63.7 billion; US\$5 billion higher than the preceding quarter and 123% higher than the recording in Q2 of 2021. This marks the seventh consecutive quarter of record earnings in an industry that for much of this century had struggled.

### [Climate change: shipping industry ‘must adopt new technologies, collaborate’ to reduce carbon footprint](#)

September 1 - *South China Morning Post* [Paywall]  
[East Asia, Global]

Hing Chao, Chairman of the Hong Kong-based Wah Kwong Maritime Transport Holdings, says that, while shipping companies are increasingly using new technologies, today’s shipping industry is in need of a “radical transformation” if it is to successfully reduce its carbon footprint.

### [Shipping Routes Shift East as US Retailers Skirt West Coast Snarls](#)

September 1 - *Bloomberg* [Paywall]  
[United States]

For about a decade, the percentage of market share from the U.S. West Coast ports has been steadily shifting towards East and Gulf Coast ports, with now about 44% of Asian imports entering the U.S. through East and Gulf Coast ports. While some of this shift has been accredited to the pandemic, many experts expect the shift to stay.

## [3] Ocean Governance and Maritime Cooperation [3]

### [Manila, Seoul tighten maritime ties](#)

September 24 - *The Manila Times*  
[East Asia, Southeast Asia]

On September 21, the Philippines and South Korea held an inaugural dialogue between top diplomatic officials where they agreed to strengthen cooperation in the maritime sphere. Both countries vowed to jointly enforce international maritime law and to work together in enhancing marine environmental protections and responsibly growing the maritime economy.

### [U.S. Facilitates Small Boat Operations Training Course for Philippine Coast Guard](#)

September 22 - U.S. Indo-Pacific Command  
[United States, Southeast Asia]

From September 5-16, U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) instructors aided the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) in running its first Small Boat Operations instruction course. This technical assistance—in training areas like navigation, driving, risk management, towing, and man-overboard recovery—was organized to enhance the Philippines’ independent capabilities and shore up bilateral relations.

### [US to invest in new cooperation over Atlantic Ocean](#)

September 21 - *EuroNews*  
[United States, Atlantic Ocean]

During the recent UN General Assembly in New York, representatives from the U.S. and about 10 other Atlantic Ocean nations gathered to discuss a new potential community built to partner “in

shared priorities for the environment and maritime security.” The U.S. Department of State released a Joint Statement on Atlantic Cooperation following the meeting.

### [Blinken to host 'Blue Pacific' event amid competition with China](#)

September 19 - *Reuters* [Paywall]

[United States, China, Indo-Pacific]

The White House announced that the U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken will host the Partners in the Blue Pacific (PBP) group with the intent of improving member coordination in the midst of competition from China. The group, formed in June 2022, currently includes the U.S., Australia, Japan, New Zealand and the UK, with India having an observer status.

### [Chinese troops drive away fishing vessels from disputed waters](#)

September 13 - *Radio Free Asia*

[South China Sea, China]

In a video recording shown on China’s state-run CCTV-7, Chinese soldiers warned away non-Chinese fishing boats from the vicinity of Mischief Reef in an effort to regulate regional fishing. CCTV also reported “soldiers and officers stay on guard night and day” to protect China’s sovereignty and sovereign rights in other disputed areas.

### [Xinhua Silk Road: 2022 Silk Road Maritime International Cooperation Forum kicks off in E.China's Xiamen](#)

September 9 - *PR Newswire*

[China, Global]

From September 8-9, the 2022 Silk Road Maritime International Cooperation Forum was held in Xiamen, China. This year’s forum focused on measures to support the new development dynamic and the “dual circulation” of domestic and international markets. Discussions focused on topics such as the integrated development of international logistics and cross-border e-commerce, and the development and application of port shipping big data.

### [Chinese scientists retrieve ancient ships from depths of South China Sea](#)

September 6 - *South China Morning Post* [Paywall]

[South China Sea, China]

Through the use of new survey technology, Chinese researchers from more than 10 research institutes discovered three ancient merchant ships in the South China Sea. The researchers said the new sonar technology, coupled by support from unmanned robots, allowed the team to delve three times as deep while increasing surveying efficiency.

### [Philippine Top Diplomat Says Open to Resume Oil Talks With China](#)

August 31 - Bloomberg [Paywall]

[Southeast Asia, China]

According to Foreign Affairs Secretary Enrique Manalo, the Philippines is willing to initiate new talks with China regarding joint oil and gas exploration in the South China Sea. However, Manalo noted that the Philippines will not agree to anything not in accordance with the Philippine Constitution.

## [4] Maritime Security and Defense [4]

### [South Korea, US begin biggest joint naval drills in 5 years](#)

September 26 - *The Korea Times*

[United States, South Korea, East Asia]

From September 26-30, the US and South Korean militaries will be holding their biggest joint naval exercise since 2017 in the East Sea. The exercise, said to involve more than 20 vessels and an array of air force and army aircraft and weapons, is also starting a day after North Korea fired a short-range ballistic missile.

### [Chinese military tracks US, Canadian warships' transit through Taiwan Strait](#)

September 21 - *South China Morning Post* [Paywall]

[China, United States, Canada, East Asia]

On September 20, China's PLA air force and navy tracked the movements of US and Canadian warships as they transited through the Taiwan Strait. A spokesman for the Chinese military called the passage a "provocative move" and said their troops are on "high alert at all times."

### [US, UK join Pacific allies in Fijian military exercise](#)

September 21 - *Associated Press*

[United States, United Kingdom, South Pacific]

For 11 days, militaries from the United States, Britain, Australia and New Zealand held Exercise Cartwheel in Fiji reportedly as a response to China's growing influence in the region. A Beijing spokesperson said China has "no objection to normal defense cooperation" but noted that such cooperation "should not be directed at third parties."

### [China slams 'double standards' of Aukus nuclear subs deal, warns of impact on Korea, Iran efforts](#)

September 20 - *South China Morning Post* [Paywall]

[China, Australia, United Kingdom, United States]

After Australia acquired nuclear-power submarines under the AUKUS pact, China's permanent envoy to the United Nations in Vienna slammed the "blatant, irresponsible act of nuclear proliferation" and

claimed the presence of “double standards.” China is one of the countries that openly objects to AUKUS on the grounds that it violates the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

### [Japan, India hold maritime drills amid China concerns in Indo-Pacific](#)

September 13 - *Kyodo News*

[Japan, India, South Asia]

The Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force and Indian Navy successfully held week-long joint exercises in the waters South of India. The joint exercises followed “two-plus-two” security talks held in Tokyo on September 8 where both sides agreed to enhance bilateral defense cooperation and support “a free and open Indo-Pacific.”

### [Europe sends air power to Indo-Pacific after flexing naval muscle](#)

September 12 - *Nikkei Asia* [Paywall]

[South Pacific, Europe]

As part of the five-week Mission Pegase 2022 exercise by the French Air and Space Force, France and Singapore held a military exercise that involved a convoy traveling to the South Pacific island of New Caledonia. The goal was to show that France is “able to project air power to protect either [their] territory or to protect an ally's territory.”

### [Japan, US, Philippines to step up maritime security ties](#)

September 7 - *ABCNews*

[Japan, United States, Southeast Asia]

Raymond Greene, the U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission in Tokyo, criticized China’s “increasingly hostile maritime actions,” stating that “[n]o one nation should be able to dominate Indo-Pacific waters through coercion and outright intimidation.” The statement was made at a news conference held right before a meeting between officials from the U.S., Japan and the Philippines.

### [Philippines may allow U.S. military access during Taiwan crisis](#)

September 5 - *Nikkei Asia* [Paywall]

[Southeast Asia, United States]

The Philippine ambassador to the U.S. said that, in the event of a Taiwan crisis, American forces may be allowed to access military bases in the Philippines “if it is important for us, for our own security.”



### [Iran seizes 2 U.S. sea drones in second incident this week](#)

September 2 - NBC News

[Middle East, United States]

Iran seized and temporarily retained two U.S. sea-based drones found in the Red Sea. The drones were eventually released after the US Navy sent over two destroyers and one Sea Hawk helicopter. According to the U.S., the incidents all occurred in international waters.

### [China has been simulating attacks on U.S. Navy ships, Taiwan says](#)

September 1 - Reuters [Paywall]

[China, United States, Southeast Asia]

In a report to its parliament, Taiwan's defense ministry said that China's PLA Navy has been simulating attacks on US Navy ships and preparing for a potential attack on Taiwan with a special focus on containing the first island chain.

### [Solomon Islands Blocks All Naval Port Visits After U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Denied Entry](#)

August 30 - USNI News

[South Pacific, United States]

Ten days after denying a "routine" entry of a U.S. Coast Guard cutter over diplomatic clearance issues, Solomon Islands Prime Minister Sogavare announced a temporary halt of visits by all foreign naval vessels so that they can review its diplomatic clearance process.

## Peer-Reviewed Research on Maritime Issues

- Government Release: The White House - ["Joint Statement on Atlantic Cooperation"](#) [September 20]
- Government Release: The White House - ["FACT SHEET: Biden-Harris Administration Announces New Actions to Expand U.S. Offshore Wind Energy"](#) [September 15]
- Government Release: U.S. Department of State - ["U.S. Engagement in the Pacific Islands: 2022 Pacific Islands Conference of Leaders"](#) [September 13]
- Government Release: Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India - ["India-U.S.A 2+2 Inter-sessional Dialogue \(September 07, 2022\) and India-U.S.A Maritime Security Dialogue \(September 08, 2022\)"](#) [September 8]
- Report: [Russia in the Arctic: Gauging How Russia's Invasion of Ukraine Will Alter Regional Dynamics](#) [Center for a New American Security - September 15]
- Report: [Submarine Cables and Container Shipments: Two Immediate Risks to the US Economy if China Invades Taiwan](#) [Mercatus Center, George Mason University - August 29]
- Opinion: ["Asia-Pacific is key to disaster risk reduction targets"](#) [World Meteorological Institution - September 23]
- Opinion: ["Protecting the High Seas Will Unleash the Blue Economy"](#) [Brink News - September 23]

- Opinion: Interview - [“The United States Needs to Step Up Its Game Across the Indo-Pacific”](#) [Carnegie Endowment for International Peace - September 22]
- Opinion: [“What I Saw as the Country’s First National Climate Adviser”](#) [The New York Times - September 19] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“Uncertainty could hamper container and tanker outlooks— Poulsson”](#) [Seatrade Maritime News - September 19]
- Analysis: [“Turbulence in the Taiwan Strait: Tensions between the US, China and Taiwan escalate”](#) [The Straits Times - September 24]
- Analysis: [“Looking back on America’s summer of heat, floods and climate change: Welcome to the new abnormal”](#) [The Conversation - September 21]
- Analysis: [“Shaping the future of sea power in Africa”](#) [Businessday Nigeria - September 20] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“Global ‘Stilling’: Is Climate Change Slowing Down the Wind?”](#) [YaleEnvironment360 - September 13]
- Analysis: [“What Role will Blue Carbon Play in China's Efforts to Reduce Emissions?”](#) [AZO Materials - August 31]

## Events on the Maritime Domain



- On September 7, the Center for a New American Security co-hosted a virtual event with The Prospect Foundation on [Taiwan, Cross-Strait Relations, and an Evolving World](#). A full recording is available online.
- On September 16, the Center for a New American Security hosted a virtual report launch event on [Russia in the Arctic](#). A full recording is available online.
- From September 18-19, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and Sasakawa Peace Foundation held their hybrid [Ocean Nations: The 2nd Annual Indo-Pacific Islands Dialogue](#) in New York, New York. A full recording is available online.
- From September 20-22, the International Maritime Lecturers Association held the [28th International Maritime Lecturers Association Conference](#) in Odessa, Ukraine with the theme of “MET Maritime Heritage: Traditions and Perspectives.”
- On September 21, the Atlantic Council Global Energy Center, the Embassy of Iceland, and Green by Iceland hosted the [“US-Iceland Clean Energy Summit”](#) at the House of Sweden in Washington, DC. A full recording is available online.
- On September 23, the Center for Strategic and International Studies held a conversation with Australian Minister for Climate Change and Energy Chris Bowen titled [“Toward a clean and secure energy future in the Indo-Pacific.”](#) A full recording is available online.
- From September 26-28, the International Seabed Authority held a hybrid [Women in the Law of the Sea Conference](#) “aimed at highlighting the important contributions of women to the development and implementation of the law of the sea, the participation of women in the institutions created by UNCLOS and related regional and sub-regional organizations and the pathways to enhancing the potential for women to contribute to the law of the sea in the future.”
- From October 13-16, the Arctic Circle will be hosting the [2022 Arctic Circle Assembly](#) in person in Reykjavik, Iceland. [Registration](#) is open until October 11.

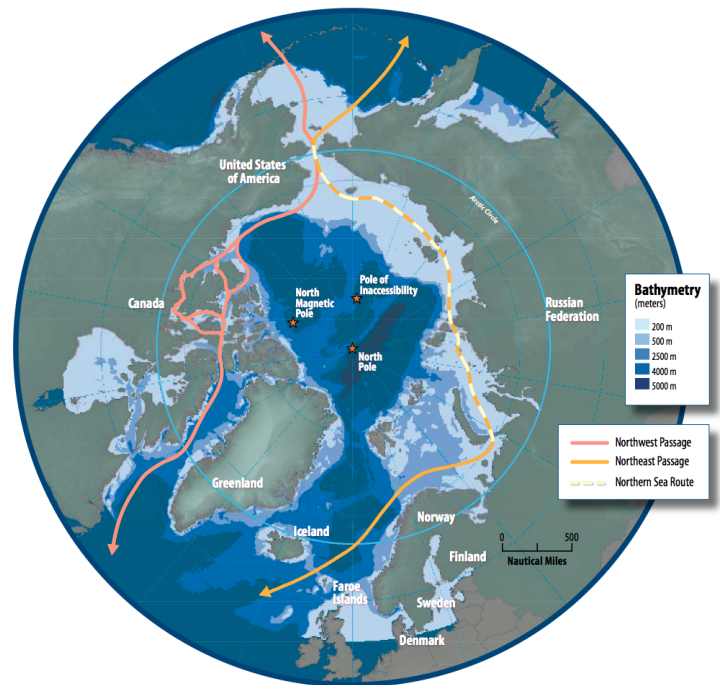
- On October 25, the U.S. Naval Institute and the U.S. Naval Academy will be co-hosting an in-person conference on [The Russia China Partnership: A Challenge to the World Order?](#) in Annapolis, MD. The keynote speakers and panelists will “look at Russia and China’s efforts to change the world order, including activities aimed at challenging the United States.”
- Throughout the year, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) offers its publicly-accessible [NOAA Science Seminar Series](#), most of which are webinars that last about 1 hour. The full list of seminar topics is available online.

## Handbill Spotlight

### Northern Sea Route

#### Issue Background <sup>1</sup>

The Northern Sea Route (NSR, or *Severoput* in Russian) is a global shipping route [about](#) 2,200-2,900 miles long that lies entirely within Arctic waters. It is also part of the polar route that directly connects the Pacific and Atlantic oceans. Given the climate of its location, it spends most of the year frozen in ice and is typically only accessible for two months of the year. Historically, while it was [first](#) mapped in 1728 by Imperial Russia, it was not first successfully traversed in its entirety until the late 1870s by Arctic explorer Adolf Erik Nordenskiöld’s [Vega Expedition](#). There was no recorded successful passage [without the aid of an icebreaker](#) until August 2017 and, in 2018, it was [determined](#) by Maersk Line that the route was not yet commercially viable. It is still the most popular and accessible of the [maritime passages](#) that run through the Arctic region, with the other passages including the Transpolar Sea Route (which crosses near the North Pole), the Northwest Passage (which runs along Canada’s coastline), and the Northeast Passage (which runs along Russia’s coastline).



Since the Northeast Passage is bilaterally adjoined by and entirely encompasses the NSR, the Northeast Passage itself is also [sometimes](#) simply referred to as the Northern Sea Route. Being located entirely within Russia’s exclusive economic zone (EEZ), the Northern Sea Route is defined by Russia legislation as lying east of Novaya Zemlya and running along the Russian Arctic coast from the Kara Sea to the Bering Strait. The Arctic Council, the primary international governance organization

<sup>1</sup> Image Source: Map of the Arctic region showing the Northern Sea Route, in the context of the Northeast Passage and the Northwest Passage, Arctic Council 2009 Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment ([Wikimedia Commons, CC0](#))

for the region, has also [identified](#) the Northern Sea Route as a unique section of the Northeast Passage that only extends up through to the entrance of the Bering Sea.

The Russian Federation is generally responsible for the governance over the NSR. Much of this coordination and governance is conducted through Russia's [Northern Sea Route Administration](#), founded in 2013, and the [Northern Sea Route Association](#), which Russia founded in 2001; the latter of which includes over 50 organizations both from Russia and foreign countries. Still, there are multiple regional and foreign parties who are active in or discuss the NSR; most notably local Arctic players, the Arctic Council, [China](#), China Ocean Shipping (Group) Company (COSCO Shipping), Maersk Line and, more recently, [India](#).

## Recent Events

Unsurprisingly, the Northern Sea Route has been gaining attention in recent years from global warming and expanding technology expanding access to the region. The most frequently cited [interest](#) in the NSR is its potential as part of the Northeast Passage to shorten the distance of travel from Rotterdam to Yokohama by more than one-third. This translates into accelerated travel time and subsequent decreases in fuel consumption, gas emissions, and overall costs. There are also fewer risks of falling prey to piracy compared to following the current route that passes through the Suez Canal. There are still researchers who argue that this assessment of the NSR's potential impact on global trade is an [overestimation](#) due to the many challenges from aspects such as regional governance and unexpected navigational issues from bathymetry and climate.

Regardless of whether or not they will restructure global shipping, the changes happening in the region are irrefutable. Ice cover in this region has been reduced by 32% since the 1960s and shipping companies are increasingly more confident in using the route. In 2011, only four commercial ships used the NSR. The following year, 46 ships sailed the entire length of the NSR. [Jumping](#) to 2019 and 2020, 277 and 331 vessels, respectively, used the route; both record numbers of full transits for the NSR. And, despite an early freeze-up, 2021 was the Northern Sea Route's [busiest navigation season](#) yet, with most of the vessels being non-Russian. Current projections [show](#) that Arctic sea lanes may be ice-free in the summertime as soon as 2035 with ice cover in the Northwest Passage reaching one if its [lowest levels](#) in September 2022.

Consequently, concern for, political interest in, and commercial exploration of the region has rapidly grown in the last decade. Russia is the most active party in the NSR—which is understandable and expected given that the NSR runs along Russia's coastline—and recently announced an [estimated 1.8 trillion roubles \(US\\$30 billion\)](#) will be spent on a Northern Sea Route development project set to run through 2035. While Russia's [icebreakers](#) have been recorded as being particularly active, many observers are paying more attention to Russia's recent uptick in [military activity](#), [defensive naval drills](#), [submarine tests](#), [infrastructure repairs](#) and [renovations](#) along the route and in the Arctic as a whole. Roscosmos, Russia's premier space administration, has also been [brought](#) in to support and improve satellite navigation and other technological advancements.

Also, Russia's military expansion along the NSR has caught the [attention](#) of several regional and extra-regional parties. This expanding global interest in the NSR likely led Russia to formally create

the Council of the Northern Sea Route Shipping Participants, the [first meeting](#) of which was held at the 2022 Eastern Economic Forum (EEF) on September 6, 2022. This Council was [explained](#) as necessary to address “the need for coordination of actions in order to build effective work on the NSR to develop optimal mechanisms for managing Arctic shipping between consignors, shipping companies, the state, and infrastructure operators providing communication, data on the state of ice sheets, weather conditions.”

### Keep In Mind

While Russia is the main stakeholder in the Northern Sea Route, there are other parties and states—both located within and external to the Arctic Region—who have expressed their own interests and commitments to the NSR; usually as an important shipping route. And, while it seems like it is in its own separate bubble, the activity in and around the Northern Sea Route remains subject to global affairs and ongoing political interactions happening elsewhere in the world. For instance, it was recently [announced](#) that China’s COSCO shipping company, along with most other foreign parties, have [not](#) sailed on NSR this year; presumably over caution from Russia’s invasion of Ukraine earlier in 2022 and the related [sanctions](#).

Simultaneously, the potential for bilateral cooperation over the NSR periodically appears and will continue to exist. After all, China’s Polar Silk Road—the Arctic route of Beijing’s Belt and Road Initiative—directly involves the Northern Sea Route and Northeast Passage. As recently as September 2022 at the Eastern Economic Forum, leaders from both [China](#) and [India](#) expressed direct interest in cooperating with Russia over the Northern Sea Route. And commercial shipping groups from around the world would highly value the benefits of establishing formal cooperation over the NSR.

There are some analysts who are [skeptical](#) of China’s long-term intent to remain cooperative in the NSR, believing that an end-game of competition is more likely. And it is true that the U.S. military and its NATO allies have [increased](#) their own “aggressive” stances in the region; which is why other observers [predict](#) the [influx](#) of various powers to the region will bring a flashpoint. These are just some examples of the considerations and attentions being made over the NSR in the last few years.

The increased ice melt only brings more attention to the Arctic and the Northern Sea Route as the melting ice opens up new trade routes and extends the season of open access. And a [2022 study](#) by Brown University concludes that as the ice continues to melt, Russia’s hold on the Arctic at the NSR will loosen; which in and of itself could explain the tightening regulations and expanding military defense along the NSR. It is difficult to pinpoint when the Northern Sea Route will become more readily accessible or to what extent it truly will [change](#) global shipping or multinational relations. But it is clear that change is happening to the NSR—be it diplomatic, militant or climactic—and states like Russia, China, India and the U.S. are preparing in the meantime to ensure they come out the other end of it in control.

*This issue’s Spotlight was written by Jessica Martin, ICAS Research Associate & Chief Editor of the MAP Handbill*

## ICAS Maritime Affairs Program: New and Upcoming

### — ICAS Past Academic Engagement —



Executive Director Nong Hong speaks at the ISA Women in the Law of the Sea Conference  
September 26-28, 2022

*Hosted by International Seabed Authority in partnership with the Permanent Representation of  
Singapore to the United Nations*

On Tuesday, September 27, ICAS Executive Director Nong Hong spoke at the International Seabed Authority's Women in the Law of the Sea Conference 2022. Her presentation focused on "Ocean governance in the South China Sea: with a focus on law, policy and management on marine environment protection" and is part of Session V: Protection of the marine environment.

[Learn More & Explore the Full Agenda](#)

### — Upcoming ICAS Event —

Information regarding a virtual ICAS Blue Carbon & Climate Change Program event to be held on October 12, to include discussion between global experts regarding the upcoming COP27 meeting, will be announced soon!

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### — Upcoming BCCC Quarterly Release —

Stay tuned for the upcoming release of the newly designed ICAS Blue Carbon & Climate Change Program Quarterly journal newsletter, to be released at the conclusion of 2022 Quarter 3! The new design features major news summaries, collections of scientific research and reports, information on related events, ICAS commentary, and a special Theme of the Quarter, among other additions!

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