



ICAS MARITIME AFFAIRS HANDBILL

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Recent News in Global Maritime Affairs

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

[China plans to tighten environmental regulation of deep-sea fish farming](#)

August 28 - *South China Morning Post* [Paywall]

[China, East Asia]

On August 28, China's Ministry of Ecology and Environment announced plans to "promote the green development of the mariculture industry," strengthen environmental regulations on deep-sea fish farming, and urge coastal regions to introduce local standards for discharging contaminated water.

[More tests show radiation levels of Fukushima seawater remain below limits](#)

August 27 - *The Japan Times* [Paywall]

[East Asia, Global]

On August 24, Japan began the discharge of more than 1 million metric tons of treated radioactive wastewater from the Fukushima No. 1 nuclear plant into the Pacific Ocean, sparking strong policy responses from neighbors. A day before Japan's planned release of treated wastewater from Fukushima No. 1, China said it "will take necessary measures to firmly safeguard the marine environment, food safety and public health." One day after the start of the release, tritium levels in the ocean where the water is being discharged was recorded at below about 10 Bq per liter—well below TEPCO's operational limit of 700 Bq per liter—and continually dropped in subsequent tests.

[Scientists uncover the secret of the deep-sea 'octopus garden'](#)

August 23 - *The Washington Post* [Paywall]

[United States, Pacific Ocean]

Scientists have discovered new information about the "octopus garden," a location about 80 miles off the coast of central California where thousands of octopuses gather, which will help researchers better understand how coldblooded animals adapt across environments.

[Gulf of Mexico waters are hottest on record as coastal areas cook](#)

August 15 - *The Washington Post* [Paywall]
[Central America, The Caribbean]

In mid-August, water temperatures in the Gulf of Mexico officially reached the highest levels ever observed, forcing local communities across the region to declare state of emergencies and prepare for what is expected to be a particularly busy hurricane season.

[BOEM finalizes wind energy areas in Central Atlantic](#)

August 14 - *Sea Technology*
[Atlantic Ocean]

The U.S. Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) has announced three final wind energy areas (WEAs) offshore Delaware, Maryland and Virginia which, if fully developed, could support 4-8 gigawatts (GW) of energy production. The project is part of the Biden-Harris Administration's goal of deploying 30 GW of offshore wind energy capacity by 2030.

[Decaying Tanker in Mideast Is Emptied of Oil, Averting Catastrophic Spill](#)

August 11 - *The New York Times* [Paywall]
[Middle East]

United Nations officials announced that an operation to transfer more than 1 million barrels of oil from the FSO Safer, a decaying oil tanker off the coast of Yemen, has been successfully completed, thus averting a potentially catastrophic spill.

[No quick fix to reverse Antarctic sea ice loss as warming intensifies - scientists](#)

August 9 - *Reuters*
[The Antarctic, Global]

In a newly released journal study, scientists say "[t]here's no quick fix to replacing" the sea ice loss in the Antarctic from global warming, noting it is "going to take decades if not centuries" to recover, if such recovery is even possible.

[Atlantic's Biggest Offshore Wind Turbine to Rise Next Week in US](#)

August 4 - *Bloomberg* [Paywall]
[United States]

Starting in October, the first commercial-scale offshore wind farm, known as Vineyard Wind, is expected to start delivering electricity to nearby homes. The project, still under construction, is located about 15 miles south of Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, in the Atlantic Ocean.

[In Baltic Sea, citizen divers restore seagrass to fight climate change](#)

July 26 - Reuters

[Europe]

In the waters of the Baltic Sea, north of Germany, citizen divers are working to replant seagrass to counter climate change. The process involves moving carefully dug up seagrass shoots from dense meadows and replanting them to barren areas,

[In hot water: South Florida ocean tops 100 degrees](#)

July 26 - The Washington Post [Paywall]

[United States, Caribbean]

On the early evening of July 24, the water temperatures along the South Florida coast topped 100 degrees Fahrenheit, potentially breaching the highest sea surface temperature observed globally.

[Scientists detect sign that a crucial ocean current is near collapse](#)

July 25 - The Washington Post [Paywall]

[Atlantic Ocean]

Scientists are detecting signs that a crucial ocean current, the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC), is nearing irreversible collapse as it becomes slower and less resilient.

[2] Maritime Economy and Shipping [2]

[Some ship traffic in Dardanelles resumes as fire curbed in Turkey](#)

August 24 - Reuters

[Eastern Europe, Global]

On August 23, more than 150 ships were temporarily halted at the north and south entrances to the Dardanelles Strait to allow safety personnel to use water from the Strait to fight a local major wildfire in Canakkale, Turkey.

[Ships Are Backed Up at the Panama Canal Because of Historic Drought](#)

August 22 - Bloomberg [Paywall]

[The Caribbean, Central America]

In August, ships trying to pass through the Panama Canal, one of the world's most vital shipping channels, are now waiting four days on average because of the lack of rain. Two months ago, the average wait was a little more than a day.

[Chinese-backed port project in Peru to be the 'gateway from South America to Asia,' official says](#)

August 22 - AP News

[South America, Asia]

A COSCO Shipping official said that the port of Chancay, a new deep water port in Peru being built as part of the Belt and Road Initiative, will be "the gateway from South America to Asia" and reduce the travel time for ships on this route by 10 days. The new port, still in construction, lies approximately 60 kilometers (37 miles) north of Lima, Peru.

[Ukraine reports new attack on grain silos but cargo ship sets sail](#)

August 16 - Reuters

[Black Sea, Global]

For the first time since Russia abandoned the Black Sea grain deal in July, a Ukrainian container ship left the Port of Odesa in spite of facing attacks to the grain storage facilities the night before.

[Russia Opens Fire to Force Black Sea Cargo Ship Inspection](#)

August 13 - Bloomberg [Paywall]

[Black Sea, Global]

On August 13, the Russian navy opened fire on a cargo vessel in the southwestern part of the Black Sea to force it to stop for checks; the first such confirmed incident since Moscow withdrew from a key grain export deal in July 2023.

[South African Expats Are Flocking to This Tiny Island in the Middle of the Irish Sea](#)

August 11 - Bloomberg [Paywall]

[Africa, Europe]

South Africans are flocking to the Isle of Man, a British crown dependency in the Irish Sea with a population of 85,000 and a unique form of autonomy with loose financial regulations. The island's pull stems from the incentives it's offering to finance, insurance, and technology professionals in an effort to increase the Manx population to 100,000 by 2027.

[100 Marines, Sailors Ready to Ride Commercial Ships in Zone Defense Against Iran](#)

August 11 - USNI News

[Middle East, United States]

Over 100 newly-trained U.S. Marines are assigned to provide armed security on foreign commercial ships transiting the Strait of Hormuz in response to Iranian forces seizing vessels in the region.

[U.S. companies are buying less from China as relations remain tense](#)

August 6 - *The Washington Post* [Paywall]

[United States, China, Global]

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. imports from China dropped 24% through the first five months of the year compared to those of last year; regarded by many as a further indication of efforts by American companies to reduce dependence on Chinese suppliers.

[Danube Ports, a Lifeline for Ukraine, Come Under Russian Threat](#)

August 1 - *The New York Times* [Paywall]

[Europe]

Shipping routes through the Danube River became the only shipping outlet for millions of tons of grain after Russia cut off the Black Sea grain deal in mid-July, making the importance of the route and its small ports "hard to calculate."

[Rishi Sunak to green-light hundreds of new oil and gas licenses in North Sea](#)

July 31 - *POLITICO*

[Europe]

United Kingdom Prime Minister Rishi Sunak announced that, starting this fall, the U.K. will be granting over 100 new oil and gas licenses for the North Sea to "bolster" energy security, create jobs and build space for carbon capture usage and storage projects.

[Gulf of Mexico ship channel to undergo enlargement](#)

July 31 - *Sea Technology*

[United States]

Great Lakes, the largest provider of dredging services in the U.S., announced a notice that they would be leading the "NextDecade Rio Grand LNG" project, set to begin later in 2023, to deepen and expand the capacity of the Port of Brownsville, Texas. This project is the largest ever by Great Lakes.

[3] Ocean Governance and Maritime Cooperation [3]

[Gigantic Russian flag unveiled in the Arctic Ocean. "It's a sign of dominance and defiance", geopolitics professor explains.](#)

August 24 - *Arctic Today*

[The Arctic, Russia]

On August 22, Russia's State Flag Day, a group of scientists from the Russian Arctic and Antarctic Research Institute revealed photos of a 1,400 square meter Russia flag on the sea ice near one of their drifting polar stations, causing observers to question the full intent of the symbolic action.

[PCG: No need to explain PH actions 'within our exclusive economic zone'](#)

August 23 - *Inquirer*

[South China Sea]

In response to Chinese allegations and alleged harassment over a supply delivery to a grounded warship in the South China Sea, Philippines Coast Guard Commodore said that the "Ayungin Shoal is within our exclusive economic zone" and they "don't need to explain what are the supplies that we need to bring on board BRP Sierra Madre."

[Chinese research ship Shi Yan 6 requests Sri Lanka port call, raising possible security concerns in India](#)

August 22 - *South China Morning Post* [Paywall]

[China, South Asia]

Beijing requested permission for the *Shi Yan 6*, a Chinese research vessel, to dock in Sri Lanka, sparking reminders of a visit in 2022 by a spacecraft-tracking vessel that brought up national security concerns for Sri Lanka's neighbor India. The request is still being processed by officials.

[South Korea, India rebuke Beijing over South China Sea claims](#)

August 21 - *Nikkei Asia* [Paywall]

[South China Sea]

At the end of a trilateral summit at Camp David, U.S. President Joe Biden, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol released a jointly published document titled "The Spirit of Camp David" that includes a statement of joint support for the international tribunal ruling in 2016 over excessive maritime claims in the South China Sea.

[Migrant boat capsizes off Cape Verde, over 60 feared dead, Senegal ministry says](#)

August 17 - *Reuters*

[Africa]

On August 15, the Senegalese foreign ministry reported that 38 migrants had been rescued from the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of Cape Verde from a capsized boat that had left Senegal on July 10 with 101 passengers.

[China asks Philippines to jointly work on defusing South China Sea tensions](#)

August 12 - *Reuters*

[China, South China Sea]

On a visit to Singapore and Malaysia from August 10-11, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi again urged the Philippines to work with China to seek an effective way to defuse tensions in the South China Sea.

[Potential Philippines-Vietnam maritime deal to stabilize South China Sea concerns – Marcos](#)

August 10 - *Phil Star Global*

[Southeast Asia]

Philippine President Marcos Jr., in a meeting with outgoing Vietnamese Ambassador Hoay Huy Chung, emphasized the importance of enhancing bilateral maritime cooperation. During their engagement, the two signed a bilateral agreement with the goal of stabilizing the region.

[Chinese Foreign Minister's visit likely aimed at shoring up Asean ties ahead of South China Sea talks](#)

August 10 - *The Straits Times* [Paywall]

[Southeast Asia]

On August 10, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi began a four-day visit to Singapore, Malaysia and Cambodia. Beijing describes the visits as an effort to drum up support for the 10-year anniversary of the Belt and Road Initiative while others say it is meant to pacify tensions over the South China Sea.

[Philippine leader says no promise made to China to remove grounded warship](#)

August 9 - *Reuters*

[South China Sea, Southeast Asia]

On August 9, Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said he was "not aware of any such arrangement or agreement that the Philippines will remove from its own territory its ship," referring to a grounded warship serving as a military outpost in the South China Sea.

[The US is concerned with blacklisted Chinese firm's hand in island-building near its Manila embassy](#)

August 2 - *AP News*

[Southeast Asia, United States]

The U.S. Embassy in the Philippines formally expressed concerns over the ongoing major land reclamation projects in Manila Bay, which are located near the U.S. Embassy and involve a Washington-blacklisted Chinese company.

[In the Race to Mine the Seabed, China Takes a Hard Line](#)

July 31 - *Bloomberg* [Paywall]

[Global, China]

During three weeks of tense meetings at the International Seabed Authority, there were repeated clashes between China and an alliance of countries calling for a moratorium on deep-sea mining for valuable metals.

[4] Maritime Security and Defense [4]

[U.S., Australia, Japan Drill with the Philippines in South China Sea; China Flies Military Drone Near Taiwan](#)

August 27 - USNI News
[South China Sea]

On August 24, the U.S., Japan, Australia and the Philippines held joint naval exercises in the South China Sea, reportedly as a show of strength and solidarity, following a series of other bilateral port calls and shows of cooperation. Simultaneously, Chinese bombers flew near Japan and a Chinese unmanned air vehicle was seen flying off Taiwan's east coast.

[Russian-Chinese Warship Group Pulls into Qingdao](#)

August 22 - USNI News
[China, Russia]

On August 21, a joint Russia-People's Liberation Army navy warship group docked at Qingdao, China, following a joint patrol that began on July 27 as part of an annual cooperative event between the Russian and Chinese militaries.

[South China Sea: Philippines says resupply mission reaches remote outpost, China firmly opposed](#)

August 22 - *South China Morning Post* [Paywall]
[South China Sea]

After two Philippine coast guard boats escorted two supply vessels to an outpost on the Second Thomas Shoal in the Spratly Islands, which Chinese Coastguard vessels reportedly attempted to "block, harass, and interfere," the Philippines said such routine "Rotation and Resupply missions" "will continue on a regular basis."

[Multinational Exercise Malabar-23 Concludes](#)

August 21 - *Naval News*
[Indo-Pacific, United States]

From August 11-21, naval forces from the U.S., Australia, Japan and India held their MALABAR 23 joint defense exercise out of Sydney, marking the first time Australia has hosted the war games. The exercise included a harbor phase and a sea phase, each lasting five days, and involved ships, submarines and aircraft from all four naval forces.

[US nuclear submarine weak spot in bubble trail: Chinese scientists](#)

August 14 - *South China Morning Post* [Paywall]

[United States, China]

According to a newly published study in a highly-revered, peer-reviewed Chinese research journal, the extremely low-frequency electromagnetic signals produced by submarines running at high speeds can be detected by certain devices.

[China sends ships and fighter jets toward Taiwan in new show of force](#)

August 9 - *AP News*

[East Asia]

On August 10, Taiwan's defense ministry reported the Chinese People's Liberation Army sending 33 warplanes, including J-10 and J-16 fighter jets, and 6 navy vessels toward Taiwan across a 24-hour period.

[Closer unofficial ties? Taiwanese coastguard ship docks in Japan](#)

August 9 - *South China Morning Post*

[East Asia]

On August 8, the *Hsun Hu No 8*, an armed Taiwanese coast guard vessel, made a rare port call to Tokyo, Japan "for routine maintenance and supply" as it was on a fishery patrol mission. The port call coincides with Japanese Prime Minister Taro Aso finishing a three-day visit to Taiwan.

[Russia and China Sent Large Naval Patrol Near Alaska](#)

August 7 - *The Wall Street Journal* [Paywall]

[North Pacific, The Arctic]

The first week of August, four U.S. destroyers were dispatched to monitor 11 Russian and Chinese ships on a naval patrol near Alaska. About a week earlier, Japan's Defense Ministry reported seeing five Chinese and five Russian warships sailing through the Soya Strait between Hokkaido and Sakhalin island to the Sea of Okhotsk.

[Battle at Sea Intensifies as Ukraine Drone Hits 2nd Russian Ship in 2 Days](#)

August 5 - *The New York Times* [Paywall]

[Black Sea]

On August 4, Ukraine announced that any of Russia's six Black Sea ports and their approaches would be considered "war risk" areas until further notice. The next day, a Ukrainian maritime drone exploded into a Russian oil tanker in the Kerch Strait off the eastern coast of Crimea, marking the second strike on a Russian ship at sea in two days.

[Two US Navy sailors arrested on charges of sharing secrets with China](#)

August 4 - Reuters

[United States, China]

On August 3, U.S. officials said two U.S. Navy sailors were arrested because “sensitive military info ended up in the hands of the People’s Republic of China” from their actions. Specifically, one was charged with conspiracy and bribe-taking involving an exchange of photographs and videos of sensitive U.S. military information.

[British Defense Ministry Warns of Potential Naval Blockade in Black Sea](#)

July 26 - USNI News

[Black Sea, Europe]

In late July, a British Ministry of Defense intelligence update warned that Russia could be planning a naval blockade, saying “there is now the potential for the intensity and scope of violence in the area to increase.”

[Cambodian Ream Naval Base Modernized by China Nears Completion: Defense Ministry](#)

July 26 - Voice of America

[South Asia, Africa, China]

Cambodia’s National Defense Ministry has confirmed that the work at the Ream Naval Base will be completed soon, though the inauguration day is unknown. Satellite imagery has tracked “the rapid pace of development of a large Chinese military naval station from August 2021 until July 2023.”

Peer-Reviewed Research on Maritime Issues

- Government Release: U.S. Congressional Research Service - [“China Primer: South China Sea Disputes”](#) [Updated August 21, 2023]
- Government Release: The White House - [“The Spirit of Camp David: Joint Statement of Japan, the Republic of Korea, and the United States”](#) [August 18]
- Government Release: Senate of the Philippines - [“19th Congress, Senate Resolution No. 718 Condemning the Continued Harassment of Filipino Fishermen in the West Philippine Sea”](#) [Adopted August 1]
- Press Release: The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region - [“Transcript of remarks by SEE at media session \(with video\)”](#) [August 22]
- Press Release: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China - [“Wang Yi Talks about the Current Situation in the South China Sea”](#) [August 12] [In Chinese]
- Press Release: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China - [“Foreign Ministry Spokesperson’s Remarks on the Philippine Foreign Ministry’s Statement on the Ren’ai Reef Issue”](#) [August 8] [In Chinese]

- Press Release: Philippine Coast Guard - [“PCG CONDEMNS CCG's DANGEROUS MANEUVERS, ILLEGAL USE OF WATER CANNONS DURING RECENT RESUPPLY MISSION”](#) [August 6]
- Press Release: U.S. Senator for Alaska Lisa Murkowski - [“Murkowski, Sullivan Statements on Chinese and Russian Vessels in U.S. Waters off Coast of Aleutians”](#) [August 5]
- Press Release: U.S. Department of State - [“U.S. Support for the Philippines in the South China Sea”](#) [August 5]
- Press Release: U.S. Department of State - [“Assistant Secretary Daniel J. Kritenbrink and Senior Director Sarah Beran’s Meeting with the People’s Republic of China \(PRC\) Ministry of Foreign Affairs Director General of the North American and Oceanian Affairs Department Yang Tao”](#) [July 31]
- Video: *The Economist* - [“What secret weapon sank Russia’s flagship?”](#) [August 4] [Paywall]
- Video: East-West Center - [“US Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Kritenbrink Speaks on Indo-Pacific Strategy Progress”](#) [July 26]
- Podcast: Center for Strategic & International Studies - [“Pacific Airwaves - Bleu Pacific”](#) [Southeast Asia Radio - August 22]
- Report: UK National Oceanography Centre - [UK Sustained Scientific Observation Priorities \(SSOOP\)](#) [August 2023]
- Opinion: [“America’s convenient territories: How Washington is preparing to duel Beijing in the Pacific”](#) [The China Project - August 25] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“China and the Philippines: Good friends, despite the sea disputes”](#) [The China Project - August 22] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“China hoped Fiji would be a template for the Pacific. Its plan backfired.”](#) [The Washington Post - August 21] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“A new Chinese runway in the Paracels? Probably not”](#) [Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative - August 18]
- Opinion: [“Here’s where water is running out in the world – and why”](#) [The Washington Post - August 16] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“China Is Building A Runway On Its Closest Island Outpost To Vietnam”](#) [The Drive - August 15]
- Opinion: [“The Caspian Sea Is a Sanctions-Busting Paradise”](#) [Foreign Policy - August 14] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“China slams Fukushima water release plans in scorching UN paper. But will Japan be swayed?”](#) [South China Morning Post - August 10] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“We don’t need nuclear cruise missiles at sea”](#) [The Washington Post - August 9] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“Ease Tensions in the South China Sea by Adopting Cooperative Mechanisms”](#) [AsiaGlobal Online - August 9]
- Opinion: [“Why a Stranded WWII Ship Is Inflaming China, Philippine Tensions”](#) [Bloomberg - August 8] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“There Might Be Less Plastic in the Sea Than We Thought. But Read On.”](#) [The New York Times - August 7] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“ASEAN’s first Maritime Outlook highlights region’s blue economy”](#) [The Phnom Penh Post - August 2]
- Opinion: [“Why US national security and its green energy transition depend on mining seabed for rare minerals”](#) [South China Morning Post - August 1] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“Will the Gulf Stream really collapse by 2025?”](#) [BBC - July 26]

- Opinion: [“Western sanctions and distrust draw China, Russia closer in the Arctic”](#) [South China Morning Post - July 25] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“Malabar Exercise Brings Quad Navies Together in Australia”](#) [Observer Research Foundation - August 28]
- Analysis: [“The \(Mostly\) Empty \\$100 Billion City Rising from the Sea”](#) [Bloomberg - August 28] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“Climate Risks Loom Over Panama Canal, a Vital Global Trade Link”](#) [The New York Times - August 28] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“A closer look at the Fukushima water discharge plan”](#) [The Japan Times - August 24] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“The Science Behind Japan's Plan to Empty Nuclear Wastewater Into Pacific”](#) [Bloomberg - August 21] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“The South China Sea talks between ASEAN and China”](#) [International Institute for Strategic Studies - August 21]
- Analysis: [“Oceans absorb 90% of the heat from climate change – here’s why record ocean temps are so harmful”](#) [CNBC - August 17]
- Analysis: [“Water Cannons and Lasers: South China Sea Standoff Around World War II-Era Ship Heats Up”](#) [The Wall Street Journal - August 17] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“Keeping tabs on China’s murky maritime manoeuvres”](#) [The Economist - August 15] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“Tokyo and Canberra Orchestrate Efforts to Multilateralize the South China Sea”](#) [Center for Strategic & International Studies - August 14]
- Analysis: [“Turbulent Waters: How the Black Sea Became a Hot Spot in the War”](#) [The New York Times - August 9] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“China’s exports and foreign direct investment plunge”](#) [The China Project - August 8] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“Asia has 5 of the world’s top 7 most powerful navies. Singapore ranks No 24”](#) [South China Morning Post - August 7] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“What This Year’s ‘Astonishing’ Ocean Heat Means for the Planet”](#) [The New York Times - August 3] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“In Depth: China Pushes Electric Future for Inland Shipping”](#) [Caixin Global - August 2] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“What is AMOC, the heat-distributing Atlantic current?”](#) [The Economist - August 2] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“The rapid loss of Antarctic sea ice brings grim scenarios into view”](#) [The Economist - August 2] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“Sailing Toward Sustainability: Wind-Assisted Ship Propulsion”](#) [Sea Technology - August 2023]
- Analysis: [“A Desperate Push to Save Florida’s Coral: Get It Out of the Sea”](#) [The New York Times - July 31] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“Beijing Is Going Places—and Building Naval Bases”](#) [Foreign Policy - July 27] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“Illegal fishing threatens Guinea-Bissau’s blue economy”](#) [China Dialogue Ocean - July 27]
- Analysis: [“China’s Cambodian navy base project makes US wary, but fears it will host aircraft carrier are unfounded, analysts say”](#) [South China Morning Post - July 27] [Paywall]

Events on the Maritime Domain

- On July 26, 2023, Brookings held an online event on [“US-China proximate military operations in the maritime, air, and space domains.”](#) A full recording is available.
- From August 3-4, 2023, the Navy League of the United States Honolulu Council and its partners held the [“Indo-Pacific Maritime Security Exchange.”](#) This year’s topic was on “Ensuring Free Access to the Maritime Commons.”
- On August 4, 2023, The Nautical Institute held a virtual seminar titled [“Seamanship Webinar- An Essential Skill or a Dying Art?”](#) A full recording is available.
- On August 7, 2023, Atlantic Council held a discussion on [“Leveraging offshore wind to decarbonize East Asia.”](#) A full recording is available.
- On August 15, 2023, the Heritage Foundation hosted a hybrid discussion on [“Chinese Naval Capabilities”](#) which aired on C-SPAN. A full recording is available.
- From August 15-16, 2023, the [“10th Annual Maritime Security West”](#) conference and exhibition was held in San Francisco, California to discuss and explore maritime security.
- From August 16-17, the UK National Oceanography Centre will be hosting the European Molecular Biology Laboratory’s (EMBL) [Traversing European Coastlines \(TREC\)](#) expedition, which will include an interactive workshop programme and an interactive science talk..
- On August 24, 2023, the Ocean Policy Research Institute of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation held [“The 195th Ocean Forum: Current ocean noise issues and guidance – European, American and Asian cases.”](#) The event was held in a hybrid setting, streamed from Japan.
- On September 4, 2023, the *Japan Maritime Daily* newspaper will hold its first global seminar in Singapore, titled [“Future of Shipping towards Net Zero.”](#) with the theme of 'Decarbonization for the Future of Shipping'. The seminar will feature several keynote speeches by and a panel discussion among top leaders in the global maritime shipping industry. Registration is still open.
- On September 6, 2023, the Center for Strategic & International Studies Middle East Program will hold a live webcast on [“Cooling Tensions: Environmental Cooperation in the Gulf.”](#)
- From September 18-19, 2023, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and Sasakawa Peace Foundation, Tokyo, will be holding the [“Ocean Nations: 3rd Annual Indo-Pacific Islands Dialogue”](#) in New York City. Registration is still open.
- From September 25-28, 2023, the IEEE Oceanic Engineering Society and its patrons will hold the [“OCEANS 2023 Gulf Coast”](#) conference “for global maritime professionals to learn, innovate and lead in the protection and utilization of the world’s largest natural resource.”
- From September 27-28, 2023, the Wilson Center, the National Science Foundation, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the US Coast Guard, and Battelle will hold the first-ever conference on Antarctic policy in Washington, DC: [“The Rules-Based Order in Antarctica and Global Challenges.”](#)
- From September 27-29, 2023, SNAME and its partners will hold the [“SNAME Maritime Convention 2023”](#) in San Diego, California with a focus on “Utilizing New Technologies to Solve Complex Maritime Problems.” Registration is still open.

- From November 1-2, 2023, Chatham House will be holding their hybrid [“Climate change 2023”](#) conference at Chatham House, focusing on “multi-stakeholder collaboration for increased ambition, action and impact.” Registration is still open.
- From November 15-16, 2023, DefenceIQ and its partners will hold a forum combining the [“Warships & OPV Latin America Conference”](#) and the [“Caribbean Basin Maritime Security and Coastal Surveillance” \(CABSEC\)](#), both of which focus on addressing regional security challenges such as technological advancements and information sharing. Registration is still open.

Handbill Spotlight

Ocean Temperature

Issue Background

The ocean covers more than 70% of the Earth’s surface and directly affects the earth’s climate, environment, and various ecosystems. Ocean temperature, a term used to refer to both the temperature of the ocean at any depth as well as the temperature of the ocean deep under the surface, plays an integral role in influencing these effects. Under natural conditions, ocean temperature is determined by the amount of heat it absorbs from solar energy, and it receives much more solar energy at the Equator than at the Poles. This difference in water temperature at various ocean depths generates currents that travel thousands of kilometers, ultimately providing favorable conditions for the reproduction of marine life and the stability of coastal ecology.

While stable and balanced ocean temperatures positively contribute to widely concerned issues (i.e., marine life security, global weather patterns and climate dynamics, and climate change), scientific observations and technical data have highlighted a concerning trend: ocean temperature is [rising rapidly year by year](#) with no sign of slowing down. In the short term, ocean temperature has a direct influence on weather phenomena such as hurricanes, cyclones, and El Niño/La Niña events. In the longer term, the rise in ocean temperatures—driven at least in part by human-induced climate change—will lead to coral bleaching, marine habitats destruction, the alteration of ocean currents, and a harsher rise in sea level, with far-reaching consequences for biodiversity, coastal communities, and global climate security.

Natural factors such as volcanic activity and solar variability can also have a short-term influence on ocean temperature. However, the consistent and rapid increase in ocean temperatures observed over the past century is [primarily attributed to human-induced climate change](#) which is mostly caused by greenhouse gas emissions such as carbon dioxide (CO₂) and methane (CH₄). In short, greenhouse gasses trap heat from the sun within the Earth’s atmosphere and lead to an overall warming of the Earth’s surface; more than 70% of which is the ocean. As a critical regulator of the Earth’s temperature, the ocean has absorbed a substantial portion of the excess heat from the increased greenhouse effect.

Recent Events¹

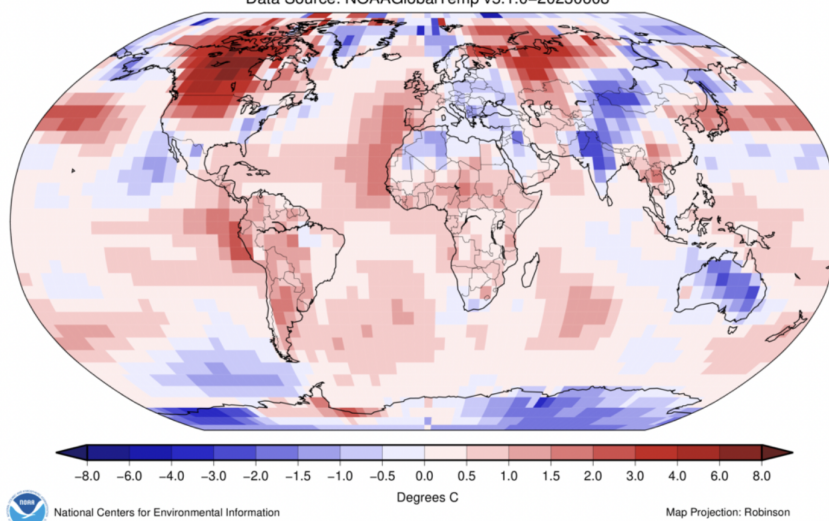
In recent years, there have occasionally been reports of ocean temperatures hitting ‘record highs’, though these reports have become even more commonplace over the last year. Scientists just [announced](#) at the beginning of 2023 that the ocean temperature in 2022 was the highest in history, though this record [was broken](#) again in less than half a year later. The unusually high temperatures started in April and have continued to exceed their normal rates. After breaking the ocean’s [previous high of 21°C \(69.8°F\) set in 2016](#) in April, preliminary data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration shows that the average sea surface temperature in August reached [21.1°C \(69.98°F\)](#). Although 21.1°C does not sound very high to the human ear, considering hot summers which have air temperatures that frequently exceed 40°C (104°F) in many countries, this temperature is excessively high for the ocean and all of its inhabitants. It means that, in some waters, the temperature has far exceeded its typical range and reached levels that are dangerously high in many ways.

People are already being forced to live with the consequences of rising ocean temperatures. For example, the average sea temperature of Japan [reached 30°C in July](#), significantly contributing to the occurrence of record rainfall and the ensuing [deadly flooding](#). Moreover, warm water and moist air not only help to generate stronger rains but also [inject more power](#) into severe tropical storms. The formation of hurricanes (known as typhoons in the Northwest Pacific) requires the evaporation of warm seawater, to start, followed by the interaction between warm air and warm seawater to give it strength. In early August, [Typhoon Doksuri](#) brought unprecedented heavy rain in China and the Philippines, causing dozens of casualties, leaving tens of thousands homeless, and destroying countless buildings. Just a few days later, another [typhoon named Khanun](#) hit Japan and the Korean peninsula, also causing casualties and heavy property damage, as [Hurricane Hilary](#) soon after battered Mexico and Southern California, marking the [first](#) time a tropical storm had landed in the region in [84 years](#).

Aside from weather formations, [El Niño](#)—one of two climate patterns of the Pacific Ocean that can affect weather worldwide—[has returned](#) for the first time in four years in early June. Although scientists find no direction between human-caused global warming and the formation of El Niño, [scientists suggest](#) that a warmer ocean probably fueled the arrival of El Niño. Scientists also say that

Land & Ocean Temperature Departure from Average May 2023
(with respect to a 1991–2020 base period)

Data Source: NOAA GlobalTemp v5.1.0–20230608



¹ Image Source: Land and Ocean Temperature Departure from Average May 2023, [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration \(NOAA\)](#)

the El Niño phenomenon will trigger a series of extreme weather events and will create a vicious circle by further exacerbating global warming.

Keep In Mind

According to the World Meteorological Organization, the ocean is storing [more than 90% of the extra heat](#) trapped to the Earth by humanity's carbon emissions and only allows about 2.3% carbon emissions to warm the atmosphere. On the one hand, this shows that the ocean is of great significance for mitigating global warming. On the other hand, it also means that the ocean is already severely damaged by global warming. The extreme weather and El Niño mentioned above are only some of the events that affect people directly. In fact, rising ocean temperatures are also wreaking havoc in areas that normally receive little attention.

Coral reefs are one of the most affected organisms by rising ocean temperature. Vital hubs of biodiversity, underwater coral reefs foster intricate ecosystems that support countless marine species. [Official research](#) has long detailed how rising ocean temperatures in particular will negatively impact coral reefs. Elevated ocean temperatures can lead to coral bleaching; a phenomenon where corals expel the symbiotic algae that provide them with essential nutrients and vibrant colors. Meanwhile, warmer oceans can affect corals' immune systems by "stressing" them, and higher temperatures also increase the reproduction of pathogens such as fungi and bacteria that can cause coral disease. As of mid-August, more than ten Caribbean and Eastern Tropical Pacific countries and regions—including the United States, Puerto Rico, Mexico (both sides of the Yucatan), and Panama—are [reporting](#) severe coral bleaching along their coasts as locals battle to combat sudden spikes in ocean temperature. Australia's Great Barrier Reef, still recovering from massive bleaching in 2022, is also being [carefully monitored](#) due to the emerging El Niño pattern.

Besides coral reefs, there are more species of marine plants and animals that rely on specific temperature ranges to thrive. A healthy ocean temperature will help to ensure the survival of various species and maintain the vitality of the ocean. While this article primarily addresses the ecological impacts of increasing ocean temperatures, stable ocean conditions contribute to bolstering tourism and fisheries as well, with some observers fearing changes in fish populations and [migration patterns](#). Consequently, economic factors also underscore the importance of monitoring and stabilizing ocean temperatures.

Lastly, it is also important to notice that a warming ocean can trigger feedback loops that amplify the process. For example, certain types of phytoplankton will die due to ocean temperature rise, but they play a crucial role in absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Their reduction will contribute to greenhouse gas emissions which, in turn, accelerates ocean warming. This interconnected cycle that builds upon itself suggests that it is necessary to not only slow down the acceleration of rising ocean temperature but also actively work to reverse the current problems.

This issue's Spotlight was written by Zhangchen Wang, ICAS Blue Carbon & Climate Change Program Research Assistant Intern

ICAS Maritime Affairs Program: New and Upcoming

– Upcoming ICAS Annual Conference –

Stay Tuned for Information Regarding the ICAS 2023 Annual Conference!

On October 17, 2023, ICAS will be holding its 2023 Annual Conference out of Washington, DC! This year, our expert panelists and keynote dialogue participants will focus on “Assessing Challenges and Exploring Prospects for U.S.-China Relations in 2024.”

Subscribe to our newsletters and follow us on social media to stay informed about speakers, co-hosts, full agenda and how to reserve your spot for this in-person conference.

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– Expert Voices Initiative Interview –

Wang Sheng on “Blue Carbon Development in China”

August 2023



On August 3, 2023, the Institute for China-America Studies (ICAS) Expert Voices Initiative (EVI) conducted an interview with **Mr. Wang Sheng**, President of the National Institute for South China Sea Studies (NISCS) to discuss “Blue Carbon Development in China.” The interview was recorded in-person at the NISCS Office in Hainan, China, and hosted by **Zhangchen Wang**, ICAS Blue Carbon and Climate Change (BCCC) Program Research Assistant.

During the forty minute interview, the host asked Mr. Wang for his views and opinions about the development of blue carbon in China, China's advantages and challenges in developing blue carbon, the blue carbon ecosystem's "spillover effects," and the international cooperation in blue carbon. Wang expounded his views on these widely concerned issues in detail. Wang's answer helped audiences to gain a deeper understanding of the status quo China's blue carbon protection and China's blue carbon policies. Then the host asked Wang about his views on blue carbon international cooperation. As an advocate of blue carbon international cooperation, Wang emphasized that international cooperation can bring common benefits to China and its Southeast Asian neighbors, and believes that China-US blue carbon cooperation is of great significance. He also emphasized that the establishment of international standards for blue carbon protection will boost international cooperation.

Watch the Discussion: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Geb5zyLT9sw>

About the ICAS Expert Voices Initiative: <https://chinaus-icas.org/media/expert-voices-initiatives/>

More About Wang Sheng: <http://en.nanhai.org.cn/index/survey/leadership/id/9597/j/4.html>

— MAP Academic Engagement —

Dr. Nong Hong speaks at the Bai Xian Asia Institute
Summer Program 2023
Friday, August 4, 2023

On August 4, 2023, ICAS Executive Director Dr. Nong Hong participated in the Bai Xian Asia Institute Summer Program 2023, which was co-hosted with Waseda University. Dr. Hong spoke on "Pressing issues related to maritime security in East Asia" and "Recent Sino-US relation and its impact on East Asia."

About the BXA Summer Program 2023

From August 4-18, approximately 70 Bai Xian Scholars and Alumni from universities across East Asia gathered together and explored the theme "Transformation of Globalization," examining how globalization has shifted and evolved over the past few years against a backdrop of an ever-changing global landscape.

Learn more about the event and the other speakers:

<https://chinaus-icas.org/event/dr-nong-hong-speaks-at-the-bai-xian-asia-institute-summer-program-2023/>

The poster features a teal background with a white icon of a person with a lightbulb above their head. The text is in white and black. It includes the event title, date, location, and a list of speakers with their photos and titles.

Key Issues/ Hot Topics BAI XIAN SUMMER PROGRAM

PANEL ON EAST ASIA Building 3 - 801 **Aug. 4 (Fri)**

Examining the Present and Future State of East Asia's Social Issues

As East Asia enters the post-COVID era, countries and territories find themselves in an ever-evolving landscape that looks markedly different from the one they left in 2019. Unavoidable effects of the pandemic, combined with existing social conditions such as low fertility, aging populations, and changing family structures and formation patterns, are expected to present a series of imminent, multifaceted challenges to East Asian nations. The panel discussion aims to examine these challenges against the current landscape; compare prevailing geo-political, economic, social issues in China, Japan, and South Korea; and consider the impact these issues may have on the future of East Asia.

Moderator **Panelists**

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|  Prof. Yoshiko NAKANO Professor, International Digital Design and Management Tokyo University of Science |  Prof. KOO Min Gyo Professor, Public Administration, Seoul National University |  Dr. HONG Nong Executive Director & Senior Fellow Institute for China-America Studies |  Prof. Tomonori ITO Professor, Institute for Business and Finance Waseda University |
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