THIS REPORT EXPLORES CURRENT SHIPPING IN THE ARCTIC

But, where is the Arctic?

Neither PAME nor the Arctic Council have established a single use definition of the Arctic

This report will use the area defined by the Polar Code.
The International Code for Ships Operating in Polar Waters (the Polar Code) defines the Arctic as the area in the figure.

Most ships that operate in this area must comply with the Polar Code.
The Polar Code covers the full range of design, construction, equipment, operational, training, search and rescue and environmental protection matters relevant to ships operating in the inhospitable waters of the Arctic.
There are many ways to measure the volume of shipping in a given geographic area.

One way is to count the number of unique ships in a specific area.

This method counts each ship only once even if it enters the geographic area multiple times.
Number of unique ships entering the IMO Arctic Polar Code area in September in each year from 2013-2019. Statistics from ASTD.
Ship tracks of all ships of all ship types in September 2019.
Shipping in the Arctic has increased in recent years.

Unique ships entering the Polar Code area 2013 and 2019:

- 2013: 1,298 ships
- 2019: 1,628 ships

Increase of 25% over 6 years.
A majority of these vessels are fishing vessels

In 2019 of all ships that entered the Polar Code area 41% were fishing vessels
ARCTIC POLAR CODE AREA 2018

UNIQUE SHIPS – CATEGORIZED BY SHIP TYPE
ARCTIC POLAR CODE AREA 2019

UNIQUE SHIPS – CATEGORIZED BY SHIP TYPE

- Container ships: 6
- Ro-Ro cargo ships: 6
- Other service offshore vessels: 10
- Passenger ships: 17
- Gas tankers: 24
- Crude oil tankers: 26
- Offshore supply ships: 45
- Oil producttankers: 55
- Chemical tankers: 60
- Cruise ships: 73
- Refrigerated cargo ships: 81
- Bulk carriers: 106
- General cargo ships: 174
- Other activities: 274
- Fishing vessels: 671
FISHING VESSELS ARE DOMINANT

SHIP TYPES THAT FALL WITHIN “OTHER ACTIVITIES” INCLUDE ICEBREAKERS AND RESEARCH VESSELS

Bar chart showing the distribution of different types of ships, with Fishing vessels having the highest count of 671.
ANOTHER WAY TO MEASURE THE INCREASE IN ARCTIC SHIPPING IS “DISTANCE SAILED”

Distance sailed is the aggregated nautical miles vessels traveled in a certain period of time in a certain area.

75% The total distance sailed by all vessels increased by 75% in the Arctic Polar Code area from 2013 to 2019.
DISTANCE SAILED
ARCTIC POLAR CODE AREA
INCREASE FROM 2013 - 2019

75% INCREASE

2013: 6.1 million
2014: 7.2 million (18% increase)
2015: 7.8 million (9% increase)
2016: 9 million (14% increase)
2017: 9.4 million (5% increase)
2018: 9.6 million (1% increase)
2019: 10.7 million (12% increase)
The total 2013 distance sailed by all vessels was approximately 6.51 million nautical miles.

In 2019, the total aggregated distance sailed had risen to over 9.5 million nautical miles.

As with unique ships - fishing vessels are dominant.
THE INCREASE IN SHIPPING COINCIDES WITH DEMINISHING SEA ICE IN THE ARCTIC

DEMINISHING SEA ICE
MEDIAN ICE EDGE 1981-2010

1999 6.1 million sq km
2009 5.3 million sq km
2019 4.3 million sq km

The images show the month of September each year. Images from the National and Snow Ice Data Center.
This graph from the U.S. National Snow And Ice Data Center (NSIDC) shows the Arctic sea ice extent in September.

The graph shows that over the last 10 years, average Arctic sea ice extent is decreasing.
NATURAL RESOURCE EXTRACTION IS ONE ACTIVITY CONTRIBUTING TO AN INCREASE IN ARCTIC SHIPPING

The following example shows an area within the Arctic Polar Code Area - experiencing increased activity from iron ore extraction.
Bulk carriers transport cargoes in large quantities, like food grains, ores, coal, and cement.

BULK CARRIER TRAFFIC to and from the Mary River Mine

Greenland

2013 2019
BULK CARRIER TRAFFIC IN 2013 IN THE POLAR CODE AREA WAS VERY LOW. BY 2019, IT HAD INCREASED SUBSTANTIALLY.

In 2014, one of the most northern mines in the world opened. It is among the richest iron ore deposits ever discovered. The Mary River Project involves the seasonal shipping of 3,5 million tonnes of iron ore during open water season.
BULK CARRIERS IN THE ARCTIC POLAR CODE AREA 2013-2019

The distance sailed by **bulk carriers** in the Arctic Polar Code area has risen **160%** between 2013 and 2019.
ALL OTHER VESSEL TYPES SHOW A SIMILAR UPWARD TREND

PAME WILL CONTINUE TO MONITOR TRENDS WITH ASTD

THE DATA CAN SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF RECOMMENDATIONS TO ENHANCE ARCTIC MARINE SAFETY AND SUPPORT PROTECTION OF PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT
ABOUT THIS REPORT

This is the first report generated by PAME’s Arctic Ship Status Report (ASSR) Project. The goal of the ASSR Project is to use PAME’s Arctic Ship Traffic Data (ASTD) System to highlight topical issues related to shipping in the Arctic. Launched in 2019, the ASTD System is PAME’s database for Arctic shipping activities.

More on www.astd.is.

All use of this report is allowed. Please cite PAME – Arctic Shipping Status Report #1 and provide a link to this report.

The project gratefully acknowledges funding from the Nordic Council of Ministers.

Sources:
• ASTD – Arctic Ship Traffic Data
• IMO: Shipping in polar waters
• National Snow and Ice Data Center (NSIDC) – Sea Ice
• Baffinland: Mary River Mine