



Our Changing Climate

Dwindling Larsen Ice Shelf

Over the last five years, the Larsen Ice Shelf has lost nearly 6 000 km² (2 317 square miles) of ice. The ice loss is attributed to a strong climate warming trend in the region that since the late 1940s, has been warming approximately ½ degree Celsius per decade. The warmer air and ocean temperatures not only melt the ice shelf, but actually cause it to disintegrate. In comparison to iceberg calving, ice shelf disintegration is a more recently

observed phenomenon where an ice shelf fragments into small pieces in a relatively shorter period of time. In 1995 and 2002 two large sections of the Larsen Ice Shelf disintegrated while a third section remained intact. However signs of its disintegration are starting to become visible in early 2006. These images show the breaking off—calving—of a new iceberg, A54 (near the bottom of the image) from the third section.