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# Polar ice caps melting faster

Jonathan Leake, Environment Editor

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THE ice caps are melting so fast that the world's oceans are rising more than twice as fast as they were in the 1970s, scientists have found.

They have used satellites to track how the oceans are responding as billions of gallons of water reach them from melting ice sheets and glaciers.

The effect is compounded by thermal expansion, in which water expands as it warms, according to the study by Anny Cazenave of the National Centre for Space Studies in France.

These findings come at the same time as a warning from an American academic whose research suggests Labour's policies to cut carbon emissions 80% by 2050 are doomed.

Cazenave's data show that in the past 15 years sea levels have been rising at 3.4mm a year, much faster than the average 1.7mm recorded by tidal gauges over the past 50 years.

Cazenave said: "This rate, observed since the early 1990s, could reflect an acceleration linked to global warming."

Met Office figures suggest sea levels in the Thames could rise 8in-35in by 2100 and possibly by as much as 6ft 6in.

Cazenave's work, just published, will be presented at this week's American Association for the Advancement of Science conference in Chicago.

Its release will coincide with a lecture in Britain by Professor Roger Pielke, of the University of Colorado, in which he implies that the UK's emission target is unachievable for population and economic reasons.

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