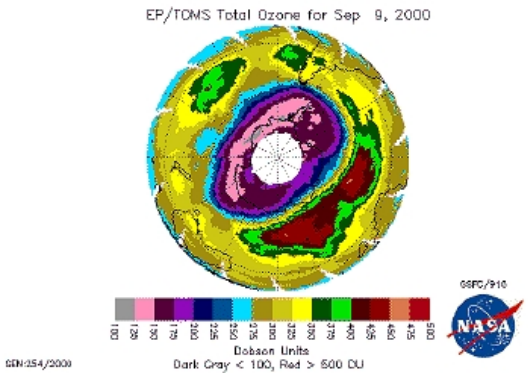
Largest-Ever Antarctic Ozone Hole



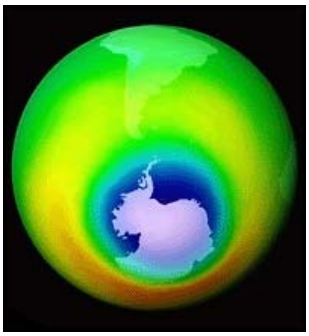
September 2000 Antarctic ozone depletion rates are unprecedented.
NASA's Total Ozone Mapping Spectrometer (TOMS) data shows huge white hole over the South Pole devoid of ozone and severe thinning over the entire Antarctic continent and the tip of South America.
Graphic courtesy NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, Maryland.

Earthfiles, news category.

September 10, 2000 Greenbelt, Maryland - The ozone hole over the Antarctic is the biggest it's ever been and it's only the beginning of September. Usually Antarctic ozone depletion starts in July during the South Pole's winter. That's when extremely cold air intensifies ozone destruction, reaching a peak by the end of September and into October. But this year, NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland reports that already the ozone hole is larger than all of the Antarctic and extends over the southern tip of South America. That's 11 million square miles and breaks all previous records. A spokesman at the United Nations World Meteorological Observation agency in Geneva, Switzerland told reporters: "It is remarkable to find these low values so early in September, perhaps one or two weeks earlier than in any previous year."

NASA scientist, Paul Newman, said, "We're perhaps beginning to see some evidence of climate change in the stratosphere. Maybe we have to be a little more serious about looking at this problem of the interaction of global warming and stratosphere cooling and ozone loss." Increased cooling in the earth's stratosphere has been linked to the global warming blanket of carbon dioxide in the lower atmosphere which traps heat at the surface. Will the huge Antarctic ozone hole continue to widen through September? No one knows. But all people and animals now living beneath that hole without ozone protection face the risk of increased skin cancers and eye damage. And scientists will be monitoring the Arctic this winter and spring for evidence of an enlarging ozone hole over the North Pole which could affect the Northern Hemisphere.

More Information:



This is an October 1999 graphic of the TOMS data
showing a smaller hole than September 2000 when ozone depletion rates are unprecedented.
Graphic courtesy NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, Maryland.

Websites:

http://jwocky.gsfc.nasa.gov/TOMSmain.html

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