

## ***Interactive comment on “Recent extreme light sea ice years in the Canadian Arctic Archipelago: 2011 and 2012 eclipse 1998 and 2007” by S. E. L. Howell et al.***

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This manuscript describes the sea ice conditions in the Canadian Arctic Archipelago (CAA) and in particular the more recent extreme low years of 2011 and 2012. Overall, I found this manuscript to be well-written and I believe would be of interest to the readers of The Cryosphere. The datasets used were very comprehensive and a thoughtful analysis was applied. I have relatively minor suggestions that I hope would be helpful to the authors in completing their story.

1. This is nit-picking a bit, but I don't like the use of the words exceeded and eclipsed when talking about levels in the abstract and text. Perhaps instead, the authors could

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say, instead: “Remarkably low mean September sea ice area . . . , a record breaking level that was nearly exceeded in 2012 . . . ” and “These exceptionally low values eclipsed . . . ” To me when one uses the terms “values eclipsed” and “level exceeded” this implies higher instead of lower numbers. I just felt that it should be made clear that these were lower.

2. I found figure 1 to be too crowded with the three panels. I would recommend combining Fig 1c and Figure 7 into a new Figure 2. One could even imagine a correlation between these two curves as this is part of the story.

3. The authors might also consider including the ice age timeseries from Maslanik et al. 2011 or Rigor et al. 2004. While there is a discussion of MYI versus FYI within the Archipelago it would be interesting to see a time series of this from the Arctic Ocean near the inflows into the CAA.

4. The authors reference Holland et al. 2006, but this is not in the list of references.

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