

We would like to express our gratitude to Ref. #1 for the thorough review. We will give a detailed response later. At this point, we just want to comment on two main points:

1. The reviewer states that we neglect oceanic influences. As the title suggests (and as we also mention in the text), our study focusses on the *atmospheric* influences on the sea ice behaviour. The *oceanic* influences are not a part of our study. However, in the discussion we mention that oceanic influences, namely on longer time scales, cannot be neglected.

2. The reviewer criticizes our study as “descriptive” and asks for an “objective” analysis.

Although our study is mainly qualitative (as stated in the discussion), it is clearly more than just “descriptive”. It is a non-quantitative, but still objective analysis of the contribution of different areas to the total ice loss and investigates the prevailing synoptic situations associated with the sea ice retreat. There are clear physical relationships between the atmospheric flow patterns and the ice behaviour, which can explain to a large amount the atmospheric influence on the ice melt. A description would not contain any explanation and interrelations.

Naturally, we are aware of the fact that the atmosphere-ice-ocean system is highly complex and we agree that further, quantitative (modelling) studies would be necessary to fully understand the processes involved, both in the atmosphere and in the ocean. However, this was not the intention of our study.