

Year of Polar Prediction – Few months left until the YOPP Southern Hemisphere (YOPP-SH)  
Special Observing Period Commences

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The core phase of the Year of Polar Prediction (YOPP) has been officially launched in May 2017 by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). From mid-2017 to mid-2019, scientists and operational forecasting centers worldwide are working together to observe, model, and improve forecasts of the polar weather and climate systems. This international effort aims to close gaps in polar forecasting capacity. Improved forecasts of weather and sea-ice conditions in polar regions are also expected to result in better weather and longer-range prediction at lower latitudes where most people live. The WMO's Information System will house the majority of the data collected across the initiative, making them available for operational forecasting centres to feed into their forecasting systems in real-time. Social scientists will assess the practical needs of stakeholders from the transport, shipping, and tourism sectors and how better polar forecasts could affect the outcomes of socio-economic decision-making.

During four Special Observing Periods in the Arctic and Antarctic, routine observations will be enhanced, for example by additional radiosonde launches and extra buoy deployments. In the Southern Hemisphere, the YOPP Special Observing Period is scheduled from 16 November 2018 to 15 March 2019. Scientists will intensely observe the Antarctic weather and sea-ice system as part of their coordinated field campaigns at Antarctic stations and in the Southern Ocean. Coordinated ship cruises, satellite observations, and newly installed automatic weather stations will provide additional insights into the processes governing the Antarctic climate and related impacts on global weather systems. Experience and know-how already gained during two earlier Arctic Special Observing Periods in winter and summer 2018 will be beneficial to prepare for the upcoming YOPP Special Observing Period in the Southern Hemisphere.