The Hunt for Tabular Icebergs using Weather Satellites

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How do Icebergs form?

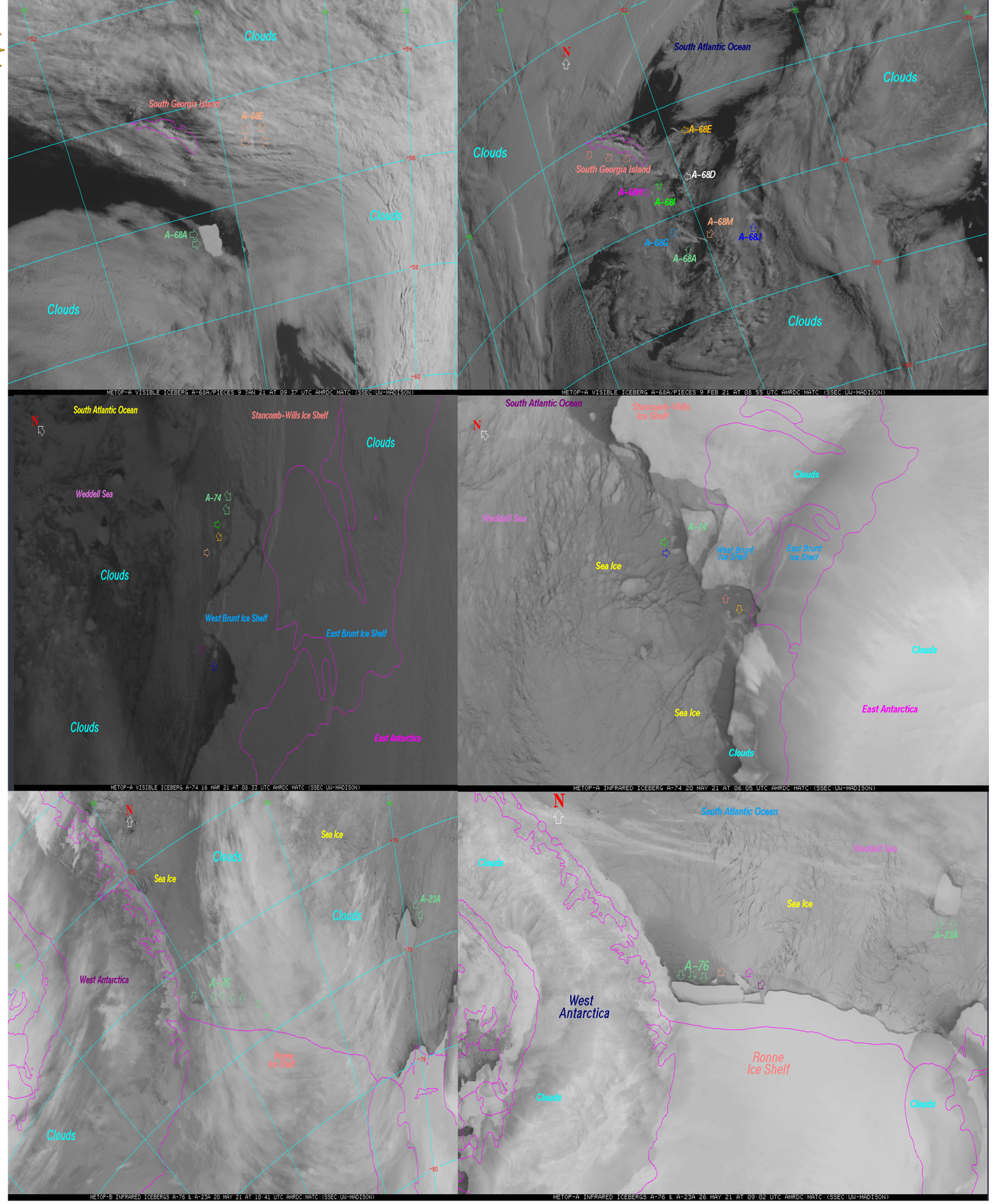
Icebergs form by different processes. When they calve off an ice sheet, glacier, or larger icebergs, tabular icebergs are identified/labeled and tracked.

How are Icebergs officially named?

Large tabular icebergs are officially named through the United States National Ice Center. They are given each name by their initial location in the Antarctic, as well as the number of other iceberg's that are being tracked. For instance, A-74 was given the character A, as it sits in the Weddell Sea between 0 – 90 W. It was given the digit 74 as it is the 74th iceberg being tracked by the National Ice Center.

Why is tracking Icebergs important?

All icebergs have the potential to cause damage. Smaller icebergs can cause serious damage to the hull of a ship, causing them to sink or capsize, as they can go undetected. Tabular icebergs, being tracked here, can drift into shipping lanes. Further, large tabular icebergs can cause harm to the marine life that lives on the sea floor.



The Changing Antarctic

As climate change continues to affect every ecosystem in the world differently, it's important to monitor ice not only when it is connected to a shelf, but when it calves as well. By monitoring icebergs, we can learn about and monitor ocean currents, melt patterns, and differences in our energy budget.

Recent News

Recently, two major calving events have garnered attention from many media outlets. A-74 was a large calving event that took place off the Western portion of the Brunt Ice Shelf. Although it is a massive 1,270 square kilometers, the more recent calving of A-76 was larger. A-76 is the largest iceberg in current existence. A handful of media outlets have unfortunately deemed A-76 to be the largest iceberg ever. This is untrue, as A-76 is 4,320 square kilometers and B-15 in March of 2000 calved at 11,000 square kilometers.

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