

Oil Rigs Leave Russia's Arctic Waters As Drilling Season Winds Down

This year, three rigs have drilled in the Kara Sea and the Gulf of Ob.

By [The Barents Observer](#)

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Rosmorport

Ice covers Russia's Arctic waters once more, and in a few weeks the vast region will become inaccessible to everyone without a powerful icebreaker. The three oil rigs that have been operating in the area for most of the summer and fall are now either out of the region or closed down for the winter season.

The Nan Hai Ba Hao rig, owned and operated by the China Oilfield Service, in mid-October completed its drilling at the Leningradskoye gas field in the Kara Sea. On Oct. 24 it arrived in Murmansk and now is being transported out of the region by the heavy lift ship Red Zed 1, according to data from MarineTraffic service.

It is the third year in a row that the Chinese oil rig has drilled in Russian Arctic waters. In 2017,

it drilled at the Leningradskoye field and in 2018 at the Rusanovskoye field. As a result of the work, more than 1.2 trillion cubic meters of natural gas were discovered.

Along with the Chinese, Russian oilmen drilled with the rig Arcticheskaya at the nearby Skuratovskoye field.

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The Arcticheskaya has returned to its home port of Murmansk and Gazprom Fleet, the rig owner, confirms in its corporate newspaper that the drilling was successfully completed.

Several Norwegian support ships, including the Sea Spear, the Sea Surfer and the Siem Emerald, accompanied the Nan Hai Ba Hao and the Arcticheskaya all summer.

Both the Leningradskoye and Skuratovskoye fields are owned by the state natural gas company Gazprom.

This summer, drilling was also carried out in the Gulf of Ob, where the Amazon rig operated at the Geophysical field. The drilling rig, owned by Gazprom Fleet, has been located in a remote shallow bay in the past years and in 2018 drilled wells at the Severo-Obkoye field for Novatek, a natural gas company. This year's drilling was also conducted for Novatek.

The Geofysicheskoye is located partly on land on the Gydan Peninsula, partly offshore in the Gulf of Ob. It is located about 160 kilometers south of Sabetta, the new terminal in Yamal.

In 2011, Novatek obtained a license for the Geofysicheskoye, as well as three other local licenses: the Utrenneye, Severo-Obkoye and the Vostochno-Tambeyskoye. These licenses are now a key to Novatek's rapid expansion in the Arctic and will become a resource base for the Arctic LNG 1 and Arctic LNG 3 projects.

Novatek has earlier estimated the total resource potential of the Geofysicheskoye and Utrenneye field to 978 billion cubic meters of natural gas. The fields are also believed to contain major volumes of gas condensate and oil.

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