

Smart Stuff

with Twig Walkingstick

Q. Dear Twig: 'Arctic ice' this, 'Arctic ice' that. What's going on with the ice in Antarctica?

A. In the past 10 years, the **East Antarctic ice sheet**, one of Antarctica's two main ice sheets, has stayed about the same in size. (The East sheet rests on land.)

But the **West Antarctic ice sheet**, the other big one, has been losing ice and losing it faster and faster. (The bed of the West sheet rests well below sea level.)

A new study says in the past 10 years, overall Antarctic ice loss has risen by 75 percent.

Why care? Because too much melting, among other things, will make the oceans go up. The homes and cities of millions of people — those who live in **low coastal areas** — could flood.

"Large uncertainties [things we don't know for sure yet] remain in predicting Antarctica's future contribution to sea level rise," said the leader of the study, a NASA scientist named Eric

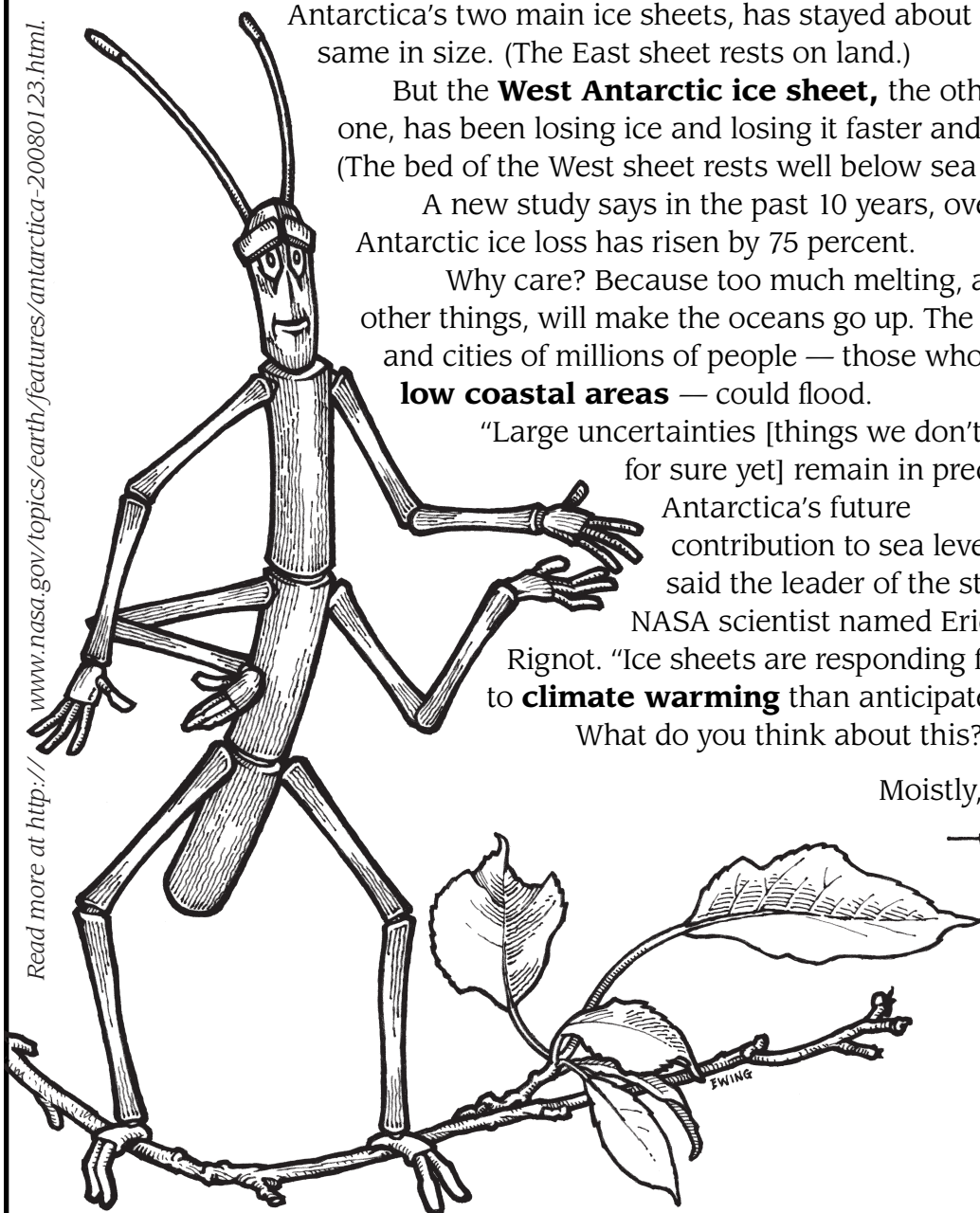
Rignot. "Ice sheets are responding faster to **climate warming** than anticipated."

What do you think about this?

Moistly,

Twig

Read more at <http://www.nasa.gov/topics/earth/features/antarctica-20080123.html>.



From your scientific friends at The Ohio State University — specifically, the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center (www.oardc.ohio-state.edu) and OSU Extension (extension.osu.edu).



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Notes: The study was done by NASA and university scientists. It appears in the February 2008 issue of the journal *Nature GeoScience*. The link is to a NASA story about the study. Additional sources included "Escalating Ice Loss Found in Antarctica," *Washington Post*, Jan. 14, 2008, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/01/13/AR2008011302753.html?hpid=topnews>; an online discussion about the *Washington Post* story at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/discussion/2008/01/13/DI2008011301886.html>; and "Antarctica's Ice Melting Faster" in the newspaper *The Australian*, Jan. 15, 2008, <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,23053212-11949,00.html>.

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