

stagnant waters. The Baltic Sea is also bordered by Germany, Poland, Russia, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Finland. Von Storch said the already low salinity meant the Baltic was in many ways a 1,600 km (1,000 mile) long estuary, gathering rivers such as the Torne, Vistula and Oder, rather than a sea. Still, a projected rise in temperatures may bring benefits by making Russian and Finnish ports less clogged by ice in winter. Warmer seas could threaten some species of seal which depend on ice but help species such as porpoises. And warmer temperatures could extend the range and growing seasons for pine and birch forests, especially in the north. The scientists said global warming would mean more snow and rain in the region in winter, with drier summers in the south. More precipitation would bring more fresh water from rivers into the sea, formed about 10,000 years ago after the last Ice Age. But there were many uncertainties. The Baltic gets saltier in a complex exchange when storms blow North Sea waters into the Baltic, immediately after winds in the opposite direction have driven brackish waters out. "We have no idea as to whether these conditions will become more or less frequent with climate change