Antarctic once warm and inviting

Ice core evidence being studied by an international team of scientists shows Antarctica has a history of climate change

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Scientists say new evidence shows there is a history of major climate fluctuations at the South Pole.

It is the first release of findings from scientists who took samples from Antarctica using the giant Christchurch-made drilling machine Andrill this summer.

A global fraternity spent the time gathering core samples from the ice and below the Ross Sea - they have taken them away to assess climate variations over time.

Results released by Northern Illinois University show climate fluctuations over the past five million years have been extreme.

They say the Ross Ice Shelf, a floating slab of ice the size of France, has changed in size dramatically, and perhaps even disappeared completely for periods of time.

The researchers says long cores of sedimentary rocks they recovered from below the bed of the Ross Sea allow them to peer into the past and into a time when the Antarctic was a warmer, more inviting place.
The information is being used by scientists to try to piece together a more accurate picture of long term trends.

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