

Shrinking glaciers threaten China

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China's glaciers in western Xinjiang Uygur region are shrinking alarmingly due to global and regional warming, posing a threat to the oases in the area.

China Daily reported Friday scientists have found Glacier No. 1, the most famous in the region at the headwaters of the Urumqi River in the Tianshan Mountains near Tibet, has shrunk by 14 percent in four decades.

Glacier No. 1 is one many that makes China the fourth country in the world -- after Canada, the United States and Russia -- in terms of area and ice volume of glaciers, the report said.

"Because of the continuous rise in temperature globally and in the western part of the country, the trend of glaciers retreating on a large scale will be irreversible," said a survey by the Chinese Academy of Sciences' arid regions environment and engineering research institute.

Scientists said glaciers in the western part of China have shrunk by an average of 4.5 percent in four decades.

The China Daily report said glaciers feed 25.4 percent of Xinjiang's rivers, 8.6 percent of Tibet's rivers and 3.6 percent of Gansu's rivers.

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