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From: University of Tromso via ScienceDaily
Published August 31, 2016 04:12 PM

Sediments control methane release to the ocean

Methane is stored under the sea floor, concentrated in form of hydrates, crystalline ice structures that stay stable under high pressure and in low temperatures. Several studies suggest that as the ocean warms, the hydrates might melt and potentially release methane into the ocean waters and atmosphere.

Several studies suggest that as the ocean warms, the hydrates might melt and potentially release methane into the ocean waters and atmosphere. This potent climate gas is profusely leaking from the seafloor in an area offshore western Svalbard, which is close to the gas hydrate stability zone.

There, scientists have discovered over 250 methane flares in water depths from 90 to 240 meters.

"Previous studies indicate that these seeps could be linked to gas hydrate dissociations. We suspected that dissociation of gas hydrate is not the primary control on seafloor methane seepage. We suggest that there is a strong lithological control on methane seepage." says Dr. Giuliana Panieri, scientist at CAGE.

Lithology is physical characteristics of a given geological feature, such as texture, composition or size of the grains in a sediment.

Giuliana Panieri is the first author of a study published in *Geochemistry, Geophysics, Geosystems*. The study examines geochemistry of foraminifera and other proxies as a record of methane seepage in an area of ongoing ocean warming.

Continue reading at [ScienceDaily](https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2016/08/160831102853.htm) <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2016/08/160831102853.htm>

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