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Perito Moreno Glacier

Straddling the border between Argentina and Chile near the tip of South America lie the Southern Patagonia Ice Fields, 220 miles of ancient ice nestled within the Andes mountain range.

Pictured here is the terminus of Perito Moreno Glacier, one of the largest glaciers in the region. At the point where Perito Moreno connects with the main ice field, it's elevation is a staggering 6,825' above sea level. By the time it terminates in Lago Argentino it's elevation has dropped to below 600'.

The bodies of water above and to the right of Perito Moreno in this image are all part of Lago Argentino. Cut off from each other by the glacier's tongue, the water is unable to circulate. The southern arm of the lake, known as Brazo Rico, catches most of the muddy runoff, causing it to become cloudy.

As you might expect, global warming is a significant threat to the Patagonian Ice Fields. Scientists believe the steady increase in the melt rate in recent times accounts for about 2% of the total rise in sea level world wide.