

A 60-year atmospheric nitrate isotope record from the SE-Dome ice core

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Stable isotopes of atmospheric nitrate (NO_3^-) are valuable tools for tracing nitrogen sources and processes; however, their signals in ice core records are often disrupted by post-depositional processes. The ice core from the southeastern Dome (SE-Dome) in Greenland is a potential record of variations in atmospheric chemistry that has experienced less post-depositional effects owing to a high accumulation rate ($\sim 1 \text{ m w e a}^{-1}$). Herein, we report 60-year (1959–2014) $\delta^{15}\text{N}(\text{NO}_3^-)$ and $\Delta^{17}\text{O}(\text{NO}_3^-)$ records from the SE-Dome ice core. $\delta^{15}\text{N}(\text{NO}_3^-)$ decreased from 1960 to 1974 and exhibited clear seasonal changes (high in summer and low in winter). $\Delta^{17}\text{O}(\text{NO}_3^-)$ did not exhibit any significant long-term trends, but did contain seasonal patterns. The mass-weighted annual average of $\delta^{15}\text{N}(\text{NO}_3^-)$ values in the SE-Dome core were about 4 ‰ lower than those in the Greenland Summit ice core between 1959–2006. The Transfer of Atmospheric Nitrate Stable Isotopes to the Snow (TRANSITS) model under SE-Dome conditions showed that the NO_3^- concentration and its isotopic composition were less affected by post-depositional alteration at SE-Dome compared to Summit, with estimated changes in archived NO_3^- of only 0.4 ‰ in $\delta^{15}\text{N}(\text{NO}_3^-)$ and -0.2 ‰ in $\Delta^{17}\text{O}(\text{NO}_3^-)$ from the initial deposition. Although differences in the source of NO_3^- at the two sites cannot be entirely ruled out, the lower $\delta^{15}\text{N}(\text{NO}_3^-)$ values observed at the SE-Dome compared to Summit were likely attributed to reduced post-depositional alteration. Therefore, the SE-Dome ice core NO_3^- record offers a precise reconstruction of NO_x emissions and atmospheric oxidation chemistry during transport, preserving records from both North America and Western Europe, thereby providing reliable insight into atmospheric nitrogen cycling.