



Summer is research season at UAA

Posted by UAAblog

Posted: June 27, 2013 - 5:09 pm



Toolik Lake Field Notes: This research site is used by scientists from around the world doing arctic work. This UAA science blog tells stories about some of the research there.

Writer **Jamie Gonzales** enjoyed the rare opportunity to visit **Toolik Lake Field Station** in early June. She accompanied a UAA team researching the circadian rhythm cycles of arctic ground squirrels.



Team Squirrel: Brian Barnes, Loren Buck and Cory Williams, co-principal investigators on Team Squirrel.

Her reports make for an engaging glimpse into the serious work at Toolik, told with an eye toward the curious armchair scientist in us all. Find her posts here, at **Field Notes: A trip to the Arctic with Team Squirrel**.

A sample:

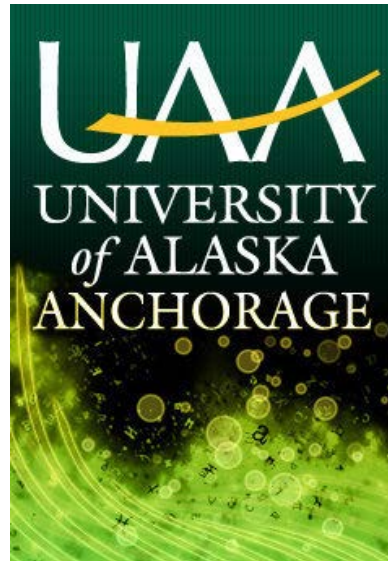
Here's what I've learned in just four days of Arctic tromping and sharing close quarters with scientists from around the world studying the science of the Arctic:

An arctic ground squirrel only needs to breathe about once a minute during hibernation;

Ground squirrels also don't have the same tissue-damaging inflammatory response to injury that humans experience, so they can snap back from a brain injury or an extended heart stoppage;

An arctic bumblebee can thermoregulate, warming itself internally to temperatures comparable to what you and I enjoy as mammals;

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Contact Kathleen McCoy at kmccoy5@uaa.alaska.edu

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Deep in the tundra permafrost are captive molecules of carbon that are hundreds, maybe thousands of years old, but shifting temperatures are causing some permafrost to thaw, releasing that ancient carbon back into the air; There is a caterpillar here in the Arctic that, if conditions are not right for metamorphosis into a moth, can remain in that pupa stage for up to 14 years; And when bears hibernate, they don't lose any bone or muscle mass—it's almost like they're hitting the gym every day, even though they're curled up in their dens.

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