PALMER STATION MONTHLY SCIENCE REPORT

October 2024

The RVIB NATHIEL B. PALMER tied up to the Palmer pier during the Science Opening cruise port call.
Image credit: Dr. Natasja van Gestel

NEWS FROM THE LAB
Hannah James, Summer Lab Supervisor

The 2024-2025 Palmer summer science season has officially begun! On October 7th, the RVIB NATHANIEL B. PALMER tied up to the Palmer Pier for the winter-to-summer turnover cruise. Antarctic Support Contract workers spent the week turning over with their counterparts, training for emergency responses, and getting (re)acquainted with the station. On our cruise south, we towed for krill to for incoming C-020-P (Steinberg) group in the Gerlache Straights. On our second cast, about 300 individuals were brought up to the surface. Upon arrival at Palmer Station, the krill were successfully transferred into the Palmer Station Aquarium.

The overwinter X-597-P (Crucian) NASA Countermeasure study was completed- I would like to extend a huge thank you to winter Lab Manager Sallie Anderson who was the point person for organizing sample collection and processing the samples for this season's participants. These samples arrived safely at Johnson Space Center for further analysis by the NASA's Immunology and Virology Laboratory.

The RVIB NATHANIEL B. PALMER departed with the winter crew on October 13th. Between port calls, the summer ASC staff were busy preparing lab spaces, fixing equipment, setting up instrumentation, and getting boats ready for field work. R/V HADAR is back on station after spending the austral winter in Punta Arenas, where ASC Marine Technicians worked to repair and ready the vessel for Summer 2024-25 field use. Our on-site Boat House staff (returning trio of Barbara Krasinski, Matt Gosselin, and David "Goldie" Goldman) have been busy readying and sea trialing it for the summer season ahead.

The RVIB NATHANIEL B. PALMER returned to Palmer Station on the morning of Tuesday, October 28th for the official Science Opening port call. We welcomed back a number of grantees, including B-086-P (van Gestel) Principal Investigator Natasja van Gestel, who will serve as our Station Science Lead for the summer season. A number of new and returning LTER grantees from C-013-P (Cimino), C-019-P (Schofield), and C-020-P (Steinberg) groups also arrived on station. All groups have been busy with station familiarization, lab orientations, boat training, and of course setting up their lab and office spaces for the summer season ahead. Next month we will have updates from each of these labs for the monthly report.

Finally, I would like to welcome our summer lab staff to Palmer Station. Danny Tropper is our new-to-Antarctica Instrument Technician, and has been doing an excellent job in the labs prepping, setting up, and calibrating various equipment to be used by summer grantee groups. Ben Rosen-Filardo is here for their third season at Terra Lab as the Research Associate, but this will be their first summer. I've returned for my eighth deployment and third summer season. It has been such a productive first month both in Terra and Bio Lab spaces! As I welcome new summer staff, I of course need to thank our outgoing winter crew Sallie Anderson (Lab Manager), Harpoon Seabring (Instrument Technician), and Evan Quinter (Research Associate). These three did so much work to get the BioLab spaces ready and ongoing Terra Lab projects maintained. Although there were not grantees on site this winter, these three were busy making our spaces and datasets better, more accessible, and brought fresh ideas to better our processes here at Palmer.

Palmer Station Summer 2024-25 Lab Staff. From left to right: Ben Rosen-Filardo (Research Associate), Danny Tropper (Instrument Technician), and Hannah James (Lab Supervisor). *Image credit: Abby Tomita*

PALMER STATION
RESEARCH ASSOCIATE MONTHLY REPORT
October 2024
Ben Rosen-Filardo

Sun halo seen from the Terra Lab roof, October 22nd, 2024. *Image credit: Ben Rosen-Filardo*

A-111-P: THE NEXT GENERATION OF GEOSPACE RESEARCH FACILITIES AT PALMER STATION

Dr. Hyomin Kim, Principal Investigator, New Jersey Institute of Technology; Newark, NJ

Extremely Low Frequency/Very Low Frequency (ELF/VLF) radio wave observations at Palmer Station are used to provide a deeper understanding of lightning and its effects on the Earth's inner radiation belt. Lightning source currents are estimated or directly measured by experimental observations of individual natural and rocket−triggered lightning flashes in North America. Together, the North American and Antarctic data sets are used to experimentally identify and analyze the components of lightning and the effects of lightning, such as lightning-induced electron precipitation (LEP), that are observed in the Antarctic, more than 10,000 km away.

The ELF/VLF radio wave observations at Palmer Station contributes to the wider network of experiments studying high-latitude geospace variables. Together with South Pole and McMurdo, these manned U.S. Antarctic geophysical stations measures the interactions between Earth's upper atmosphere, the magnetosphere, and solar wind. In 2026, this imperative network will be managed by the NJIT-Polar Engineering Development Center (PEDC).

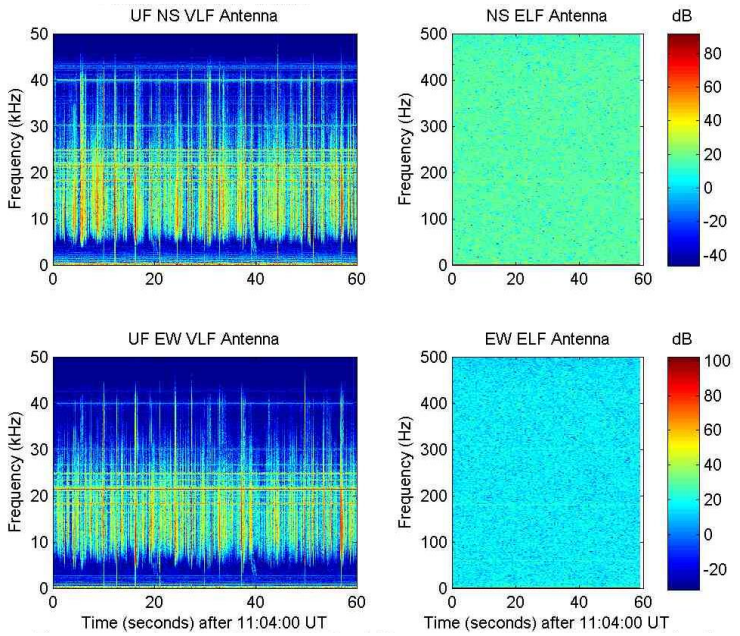

Figure 1. *Real-Time broadband VLF and ELF Spectrogram from Palmer Station, Antarctica.*

The VLF/ELF radios have been turned on, though not logging data. The bi-weekly antenna inspections continued as weather allowed. The VLF PC was downgraded to Windows 10 but the DAQ is not yet up and running. A new computer is on its way south.

When online, current VLF/ELF data from Palmer Station can be observed at: http://halo.ece.ufl.edu/realtime_palmer_bb.php.

A-111-P: SAMBA MAGNETOMETER

Dr. Hyomin Kim, Principal Investigator, New Jersey Institute of Technology; Newark, NJ

The three-axis fluxgate magnetometer at Palmer is one in a chain of eleven longitudinal, ground-based magnetometers extending down though South America and into Antarctica. The primary scientific goals are the study of Ultra Low Frequency (ULF) waves and the remote sensing of mass density in the inner magnetosphere during geomagnetically active periods. Palmer's magnetometer is also a conjugate to the Canadian Poste de la Baleine Station, allowing the study of conjugate differences in geomagnetic substorms and general auroral activity. In 2017 the project was taken over by Dr. Andrew Gerrard and in 2024 by Dr. Hyomin Kim.

SAMBA stands for South American Meridional B-field Array. The sites are approximately along the 0° geomagnetic longitude and ranging from -5° to -48° geomagnetic latitude. In combination with other magnetometer chains, including the AGO (Automated Geophysical Observatory) systems elsewhere in Antarctica, the stations create an almost complete, cusp-to-cusp-long meridional chain at approximately 0° magnetic meridian.

The magnetometer was originally installed at Palmer in 2005, and a replacement installed in April of 2008. A new Raspberry Pi system was installed in 2023. The system operated normally this month, only needing the live plots to be reloaded once. More information can be found at: http://magnetometers.bc.edu/index.php/palmer.

G-090-P: GLOBAL SEISMOGRAPH NETWORK (GSN) SITE AT PALMER STATION.
Dr. David Wilson, Supervisor Research Geophysicist, USGS Earthquake Hazards Program, Albuquerque, NM

Palmer's seismic station, code named PMSA, is part of the Global Seismic Network (GSN), a collection of 150+ sites worldwide, operating under the aegis of the Incorporated Research Institutions for Seismology (IRIS), and managed by the United States Geological Survey's Albuquerque Seismological Laboratory (ASL). The site was installed in March 1993. As of August 2006, PMSA is also used as an ancillary seismic system for the CTBT/IMS installation; CTBT-specific protocols for the seismic system are covered in the CTBT (T-998-P) section this document.

A standard seismic station consists of three seismometers oriented to detect ground motion along three mutually perpendicular lines. Most of the time the directions chosen are north-south, east-west, and up-down. The seismometers in the Palmer Station installation are “forced balanced” instruments, which means that they work by keeping an inertial mass stationary with respect to the instrument (and the earth). When a seismic wave arrives, the ground moves, carrying along the housing of the seismometer. The inertial mass tends to remain stationary and not move with the instrument, but it is electronically “forced” to travel along with the instrument (and the earth). The amount of “force” necessary to make it move with the rest of the instrument is proportional to the ground acceleration and is recorded as the raw data from the seismometer.

By examining time of arrival, azimuth, magnitude, frequency and wave type of the incoming waves, seismologists can determine the location, depth of focus, magnitude, type of faulting that occurred, ground acceleration in gravitational force and the structure of the medium (the earth) through which the waves traveled to reach the station. The Research Associate operates and maintains on-site equipment for the project.

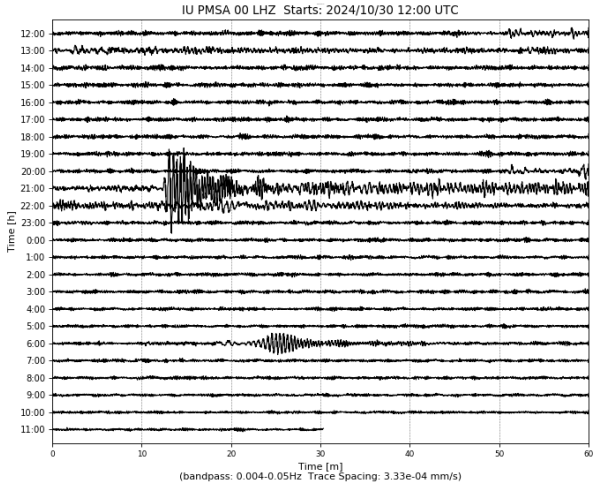

Figure 2. *An October 30th 6.0 earthquake off the coast of Oregon, as recorded from the Palmer seismic station.*

The system performed normally during the month. The time stamp and seismic activity found on the Heliplot was checked daily. Current data from Palmer station can be found on the USGS site: https://earthquake.usgs.gov/monitoring/operations/stations/IU/PMSA/#heliplot.

O-264-P: A STUDY OF ATMOSPHERIC OXYGEN VARIABILITY IN RELATION TO ANNUAL DECADAL VARIATIONS IN TERRESTRIAL AND MARINE ECOSYSTEMS.

Drs. Vanda Grubisic and Ralph Keeling, Principal Investigators, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration /Global Monitoring Laboratory; Boulder, CO and Scripps Institution of Oceanography; La Jolla, CA

The goal of this project is to resolve seasonal and inter-annual variations in atmospheric O_2 (detected through changes in O_2/N_2 ratio), which can help to determine rates of marine biological productivity and ocean mixing as well as terrestrial and oceanic distribution of the global anthropogenic CO_2 sink. The program involves air sampling at a network of sites in both the Northern and Southern Hemispheres.

The Scripps Institution of Oceanography flask sampling project analyzes air samples to assess variations in the atmospheric oxygen content caused by exchanges of O_2 between the atmosphere and the Southern Ocean. The oceans tend to be a source of oxygen to the air in the spring and summer, and a sink for oxygen in the fall and winter. The spring emissions are mostly due to photosynthesis in the water, while the winter uptake is due to mixing processes, which bring oxygen depleted waters from depth up to the surface. These exchanges lead to variations in the oxygen content of the air above the water, and these changes are rapidly mixed around the latitude band by zonal winds. Measurements of the seasonal variations in oxygen content at Palmer and other sites may be valuable for documenting changes in the biological productivity of the southern oceans over time.

The percentage changes in oxygen are very small. Relative to the 20.95% background, the summer-winter differences are only about 0.01%. Some special precautions are necessary so that the O_2 content of the samples isn't perturbed at this low level. Among these precautions are maintaining a constant pressure and temperature in the flasks during sampling. This dictates the installation of the sampling station indoors and the use of a pump module with a bypass valve for avoiding pressure buildup. The Research Associate collects samples fortnightly from Terra Lab.

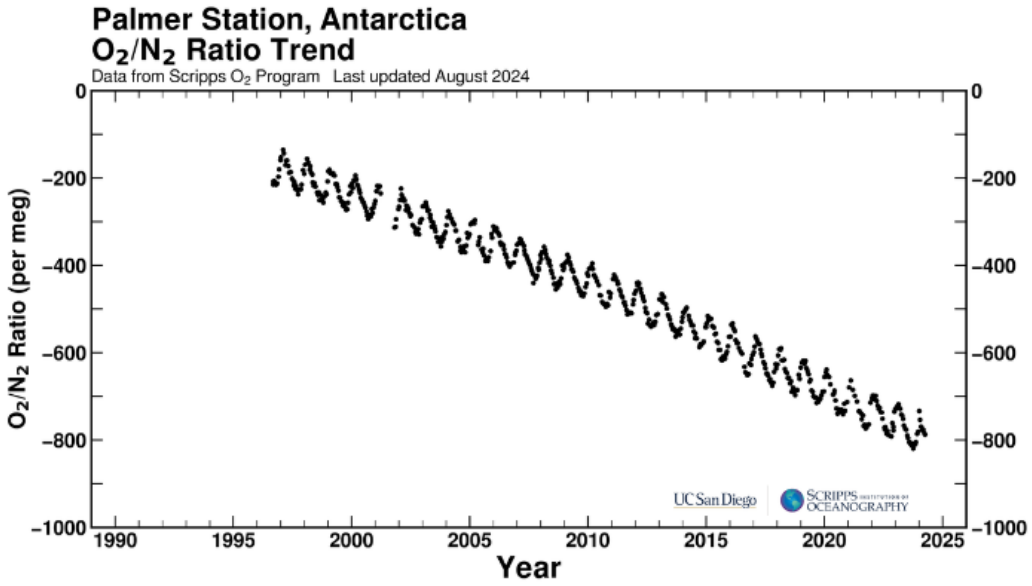

Figure 3. *Historical plot of* $\boldsymbol{O_2/N_2}$ *ratio per meg and* $\boldsymbol{CO_2}$ *ppm updated August 2024.*

A new shipment of flasks arrived this month, allowing the biweekly sampling schedule to resume. An air sample was collected on October 14th. Wind conditions must equal or exceed 5 knots from a direction between 5° to 205° constantly for over an hour with no interference from human traffic on foot or in vessels. These air samples are shipped to the Scripps Institution of Oceanography in California for analysis. More information and data can be found at: https://scrippso2.ucsd.edu/graphics-gallery/o2n2-graphics/psa.html.

O-264-P: COLLECTION OF ATMOSPHERIC AIR FOR THE NOAA/GMD WORLDWIDE FLASK SAMPLING NETWORK

Dr. Vanda Grubisic, Principal Investigator, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration /Global Monitoring Laboratory; Boulder, CO

The NOAA ESRL Carbon Cycle Greenhouse Gases (CCGG) group makes ongoing discrete measurements to document the spatial and temporal distributions of carbon-cycle gases and provide essential constraints to our understanding of the global carbon cycle. The Halocarbons and other Atmospheric Trace Species (HATS) group quantifies the distributions and magnitudes of the sources and sinks for atmospheric nitrous oxide (N_2O) and halogen containing compounds. The Research Associate collects weekly air samples for the CCGG group and fortnightly samples for the HATS group. Wind must be between 5 and 15 knots and consistently blow from one sector with no people, equipment, or boats upwind of the sampling location.

Replacement batteries for the CCGG and HATS united arrived this month and were installed. Both units are now functioning properly, and the regular sampling schedule has resumed.

Carbon Cycle Greenhouse Gases (CCGG) samples were collected on October 14th and 21st during favorable wind conditions. More information and data for the Carbon Cycle group can be found at: https://gml.noaa.gov/ccgg/.

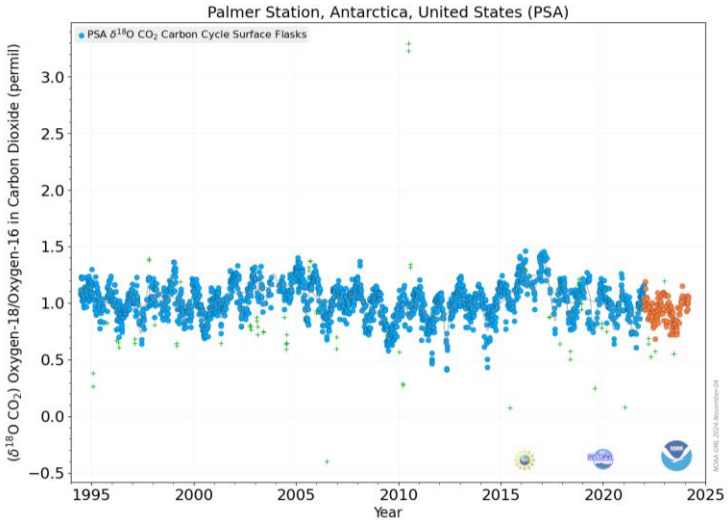

Figure 4. *Oxygen-18/Oxygen-16 in Carbon Dioxide ($\delta^{18}O\ CO_2$) levels at Palmer Station dating back to 1994. Orange dots are preliminary data and green pluses are poorly mixed air masses, which should not indicate background conditions.*

A HATS sample was collected on October 24th during favorable wind conditions. More information and data for the Halocarbons and other Atmospheric Trace Species group can be found at: https://gml.noaa.gov/hats/

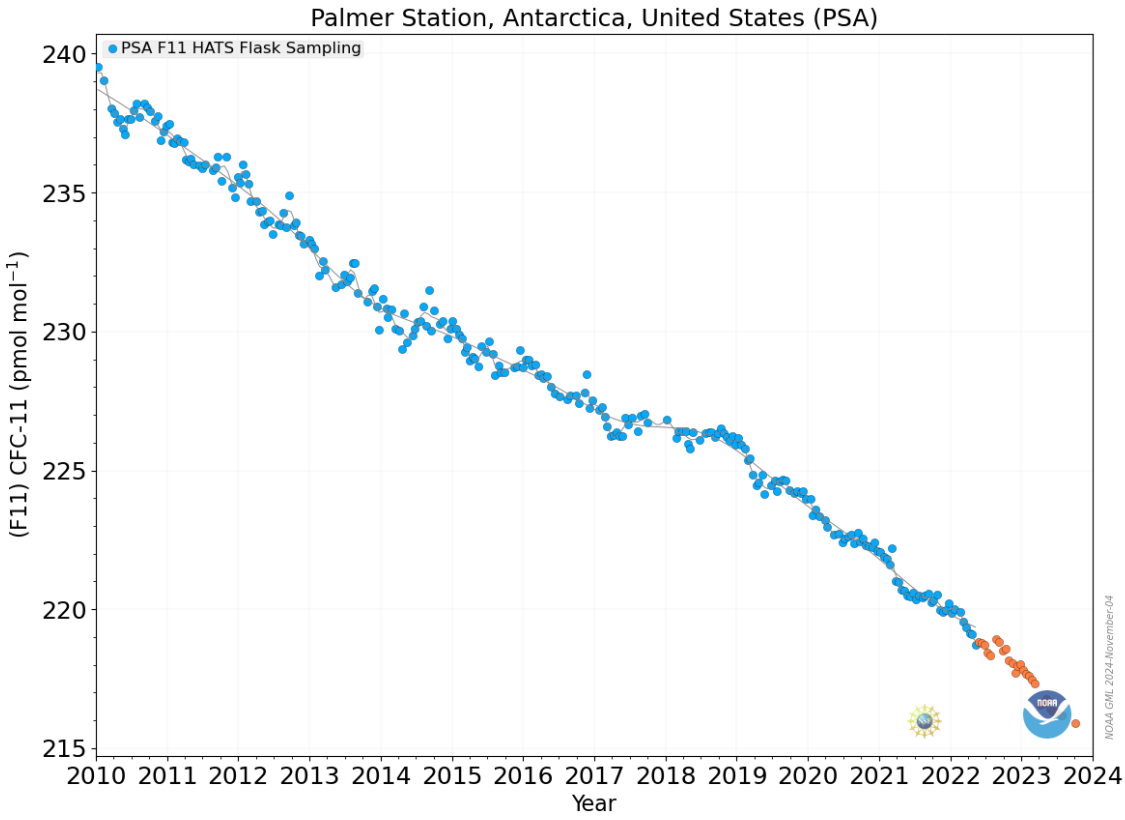

Figure 5. *CFC-11 (CCl_3F) levels dating back to 2010, one of the Halocarbon and Trace Gases measured at Palmer Station. Orange dots are preliminary data.*

All samples collected on station are sent back to the Earth System Research Laboratories in Boulder, Colorado for analysis.

O-264-P: ULTRAVIOLET (UV) SPECTRAL IRRADIANCE MONITORING NETWORK
Dr. Scott Stierle, Principal Investigator, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration /Global Monitoring Laboratory; Boulder, CO

A Biospherical Instruments (BSI) SUV-100 UV spectroradiometer produces full sky irradiance spectra ranging from the atmospheric UV cutoff near 290nm up to 605nm, four times per hour. A BSI Ground-based Ultraviolet (GUV-511) filter radiometer, an Eppley Precision Spectral Pyranometer (PSP), and an Eppley Total Ultra Violet Radiometer (TUVR) also continuously measure hemispheric solar flux within various spectral ranges. The Research Associate operates and maintains on-site equipment for the project.

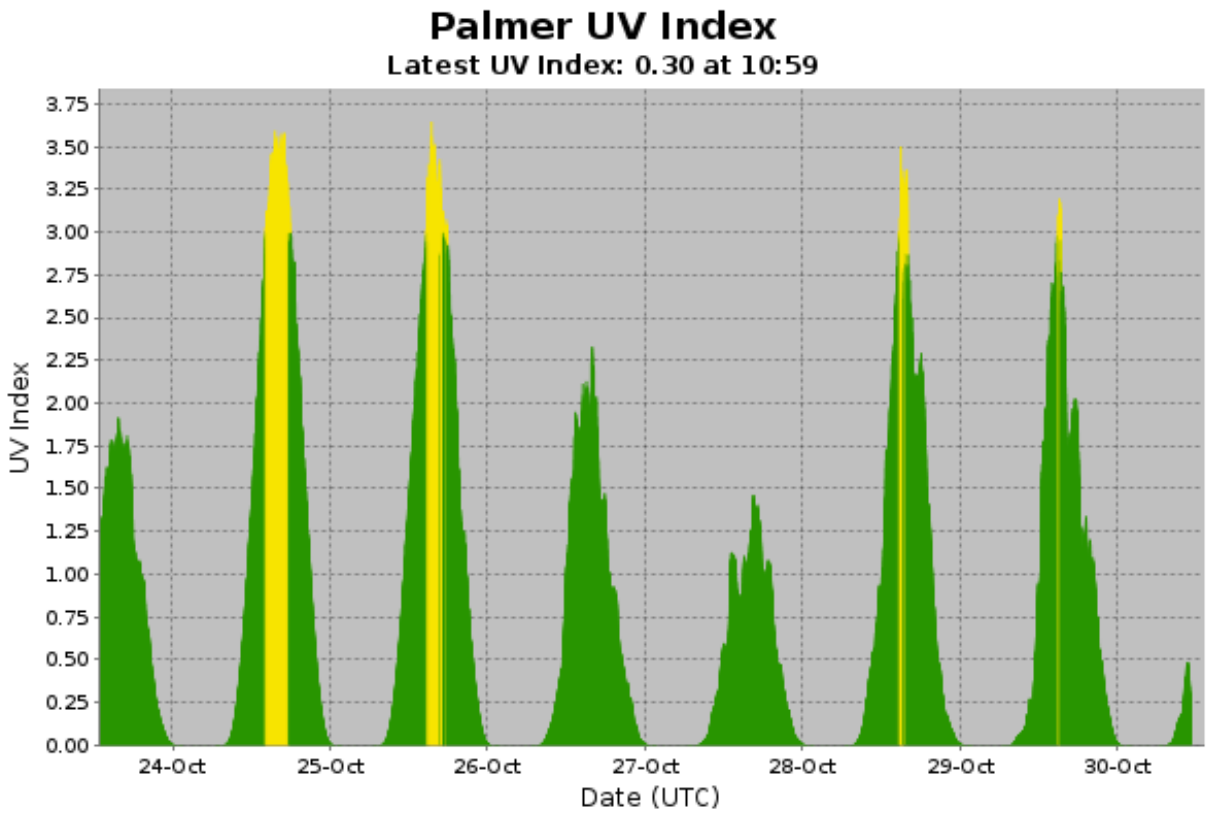

Figure 6. *UV index generated from the GUV-511 radiometer in real time.*

The log was filled out and collectors were cleaned on a daily basis. Once a week level checks were performed to confirm that the instrumentation was within +/- 0.2 degrees. The weekly log was sent out each Monday, and SUV-100 Absolute Scans were performed on October 8th and 22nd without issues. The broken HP power supply was sent northward on turnover cruise. For more information, visit: https://esrl.noaa.gov/gmd/grad/antuv/.

R-938-P: TERASCAN SATELLITE IMAGING SYSTEM

Justin Maughmer, Principal Investigator, System Administrator, United States Antarctic Program

TeraScan is an integrated system of hardware and software designed for automated reception of data from meteorological/environmental satellites and for processing the data into images and data overlays. The system collects, processes, and archives DMSP and NOAA satellite telemetry, capturing approximately 25-30 passes per day. The data files for these images and overlays are of a special format called TeraScan Data Format (TDF). The Research Associate operates and maintains on-site equipment for the project. The TeraScan weather and ice imagery is used for both research and station operations.

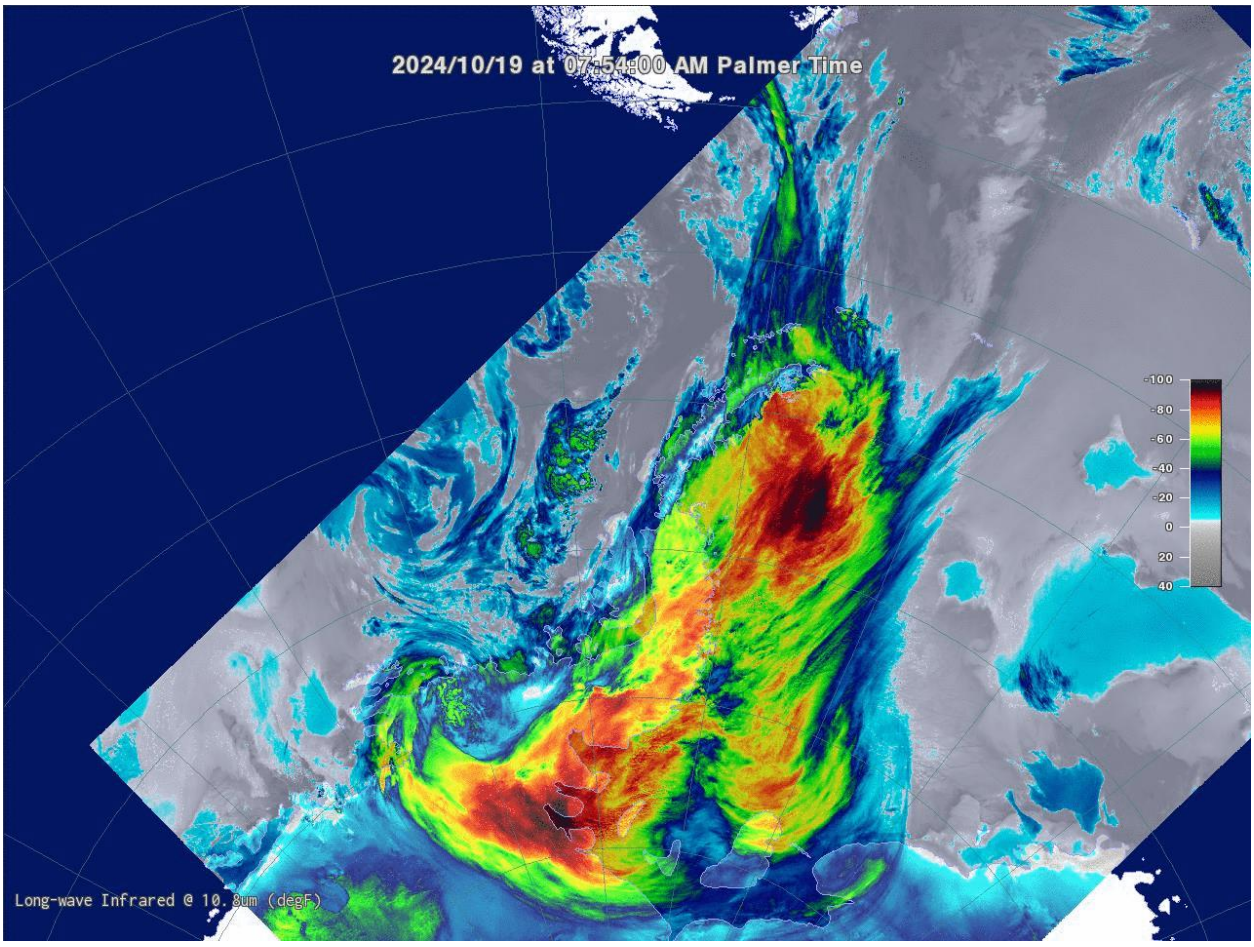

Figure 7. *MetOp-1 October 19th satellite pass.*

The imagery was checked daily. Both the MetOp and NOAA satellite passes were captured normally this month.

T-295-P: GPS CONTINUOUSLY OPERATING REFERENCE STATION.
Joe Pettit, Principal Investigator, EarthScope Consortium; Washington, DC and Socorro, NM

The National Science Foundation (NSF) tasked and funded the USGS Antarctic Program to establish a GPS (Global Positioning System) Continuous Operation Reference Station (CORS) at Palmer to serve a variety of scientific investigations in Antarctica. A permanent GPS CORS known as PALM (1003) was established during April and early May of 1997. Four reference marks were set and, along with 10 existing survey marks, PALM was tied in by differential GPS methods.

The GPS data collected supports the International GPS Service (IGS). This system is used for global geophysical studies such as crustal motion monitoring and determination of the global frame. PALM also provides Palmer scientists with real-time differential GPS positioning capabilities. Continuous 15-second epoch interval GPS data files are collected at station PALM, compressed, and transmitted to the NASA-JPL in Pasadena, CA.

JPL/NASA is contracted to maintain the system, and they have sub-contracted to UNAVCO. While operation and maintenance of the GPS/CORS base station is the responsibility of the

Research Associate, it is available for grantees who wish to use the roving systems and/or differential post-processing using data from the fixed reference station. Users are expected to have proper training prior to deployment to Palmer. The Research Associate may offer support to visiting grantees at their discretion.

The system operated consistently throughout the month. The lights on the Trimble and Septentrio receivers were all illuminated in the correct pattern and showed no signs of interruption. For more information, visit: https://www.unavco.org/projects/project-support/polar/base_stations_and_survey_systems/palmer/base.html.

T-998-P: INTERNATIONAL MONITORING STATION (IMS) FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR TEST BAN TREATY ORGANIZATION. (CTBTO)
Managed by General Dynamics

The Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) bans all nuclear explosions. Although not ratified, the U.S.A. is following through with the treaty, including the installation monitoring stations around the world. The global verification regime for monitoring compliance is called the International Monitoring System (IMS). The radionuclide air particulate sampling station was installed at Palmer in October of 2005. Palmer's radionuclide sampler/analyzer (RASA) is a primary station in the IMS, known by its treaty code USP73 (and RN73). The pre-existing USGS seismic system is an auxiliary station, treaty code AS106.

Data collected by Palmer's RASA unit is relayed back to the CTBT Organization (CTBTO) in Vienna. As of August 2006, both the RASA and seismic systems have been certified by CTBTO. Palmer is now officially part of the IMS. The automated RASA continually filters ambient air and tests for particulates with radioisotope signatures indicative of a nuclear weapons test. The Research Associate operates and maintains the instrument.

The system operated consistently this month. The amount of filter material was checked as needed. Daily filters were processed on October 7th, 15th, and 23rd. The monthly log was sent on time. Additional details about the treaty and monitoring stations can be found on the CTBTO website, http://ctbto.org/.

PHYSICAL OCEANOGRAPHY

Palmer Station has a tide and conductivity gauge located on the west side of the pier at -64.774558° -64.055580° at a depth of 11.46 meters (WGS-84). It was reinstalled at this deeper depth after the completion of the Palmer Pier.

The Research Associate acts as the station's physical oceanography observer by maintaining and observing the sea state. Observations of sea ice extent and growth stage is recorded along with continuous tidal height, ocean temperature, and ocean conductivity. Observations of sea ice around station were made daily.

Aside from what remains in Hero Inlet, the sea ice has receded. However, many large bergs remain in the boating area. The 2024 snow level continues to be well above average in the 8-year record, surpassed only by 2022.

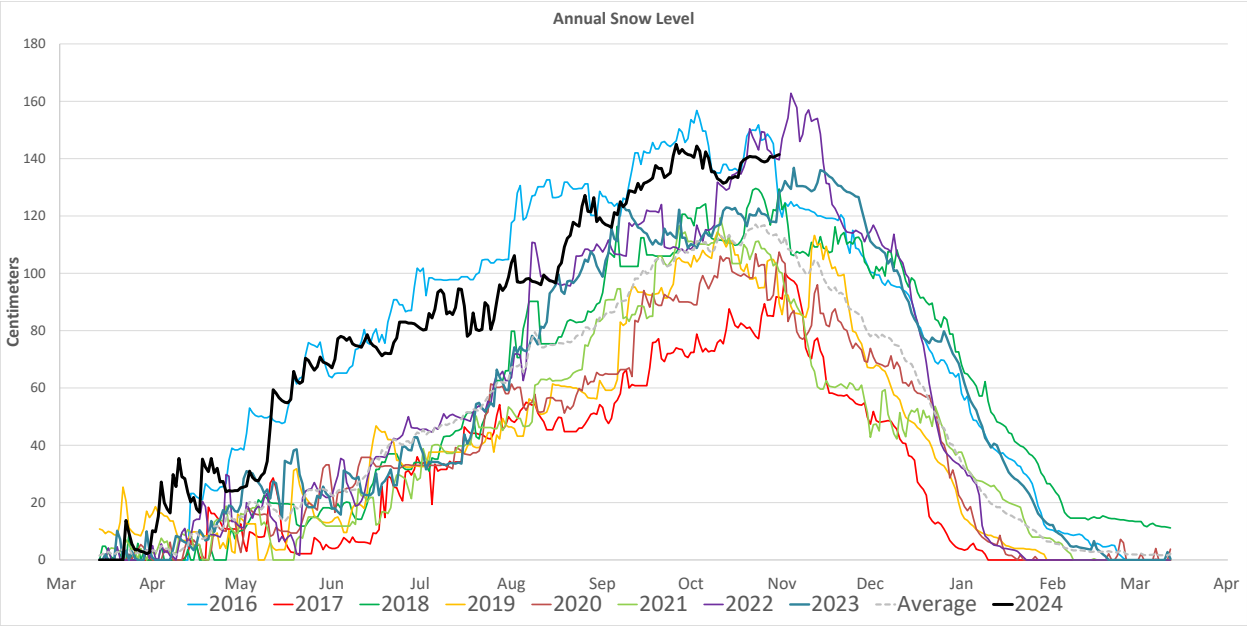

Figure 8. *Snow level as measured by the average of the five backyard snow stakes. The black line shows the 2024 snow level through October 31st, 2024.*

Tide level, sea water conductivity, and sea water temperature data is archived on the AMDRC website: https://amrdcdata.ssec.wisc.edu/dataset?q=Palmer+Station.

METEOROLOGY

Mike Carmody, Principal Investigator, United States Antarctic Program

Palmer Station is Station 89061 in the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Worldwide Network. Automated surface synoptic observations are made 8 times each day and emailed to the National Atmospheric and Oceanographic Administration (NOAA) for entry into the Global Telecommunication System (GTS).

The Palmer Automatic Weather Station (PAWS) is a collection of sensors, computers, and software that records the meteorological data and generates synoptic reports. PAWS began recording data in September of 2015. It was a replacement for the Palmer Meteorological Observing System (PalMOS) that was taken down in November 2017. The PAWS sensors and data acquisition hardware are located on a ridge in the backyard at -64.774130° -64.047440° at an elevation of 38.3 meters above sea level using the World Geodetic System-84. In addition to the synoptic and METAR reporting, PAWS also archives the current conditions at one-minute intervals and displays both raw data and graphs of the sensor data on our local intranet.

The Research Associate acts as Chief Weather Observer on station, measuring, compiling and distributing all meteorological data. Snow accumulation is physically observed by taking an average of five accumulation stakes found near the PAWS system. All weather data is archived locally and forwarded to the University of Wisconsin on the first day of each month for archiving and further distribution. On October 28th, the temperature/relative humidity sensor was replaced to restore humidity readings. On October 29th, the fan in the sensor's enclosure was replaced.

An ongoing effort to clean up the AMRDC database continued this month.

One minute weather data is archived on the AMRDC website: https://amrdcdata.ssec.wisc.edu/dataset?q=Palmer+Station.

Palmer Monthly Met summary for October, 2024

Temperature
Average: -2.3°C / 27.9°F
Maximum: 6.7°C / 44.06°F on 28 Oct 15:22 *
Minimum: -9.2°C / 15.44°F on 2 Oct 05:50
Air Pressure
Average: 977.1 mb
Maximum: 1004.9 mb on 7 Oct 20:24
Minimum: 955.6 mb on 15 Oct 22:35
Wind
Average: 10.7 knots / 12.3 mph
Peak (5 Sec Gust): 54 knots / 62 mph on 18 Oct 23:48 from NNE (031 deg)
Prevailing Direction for Month: SE
Surface
Total Rainfall: 22.9 mm / 0.9 in
Total Snowfall: 24 cm / 9.4 in
Greatest Depth at Snow Stake: 144.4 cm / 56.3 in
WMO Sea Ice Observation: 11-20 bergs, bergy bits, growlers, brash ice. The ice in Hero Inlet is gradually breaking up and has receded about halfway to the glacier.
Average Sea Surface Temperature: -1.22 °C / 29.8 °F

**The fan on the temperature sensor's aspirated enclosure was not functioning on 10/28. Therefore, it is possible that this measurement is inaccurate. A more thorough review is underway. The AMRDC archive will be updated if the 10/28 temperature data is found to be erroneous.*