

Phytoplankton phenology: Shedding light on the dark period

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with C Marec, E Leymarie, J Lagunas, C Penkerc'h, X Xing, L Lacour, F D'Ortenzio, H Claustre, G Darnis, L Fortier, M Sampei, and the Takuvik/LOV teams

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Scientific motivations

I. Entering winter (Babin et al.)

II. Going through it (Randelhoff et al.)

I. Entering winter

Deployment during summer 2016

Babin et al., in prep.

Fall bloom window in future Arctic

Figure 1. Evolution of the ice seasonality diagnostics (ice retreat date, blue; ice advance date, orange): (a) CMIP5 median and interquartile range, with corresponding range of satellite-derived values (green rectangles 1980–2015) over the 70–80° N latitude band;

Lebrun et al. (2019)

Day when $Z_{0.415}$ reaches surface – day of freeze-up

II- Going through winter

Polar night + sea ice/snow = little light

Randelhoff et al., in prep.

2 conditions for winter biomass accumulation: low respiration and low grazing

At low latitudes, made possible by deep-mixing (= dilution)

Behrenfeld (2010)

(Almost) no zooplankton grazing in winter

Data source: Circumpolar Flaw Lead project, 2007-08

Gerald Darnis

Winter bloom initiation: Positive growth rates in mid-winter

The ice edge/spring bloom is linked to what's happening during winter

SCIENCE ADVANCES | RESEARCH ARTICLE

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Arctic mid-winter phytoplankton growth revealed by autonomous profilers

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It is widely believed that during winter and spring, Arctic marine phytoplankton cannot grow until sea ice and snow cover start melting and transmit sufficient irradiance, but there is little observational evidence for that paradigm. To explore the life of phytoplankton during and after the polar night, we used robotic ice-avoiding profiling floats to measure ocean optics and phytoplankton characteristics continuously through two annual cycles in Baffin Bay, an Arctic sea that is covered by ice for 7 months a year. We demonstrate that net phytoplankton growth occurred even under 100% ice cover as early as February and that it at least partly resulted from photosynthesis. This highlights the adaptation of Arctic phytoplankton to extreme low-light conditions, which may be the key to their survival before seeding the spring bloom.

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