

CANADIAN OCEAN SCIENCE NEWSLETTER
LE BULLETIN CANADIEN DES SCIENCES DE L'OcéAN

Special Bulletin March 2022
Bulletin spécial mars 2022

2022 CMOS & CNC-SCOR TOUR SPEAKER

Dr. Eric Oliver

March 17, 2022 - 12:00pm ET

Presentation Title:

Bridging knowledge systems:
Scientific and Inuit knowledge
of the ocean and sea ice

**To participate in the scientific lecture
register here:**

[Zoom Meeting Registration Link](#)

Abstract :

Science and Inuit both have ways of knowing with a rich understanding of climate, the ocean and sea ice. These understandings are distinct and independent, yet complementary. Is it possible to bridge these two knowledge systems so as to inform each from the other? Is it even desirable? As a Labrador Inuk working in the scientific field of oceanography I have spent the four years exploring these questions. While they cannot be answered simply, I will provide my perspective and experience working at the interface between scientific and Inuit knowledge of the ocean. My research team and collaborators in the Nunatsiavut Government and in Inuit communities in the region, have been undertaking a number of related project and activities along these lines. Inuit knowledge of the coastal ocean and sea ice is being documented using participatory mapping and interview methods. We are developing ways recording Inuit observations of the environment, rooted in and referencing local traditional knowledge and focusing on that which Inuit consider important and of value. Scientific measurements of coastal ocean temperature, salinity, and ocean currents are being made through community-based monitoring programmes with representation in most communities in Nunatsiavut who are providing their expertise in choosing locations, times, and methods of accessing field sites. Finally, we are developing numerical ocean models for the region with Inuit Knowledge providing both ground-truths against which we can validate the model as well as informing hypothesis and model experiments. We have also been exploring the role that land-based activities, including research workshops, can play in this process. We are encouraged by the points of contact between science and Inuit knowledge that have emerged – such as maps, conceptual models, hypotheses – and that these can play the role of boundary objects to facilitate dialogue between these two knowledge systems.

Speaker :



Dr. Eric Oliver is an Assistant Professor of Physical Oceanography in the Department of Oceanography, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. His research interests involve ocean and climate variability across a range of time and space scales including extreme events, the predictability of climate variations, the influence of modes of variability on the ocean, and the role of climate change on the mean state, variability and extremes of the climate system. He is of Inuit descent with roots in Nunatsiavut (northern Labrador) and is interested in Indigenous perspectives on climate, weather and oceans and understanding both Indigenous and scientific knowledge of these systems.

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