

Castellini Science for Alaska Introduction February 19, 2008

From spying on scorpions with a black light to studying two-ton elephant seals with sleep apnea, Mike Castellini has always wanted to know how animals adapt to their environment.

So, it is appropriate that he is tonight's Science for Alaska lecturer giving a talk titled:

On Thin Ice: Marine Mammals Challenged by Climate Change.

Mike knows a lot about ice. He has been "to the ice" in Antarctica 13 times since 1977 and having spent a total of three and a half years there. He also spent an entire calendar year there (January to December).

I learned that he has had five worker's comp injuries because of Weddell seals, which he describes basically like giant Saint Bernards, and he has had three knee surgeries from working on the ice. He's one of the preeminent Weddell seal experts in the world.

His many contributions to Antarctic science has resulted in the naming a part of Antarctica after him, the "Castellini Bluff" *78°09'S Latitude, 167°10'E Longitude*, a rocky bluff rising just over 1500 feet in western White Island in the Ross Archipelago.

If you ask Mike, What brought you to Alaska in 1989? He jokes that he came up with the R/V Alpha Helix. "I was doing work in Santa Cruz on elephant seals and how they sleep. I heard that Bob Elsner was retiring from UAF. I applied and thought I had no chance. I interviewed in late September in Fairbanks. It was absolutely gorgeous. We were at a faculty party and the major topic of conversation was who was going to get to the garden first—the frost or the moose. I decided that this was the place I wanted to live.

After interviewing, I went back to work in Antarctica. I actually received a fax delivered via snowmobile in Antarctica. The fax was a job offer from Vera Alexander, the former dean of SFOS. The fax was barely legible and was riddled with STOP breaks."

Mike received his B.A. in Biology from University of California, San Diego and his Ph.D. in Marine Biology from the Scripps Institution of Oceanography

He has published papers in 70 journal articles and 14 books chapters. He has earned a UAF student mentor award, served as the director of the Alaska SeaLife Center in Seward.

He has served as a UAF faculty member and as Director of the UAF Institute of Marine Science.

Now Mike serves as Professor of Marine Biology and Associate Dean in the UAF School of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences where he makes sure our academic programs are working, works to further develop our programs and help students in any way that he can.

Please join me in welcoming Mike Castellini as tonight's Science for Alaska speaker.