The Arctic Boundary Layer Expedition (ABLE 3A): July–August 1988

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The Arctic Boundary Layer Expedition (ABLE 3A) used measurements from ground, aircraft, and satellite platforms to characterize the chemistry and dynamics of the lower atmosphere over Arctic and sub-Arctic regions of North America during July and August 1988. The primary objectives of ABLE 3A were to investigate the magnitude and variability of methane emissions from the tundra ecosystem, and to elucidate factors controlling ozone production and destruction in the Arctic atmosphere. This paper reports the experimental design for ABLE 3A and a summary of results. Methane emissions from the tundra landscape varied widely from 2.1 to 426 mg CH4 m⁻² d⁻¹. Soil moisture and temperature were positively correlated with methane emission rates, indicating quantitative linkages between seasonal climate variability and soil metabolism. Enclosure flux measurement techniques, tower-based eddy correlation, and airborne eddy correlation flux measurements all proved robust for application to methane studies in the tundra ecosystem. Measurements and photochemical modeling of factors involved in ozone production and destruction validated the hypothesized importance of low NOx concentrations as a dominant factor in maintaining the pristine Arctic troposphere as an ozone sink. Stratospheric intrusions, long-range transport of mid-latitude pollution, forest fires, lightning, and aircraft are all potential sources of NOx and NOy to Arctic and sub-Arctic regions. ABLE 3A results indicate that human activities may have already enhanced NOy inputs to the region to the extent that the lifetime of O3 against photochemical loss may have already doubled. A doubling of NOx concentration from present levels would lead to net photochemical production of O3 during summer months in the Arctic (Jacob et al., this issue (a)). The ABLE 3A results indicate that atmospheric chemical changes in the northern high latitudes may serve as unique early warning indicators of the rates and magnitude of global environmental change.

INTRODUCTION

The Arctic Boundary Layer Expedition (ABLE 3A) was conducted in Arctic and sub-Arctic regions of North America and Greenland during July and August 1988. This was the first comprehensive investigation of the sources, sinks, and size distribution of trace gas and aerosol chemical species in a northern high-latitude region during summer months. The ABLE 3A experimental design placed emphasis on the role which influence the tropospheric O3 budget (Figure 1). The suite of chemical species measured included the following gases: methane (CH4), carbon monoxide (CO), carbon dioxide (CO2), nonmethane hydrocarbons (NMHC), acetic acid (HA), formic acid (HFO), nitric oxide (NO), nitrogen dioxide (NO2), total "reactive" nitrogen gas (NOx), nitric acid (HNO3), peroxyacetyl nitrate (PAN), peroxypropionyl nitrate (PPN), ozone (O3), and aerosol chemical composition and size distribution.

The ABLE 3A is a component of the NASA Global Tropospheric Experiment (GTE) sponsored by the NASA

Tropospheric Chemistry Program [McNeal et al., 1983]. Previous ABLE expeditions have reported on the chemistry of North African dust and marine air over the tropical Atlantic [e.g., Ferek et al., 1986; Talbot et al., 1986] and on air chemistry over the tropical rain forests of Guyana and Brazil [e.g., Gregory et al., 1986; Harriss et al., 1988, 1990]. A second expedition to the northern high latitudes (ABLE 3B) was conducted jointly with the Canadian Northern Wetlands Project during July–August 1990.

This paper reports the overall experimental design for ABLE 3A and includes a brief overview of results. A following series of papers report the detailed results of individual studies.

ARCTIC AND BOREAL REGION AIR

Arctic and boreal regions (>50°N) are uniquely important to tropospheric chemistry for at least two reasons: (1) these regions include approximately 27% of the world’s soil carbon [Post et al., 1982]. The exchange of this carbon between soils and the atmosphere, as CO2 and CH4, is influenced by climate variability [e.g., Billings, 1987]. In a “global warming” era these environments may be “feedback” regions which influence rates of climatic change. (2) Even the most remote wilderness areas of the region are showing indications of air pollution derived from long-range transport from mid-latitude source emissions. During late winter and early spring, meteorological conditions are particularly favorable for midtropospheric air masses to track across industrialized regions and into the Arctic (see Barrie [1986] for a review). It is particularly important to understand both direct and indirect impacts of long-range transport of pollutants on the chemistry of high-latitude air masses. Direct impacts could
Methane flux increases in response to increasing soil temperatures CH$_4$ flux to the atmosphere has been shown to be temperature and moisture. In both tundra and boreal environments change can be derived from field and experimental studies of CH$_4$ exchange rates between northern peatland soils and the atmosphere gas exchange with subsequent effects on atmospheric composition has been closely coupled to atmospheric temperature in polar regions for at least the past 16,384 years [Lachenbruch and Marshall, 1986]. There are also some empirical data which indicate increasing permafrost temperatures [Lachenbruch and Marshall, 1986], suggesting that certain regions of the high-latitude biosphere may be experiencing the early stages of a warming. Biospheric responses to a variable climate are feedback processes which could accelerate or modulate rates of climate change. Examples of potential feedbacks have been documented by direct measurement of trace gas exchange rates in response to seasonal climate changes, and by inference from correlations of trace gas concentrations and isotopically derived temperature records in ice cores. For example, studies of variations of trace gases of biospheric origin such as CO$_2$ and CH$_4$ in ice cores suggest that atmospheric composition has been closely coupled to atmospheric temperature in polar regions for at least the past 160,000 years [e.g., Raynaud et al., 1988; Chappellaz et al., 1990].

A more direct indication of initial feedbacks to climate change can be derived from field and experimental studies of CH$_4$ exchange rates between northern peatland soils and the atmosphere in response to seasonal variations in soil temperature and moisture. In both tundra and boreal environments CH$_4$ flux to the atmosphere has been shown to be sensitive to seasonal climatic variations [e.g., Sebacher et al., 1986; Moore and Knowles, 1987; Crill et al., 1988; Whalen and Reeburgh, 1988; Bartlett et al., this issue]. Methane flux increases in response to increasing soil temperatures in water-saturated organic soils. Soil drying decreases CH$_4$ emissions. Experimental studies on tundra soil cores indicate the opposite behavior for CO$_2$ flux; aerobic decomposition which produces CO$_2$ is the dominant process in dry soils [e.g., Billings, 1987]. Thus, a warmer, wetter climate might enhance CH$_4$ flux from northern peatland environments. A warmer, dryer climate might result in reduced CH$_4$ emissions and enhanced CO$_2$ flux.

Potential trace gas feedbacks to climate change in northern tundra environments can be expected to operate on at least three time scales: (1) Changes in CH$_4$ flux from the near-surface “active” soil layer in response to seasonal or interannual climate variations will be the initial signal of a biospheric feedback. (2) Gradual climate change on decadal to century time scales could alter permafrost, a warming trend would release trapped CH$_4$ from the permafrost and increase the depth of the seasonal active layer. (3) A long-term dramatic warming of the Arctic (e.g., an ice-free condition) could lead to a release of CH$_4$ from presently frozen methane hydrates found at considerable depth below the surface. The ABLE 3 is focused on understanding the “early warning” response of the near-surface, organic active layer to climate variability.

Several preliminary modeling studies have also been conducted to explore potential interactions between climate change and atmospheric chemistry [e.g., Hameed and Cess, 1983; Khalil and Rasmussen, 1989]. These studies also indicate that climate-induced feedbacks from natural soils could potentially influence the global CH$_4$ budget.

The ABLE 3A has obtained regional-scale empirical data on trace gas exchanges between northern ecosystems and the atmosphere, which will permit a more detailed analysis of potential biosphere-atmosphere feedback processes in response to climate variability. Three independent approaches to CH$_4$ flux measurement were used to define the characteristic temporal and spatial variability for the Yukon-Kuskokwim tundra ecosystem, Alaska. Ground-based enclosure and eddy correlation measurements were used to characterize temporal variability, individual landscape elements as sources or sinks, and integrated flux from the local area. An airborne eddy correlation measurement program was used to characterize spatial variability in CH$_4$ flux at the regional scale.

**High-Latitude Air Pollution: Magnitude and Impacts**

The large-scale pollution of the Arctic troposphere by long-range transport of pollutants from industrial regions during late winter and early spring months is well documented [e.g., Schnell, 1984; Barrie, 1986; Stonehouse, 1986; Lowenthal and Rahn, 1985]. During these “Arctic haze” pollution events the buildup of aerosol constituents, sulfur dioxide, and PAN has been observed [e.g., Barrie and Hoff, 1985; Bottenheim et al., 1986]. At the time of Arctic sunrise, significant perturbations in the chemistry of the boundary layer have been observed: O$_3$ concentrations decrease, gaseous halogens increase, and aerosol pollutant species decrease [Barrie et al., 1989]. To date, there have been no comprehensive studies of the chemistry of the Arctic troposphere during summer months. Observations during the summer are critical to an assessment of the full impact of the accumulated winter/spring pollutant loadings, and to determine if significant long-range transport and injection of pollutants occur during these months.

![Fig. 1. A schematic illustration of interactions of the biosphere, climate, and long-range transport of pollutants as sources and/or sinks for atmospheric trace gases in northern high-latitude regions.](image-url)
Observations at a few ground-based monitoring sites have indicated that concentrations of aerosols are at a minimum during summer periods [e.g., Bodhaine, 1986]. However, ground-based monitoring stations at Arctic sites are influenced by frequent stratus cloud cover and may not be a good indicator of overall tropospheric air chemistry. Evidence gathered in ABLE 3A indicates that the stratus cloud decks common over the Arctic during summer months may filter out soluble aerosol species before they reach ground level [e.g., Talbot et al., this issue].

The observation of a possible increasing trend in surface O₃ at Barrow, Alaska [Oltmans and Komhyr, 1986] is a potential indicator of an increasing degree of Arctic pollution. However, the O₃ concentration at any individual site will be influenced by a variety of meteorological and chemical factors. The ABLE 3A placed special emphasis on identifying the range of variables which might have a significant influence on the tropospheric O₃ budget in the Barrow region during the summer period.

A component of ABLE 3A O₃ studies was to determine the sources of nitrogen oxides (NOₓ) and total reactive nitrogen (NOₓ) to the Arctic troposphere. Previous studies indicated that primary production in many biological environments in the Arctic is limited by inadequate levels of available nitrogen during summer months [e.g., Van Cleve and Alexander, 1981]. These results suggest that surface environments should be a net sink for NOₓ and NOₓ. Under natural conditions, the Arctic region should be an important low-NOₓ region for testing photochemical theory on the role of NOₓ in O₃ production and destruction processes. However, the alternate possibility existed that a reservoir of atmospheric reactive nitrogen accumulated during winter and spring months from mid-latitude pollution sources could provide a source of NOₓ to influence photochemical O₃ chemistry during summer months. Enhanced deposition of nitrogen to the Arctic biosphere from mid-latitude pollution sources could also stimulate primary production and alter biosphere-atmosphere exchange rates of other trace gases like CO₂ and CH₄.

Another characteristic of the Arctic tundra ecosystem important to ABLE 3A objectives is the paucity of plant species known to emit isoprene and other reactive non-methane hydrocarbon species which are important in O₃ chemistry. As a long-term strategy, the ABLE missions are designed to study O₃ production and destruction processes in atmospheric boundary layer environments which have characteristics of low NOₓ/low NMHC (tundra), low NOₓ/high NMHC (boreal forest), low NOₓ/high NMHC (wet season tropical forest), intermediate NOₓ/high NMHC (dry season, unpolluted tropical forest), high NOₓ/high NMHC (polluted tropical and boreal forests), and high NOₓ/low NMHC (polluted tundra environments). Results from several of these categories are reported in ABLE 2 publications (Journal of Geophysical Research, volume 93, pages 1349-1624, 1988; and volume 95, pages 16,721-17,050, 1990) and in the present issue.

**Approach**

The scientific objectives of ABLE 3A were accomplished through a coordinated program of chemical and meteorological measurements at surface sites in Alaska and on the NASA Lockheed Electra research aircraft. The expedition was conducted during July and August 1988. A complimentary program of surface-based biogeochemical studies, termed the Biospheric Research on Emissions from Wetlands (BREW), supported by the NASA Biospherics Research Program, was conducted in Bethel, Alaska, during the period of the ABLE 3A. Investigators sponsored by the NASA Interdisciplinary Program also participated in the expedition. A list of principal investigators, institutions, and measurements is presented in Table 1.

**Aircraft Experiments**

The centerpiece of ABLE 3A was a series of research flights with the instrumented NASA Electra (Figure 2). The flights were divided into four generic types of experiments: (1) Boundary layer survey studies determined the regional horizontal and vertical distribution of trace gas and aerosol species over tundra environments to explore the qualitative effects of biosphere-atmosphere exchange versus atmospheric transport processes on the chemical composition of the atmospheric mixed layer and overlying free troposphere. (2) Flux measurements were conducted over tundra environments to quantify exchange rates for CH₄, CO, and O₃ at incremental scales of approximately 50–150 km over a total of up to 2000 km per experiment. (3) Several missions were devoted to determining the large-scale distribution of gas and aerosol species over ice and oceanic environments upwind of tundra, with flight lines along a sea or ice to land gradient. These missions also provided an excellent qualitative indication of gas and aerosol source/sink processes associated with different surface environments. (4) Several missions, and transit flights between bases, were devoted primarily to characterizing mid-tropospheric variability of gas and aerosol species for investigation of long-range transport of pollutants to the study regions and tropospheric photochemical processes. A schematic illustration of these generic flight patterns is shown in Figure 3.

The areas studied by intensive aircraft missions are shown in Figure 4. The characteristics of each mission are summarized in Table 2.

In situ measurements of most of the trace gas and aerosol chemical species discussed in the above sections are available for all of the flights listed in Table 2. The two-dimensional distribution of aerosol and O₃ from the surface to the tropopause was measured along each flight path using a UV Differential Absorption Lidar (DIAL) described by Browell et al. [this issue]. The UV DIAL also provides information on cloud distribution and on mixed layer dynamics.

Aircraft research missions were conducted from bases in Barrow, Alaska (flights 6–12), Bethel, Alaska (flights 14–21, 25–26), Cold Bay, Alaska (flights 22–24), and Thule, Greenland (flight 29). Flights 30–33 from Thule, Greenland, to Wallops Island, Virginia, on August 15–16, 1988, included vertical profiles along the flight track to determine latitudinal distributions of trace gas and aerosol species as a function of altitude. Flights 1–5 were constant altitude transits between Wallops Island, Thunder Bay, Churchill, Thule, Fairbanks, and Barrow (Figure 4).

**Ground-Based Experiments**

The extensive peatland environments in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta region of Alaska, overflown during mis-
The two major components of the ground-based research program were (1) measurements of fluxes, total storage, and isotopic characteristics of biogenic trace gases using enclosures and soil sampling techniques. (2) Flux and ambient atmospheric concentrations of trace gases were also measured using micrometeorological and eddy correlation techniques to obtain time series of surface/atmosphere exchange.

The objective of enclosure measurements was to quantify relationships of biogenic gas sources and sinks along major environmental gradients representative of the Yukon-Kuskokwim tundra. Topography and resulting surface and soil water conditions exert major controls over vegetation and soil composition (Figure 5a). These relationships were also hypothesized to mediate trace gas fluxes. Satellite remote sensing of the spatial distribution of surface environments was used to extrapolate point measurements of flux to the regional tundra environment [e.g., Bartlett et al., this issue; Whiting et al., this issue]. Relationships of flux with important physical variables such as temperature and light level were also studied. The trace gas species examined were CH₄ [Bartlett et al., this issue], CO₂ [Whiting et al., this issue], and several sulfur compounds [Hines and Morrison, this issue]. Soil profiles and depth to permafrost along selected transects were obtained using ground-penetrating radar techniques by Doolittle et al. [1990]. Studies were conducted in undisturbed sites accessible by road from Bethel, and in the area of the ABLE 3A micrometeorological tower.

The ABLE 3A micrometeorological tower facility is shown in Figure 6. The tower was located approximately 50 km WNW of Bethel (61°N, 162.5°W) and was accessible by float plane. Climatological data were used to site the tower in a location which would be subject to minimal local pollution effects.

Ground-based measurements were carefully coordinated with aircraft overflights to provide data for comparing estimates of CH₄ emissions from local to regional scales based on enclosure, tower, and airborne eddy correlation methods.

In addition to ABLE 3A investigators, the ground-based program included investigators sponsored by BREW and the NASA Interdisciplinary Research Program (Table 1).

**TABLE 1. Principal Investigators Participating in ABLE 3A**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Investigator</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Investigation</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Barrick</td>
<td>NASA Langley Research Center</td>
<td>Airborne meteorological/position data (a)</td>
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<td>John Bradshaw</td>
<td>Georgia Institute of Technology</td>
<td>Nitric oxide, nitrogen dioxide, NO₂ (a)</td>
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<td>Edward V. Browell</td>
<td>NASA Langley Research Center</td>
<td>Aerosols, ozone profiles (a)</td>
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<td>David R. Fitzjarrell</td>
<td>State University of New York at Albany</td>
<td>Micrometeorological studies (s)</td>
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<td>Gerald L. Gregory</td>
<td>NASA Langley Research Center</td>
<td>Ozone, aerosol size (a)</td>
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<td>Robert C. Harris</td>
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<td>Carbon dioxide/Mission Scientist (a)</td>
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<td>Paul Kebabian</td>
<td>Aerodyne Research, Inc.</td>
<td>Methane (s)</td>
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<td>Enio Pereira</td>
<td>Instituto de Pesquisas Espaciais, Brazil</td>
<td>Eddy correlation flux (CO₂, CH₄, O₃, H₂, H₂O) (a)</td>
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<td>John Ritter</td>
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<td>F. Sherwood Rowland</td>
<td>University of California at Irvine</td>
<td>Carbon monoxide, methane (a)</td>
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<td>Glen W. Sachse</td>
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<td>Hanwant Singh</td>
<td>NASA Ames Research Center</td>
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<td>Robert W. Talbot</td>
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<td>Carbon dioxide (a)</td>
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<td>Steven C. Wofsy</td>
<td>Harvard University</td>
<td>Nitrogen species (NO, NO₂, NO₃) (s)</td>
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<td>Michael Hardisky</td>
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<td>Karen B. Bartlett</td>
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<td>Mark Hines</td>
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<td>Patrick Crill</td>
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(a), airborne; (s), surface.

Meteorological forecasts during the ABLE field expedition were provided by a team of meteorologists stationed at the Anchorage National Weather Service Office. The Anchorage office receives extensive data, including both GOES and NOAA 9 polar orbiter imagery, all National Weather Service products, statewide surface observations, and a host of specialized computer-generated products tailored to the Alaska region.
In addition, a Micro-VAX-II computer from NASA was used to receive domestic, international, and model data through a satellite downlink from Zephyr Weather, Inc. This allowed a host of additional products to be generated and stored in near real time, including soundings, potential temperature time-height cross sections, and 12- to 48-hour forecast wind fields. All generated products were faxed to the aircraft location on a twice daily basis. Forecasts were updated via telephone and were available on an as needed basis.

Postmission meteorological analyses included a comparison of weather during the study period to climatological means, calculation of isentropic trajectories for air mass flow and source regions associated with each aircraft mission, and compilation of the active forest fires in Alaska during ABLE 3A. A summary of meteorological methods and results for ABLE 3A is provided by Shipham et al. [this issue].

**Overview of Results**

In this brief overview of results, we highlight selected findings from individual investigations which relate directly to the primary objectives of the expedition. It is hoped that this summary will serve the reader who may not be able to pursue study of the entire collection of ABLE 3A papers. This summary also serves as a guide to individual papers, which discuss the details of specific factors controlling the distribution of any particular trace gas or aerosol constituent.

**Methane Sources and Sinks**

Water-saturated soils and lake sediments are the primary sources of CH$_4$ in the Arctic and sub-Arctic landscapes studied in ABLE 3A. Dry tundra soils can reduce CH$_4$ concentrations below ambient concentrations in the atmospheric mixed layer, acting as a weak sink for tropospheric CH$_4$ [Whalen and Reeburgh, 1990]. In the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta environments studied in ABLE 3A, CH$_4$ exchange rates ranged widely from $-2$ mg m$^{-2}$ d$^{-1}$ (net consumption of atmospheric CH$_4$) to net emissions as high as $400$ mg m$^{-2}$ d$^{-1}$ [Bartlett et al., this issue].

A synthesis of published CH$_4$ flux data from high-latitude tundra sites by Bartlett et al. [this issue] was used to calculate an annual flux of approximately $11 \pm 4$ Tg CH$_4$ from the global tundra ecosystem. Scaling up the CH$_4$ flux data from the ABLE 3A micrometeorological tower produced an estimate of approximately 11 Tg CH$_4$ yr$^{-1}$ from global tundra [Fan et al., this issue]. Most previous estimates centered between 20 and 40 Tg yr$^{-1}$ [e.g., Sebacher et al., 1986; Whalen and Reeburgh, 1988]. It is significant to
note that these new, lower estimates of the tundra CH$_4$ source are very compatible with the preferred estimate derived with a global modeling technique [Fung et al., 1991]. The dominant factors determining the magnitude of CH$_4$ flux were soil moisture and soil temperature. Water-saturated soils typically emitted CH$_4$ at rates more than an order of magnitude greater than dry soils (Figure 7). The sensitivity of CH$_4$ flux rates from both saturated and moist...
TABLE 2. Summary of the Flights Conducted During the ABLE 3A Expedition

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Time</th>
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<th>Arrival</th>
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Time is GMT.

Tundra to variations in soil temperature are also shown in Figure 7. In wet meadow tundra a 2°C increase in temperature at 10- to 20-cm soil depth increases the CH₄ flux to the atmosphere approximately 120%. These results together with similar characterizations at other Arctic and boreal sites [e.g., Crill et al., 1988; Whalen and Reeburgh, 1988] indicate that a warming of several degrees centigrade during summer months in northern high latitudes could possibly produce a detectable increase in regional tropospheric ambient CH₄ concentrations. A long-term monitoring program for ambient CH₄ at sites downwind of extensive tundra could possibly provide an "early warning" of climate change effects in the Arctic.

**Sources and Chemistry of Nitrogen Gases**

The ABLE 3A results indicate that pollutant emissions from human activities in mid-latitude regions and emissions...
Fig. 5b. An aerial perspective of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, including the ABLE 3A ground site.
from sub-Arctic forest fires are sources of reactive nitrogen gases to the sub-Arctic and Arctic troposphere during summer months. The tundra ecosystem is a net sink for atmospheric nitrogen species. A brief synthesis of the ground and airborne nitrogen measurements is presented here as a guide to the detailed results presented in other papers in this issue [Bakwin et al., this issue; Sandholm et al., this issue; Jacob et al., this issue (a); Singh et al., this issue (a, b); Talbot et al., this issue; Wofsy et al., this issue].

Both ground and airborne measurements indicate that the

sub-Arctic tundra ecosystem is a net sink for atmospheric nitrogen species. Bakwin et al. [this issue] report a near-continuous time series of NO, NO₂, and total NOy measurements at the Lake ABLE ground site for July and August. The fluxes of NOₓ and NOy determined from these data indicate an emission rate for NO from the tundra surface to the atmosphere of \(0.17 \pm 0.10\) \(\times 10^9\) molecules cm\(^{-1}\) s\(^{-1}\). The mean dry deposition of NO to the tundra was \(2.0 \pm 1.0\) \(\times 10^9\) molecules cm\(^{-1}\) s\(^{-1}\). The mean wet deposition rate for NO\(^+\) to the Lake ABLE region during the ABLE study period was approximately \(3.9 \times 10^9\) molecules cm\(^{-1}\) s\(^{-1}\) [Talbot et al., this issue]. Thus, the tundra was a net sink for atmospheric nitrogen species during this summer period.

Enhanced NOx and NOy concentrations observed at the Lake ABLE ground site during the study correlated with the long-range transport of emissions from forest fires into the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta region. Forest fire emissions polluted a significant portion of the tropospheric column during episodes of westerly flow from the areas of active burning which were centered around the Yukon Flats region north of Fairbanks [Wofsy et al., this issue; Shipham et al., this issue; Harriss et al., this issue; Bakwin et al., this issue (a)]. The NO\(_x\) levels associated with emissions from forest fires were often greater than 30 pptv, a level which would promote photochemical \(O_3\) production [Jacob et al., this issue; Singh et al., this issue (b)]. However, studies of haze

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**Fig. 6.** Ground-based micrometeorological tower used for conducting flux measurements in a tundra environment near Bethel, Alaska.

**Fig. 7.** Fluxes of methane from two ABLE 3A study sites [Bartlett et al., this issue].
layers derived from biomass burning indicate a relatively rapid conversion of NOx to PAN in the Alaska troposphere, with consequent low O3 enhancements compared to tropical haze layers [Jacob et al., this issue (a); Wofsy et al., this issue].

The vertical distributions of PAN, NO, NO2, HNO3, and NOx indicate that the primary sources of these gases to the North American sub-Arctic and Arctic troposphere are a combination of stratospheric intrusions, long-range transport of pollutants from mid-latitude sources, and warm season biomass burning in sub-Arctic environments. The concentration of PAN increases with altitude, with highly variable concentrations above 3 km (e.g., <50 to >700 ppt). Singh et al. [this issue (a)] attribute the origin of PAN to a group of diverse sources, including injections of mid-latitude pollution during winter-spring “Arctic haze” events, forest fires, and stratospheric intrusions. It is likely that lightning and aircraft are also potentially significant sources of NOx to this region. The relative stability of PAN in the cold middle and upper Arctic troposphere promotes accumulation and a lifetime determined primarily by the dynamics of downward transport. In the atmospheric mixed layer (0-3 km), PAN concentrations are typically 0-50 ppt. PAN, and as an at unidentified suite of organic nitrate gases (alkyl nitrates and pernitrates?), has the potential to control the summer NOx availability in the high-latitude troposphere and thus to determine O3 concentrations and distribution [Singh et al., this issue (b); Jacob et al., this issue (a)]. Photochemical modeling indicated that decomposition of PAN alone could account fully for the NOx concentrations observed at 0- to 2-km altitude, but for only 20% of the NOx at 5-6 km.

Ozone: Distribution and Variability

The stratosphere was the dominant source of O3 to lower tropospheric altitudes in the ABLE 3A study regions. Well-defined intrusions of O3-rich air from the upper troposphere and stratosphere were directly observed with remote sensing to influence O3 concentrations at altitudes of 1 km and lower [Browell et al., this issue]. The dynamical characteristics of stratosphere/troposphere exchange at high latitudes has been discussed by several authors [e.g., Gidel and Shapiro, 1980; Shapiro, 1980; Shapiro et al., 1987; Raatz et al., 1985]. The concentrations of NOx in the region studied were sufficiently low that photochemical processes were typically a net sink for tropospheric O3 [Sandholm et al., this issue; Jacob et al., this issue (a)]. The extensive biomass burning in Alaska during summer 1988 had little impact on the observed tropospheric O3 distributions [Gregory et al., this issue; Browell et al., this issue; Jacob et al., this issue (a); Wofsy et al., this issue]. Long-range transport of photochemically derived O3 from the mid-latitudes into the study area was difficult to detect due to the relatively high “background” of O3 derived from upper atmospheric sources.

Jacob et al. [this issue (b)] combined the aircraft O3 measurements to estimate an average 0- to 7-km O3 column of approximately 6 x 1011 molecules m^-2. Using the deposition flux average measured at the Lake ABLE tower of -1.1 x 1011 molecules cm^-2 s^-1 as an O3 lifetime of 8 months was calculated. If the time scale for ventilation of air north of 60°N is 2-3 months the Arctic cannot be viewed as an ultimate sink for O3.

If the PAN and organic nitrates which decompose to produce NOx in the Arctic are derived, in part at least, from human activities, the lifetime of O3 against photochemical loss may have already increased significantly. Increased NOx inputs would further reduce the capacity of the Arctic as a region for O3 destruction; in particular, a doubling of NOx concentrations from present levels would lead to net O3 photochemical production in the Arctic (Figure 8).

Acidic Gases, Aerosols, and Precipitation

The Arctic and sub-Arctic tropospheric regions studied during ABLE 3A were acidic. Formic and acetic acids were the principal acidic gases, the aerosol acidity was due to the presence of “excess” sulfate [Talbot et al., this issue]. The rainwater-free acidity (average pH = 4.69) in the Bethel area was derived from the carboxylic acids and H2SO4. Sources of these acids included marine and continental biogenic emissions, forest fires, and to a lesser extent, long-range transport of industrial pollutants.

Nitric acid is a major component of the nitrogen cycle in the boundary layer. Decomposition of PAN and biogenic emissions of NO are precursors for HNO3 production, biomass burning, and long-range transport of industrial pollutants to the region contribute to episodic increases [Talbot et al., this issue; Bakwin et al., this issue; Jacob et al., this issue (a); Singh et al., this issue (a,b)]. The results of photochemical model simulations predict an HNO3 concentration of 50 ppt for the boundary layer [Jacob et al., this issue (a)], the measured mean concentration was 59 ± 25 ppt [Talbot et al., this issue]. Nitric acid is the primary component of NOx dry deposition to the tundra ecosystem [Bakwin et al., this issue].

Implications for Future Studies

The results of ABLE 3A confirmed two major hypotheses which generated the study. First, emissions of CH4 from the tundra ecosystem are sensitive to changes in climate variables such as soil moisture and temperature. Enclosure flux measurements, eddy correlation flux measurements from a ground-based tower, and airborne eddy correlation tech-
tiques for CH₄ flux measurement, all proved to be robust for use in studying emissions from the tundra landscape. Airborne flux measurements are most useful for surveying large areas to characterize relationships between major ecosystem parameters (e.g., distribution of vegetation type) and CH₄ flux. Tower-based eddy correlation and enclosure flux techniques can be best used to quantify specific response functions relating changes in CH₄ emissions to changes in soil climate.

Second, concentrations of NOₓ are critical to O₃ production/destruction processes in the relatively pristine high-latitude regions studied. At present, O₃ destruction processes dominate; however, NOₓ pollution from mid-latitude sources may have already reduced the capacity of the region to act as an O₃ sink [Jacob et al., this issue (a)].

These ABLE 3A results indicate that atmospheric chemical changes in the Arctic environment may serve as a unique early warning indicator of global change. If northern hemisphere NOₓ emissions continue to increase, particularly in the newly industrializing nations (e.g., Korea, China, India), Arctic O₃ levels could increase rapidly with significant implications for the northern hemisphere and, perhaps, the global environment. Future studies should emphasize determining the pathways and mechanisms of the transport and fate of NOₓ to the Arctic from mid-latitude pollution sources.

Methane flux from tundra environments may be one of the most sensitive, integrative indicators of climate change effects on the Arctic biosphere. A long-term monitoring program of CH₄ flux at a network of sites in the tundra ecosystem, in combination with enhanced monitoring of ambient air CH₄ trends, could contribute to early detection of climate change effects in the Arctic.

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