

*IACS promotes the advancement
of cryospheric sciences of
the Earth and solar system*



IACS

International Association
of Cryospheric Sciences

IACS NEWSLETTER

February 2026

Update from the Joint Commission on Ice-Ocean Interactions (JCIOI)

The [Joint Commission on Ice-Ocean Interactions](#) (JCIOI) was established in January 2021 when a proposed executive was approved by parent organizations IAPSO (the International Association for the Physical Sciences of the Oceans) and IACS (the International Association of Cryospheric Sciences).

JCIOI aims to establish a cohesive framework to advance research on ice–ocean interactions. JCIOI communicates the latest developments around ice–ocean interactions by coordinating a biennial workshop and by engaging in regular communication with relevant parties, including its parent associations. JCIOI also serves as a central point of contact for questions related to ice–ocean processes within the Earth sciences community, promoting ongoing technological innovation and the development of improved parameterizations informed by both observations and models.

Meetings: JCIOI meets approximately every eight weeks as a group. JCIOI hosted its international conference session “Ice sheet–ocean interactions and impacts” at the BACO in Korea, July 2025. The committee plans for a JCIOI workshop this year in October 2026.

Current activities from JCIOI

- RECOIL (Reconciling Cross-platform Observations of Ice-shelf Melt) document is now online <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17469856>. This document presents formal guidance for observation or modelling of ice–ocean interaction. It includes standards of operational parameters, time scales and variables of reporting, and a data sharing approach that will enable improved comparison of techniques and outcomes.
- JCIOI submitted suggestions for essential climate variables to GCOS.
- Committee members contributed to the establishment of the Antarctica InSync working group for ice–ocean interaction. The committee's role has been to identify research gaps, where groups/communities could interact better, and helping to build connections.
- A few members contributed to a recent IACS supported paper '[Multi-model estimate of Antarctic ice-shelf basal mass budget and ocean drivers](#)' in The Cryosphere

(Report by co-chairs Lu An (IACS) Yoshihiro Nakayama (IAPSO) and other JCIOI members)



JCIOI co-chairs:
Yoshihiro
Nakayama and
Lu An

Deadline 1 April for IACS grants

IACS co-sponsors cryosphere-related workshop, educational or other events that further the IACS Objectives and align with the remits of IACS Divisions. There are two deadlines per year on 1 April and 1 October. See [GRANTS – IACS](#) for further information and application form.

In memory of Charles Fierz

It is with deep sadness that we announce the passing of Charles Fierz, a snow scientist and admired figure within the cryospheric sciences community. He passed away on 10 December, in Davos, Switzerland, at the age of 67. Charles' efforts over two decades made a lasting contribution to the International Association of Cryospheric Sciences (IACS), the International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics (IUGG), and the wider field of snow and ice science.

Charles served with distinction in numerous leadership roles within IACS. In 2004, he joined the predecessor to IACS, the IUGG Union Commission for Cryospheric Sciences, as Head of the Seasonal Snowcover and Avalanches Division. When IACS was officially approved at the 24th IUGG General Assembly in 2007 in Perugia, Italy, Charles became Head of the Snow and Avalanches Division. For this occasion, he coined the term "Festa Cryospherica" for the IACS celebration now customarily held at IUGG and IACS assemblies. He served two terms as Head of Snow and Avalanches (2007–2011 and 2019–2023) before becoming President-Elect, President, and Immediate Past President from 2013 to 2019. His dedication to the organisation, to advancing the field of cryospheric science, and to mentoring young scientists and those new to scientific stewardship roles was extraordinary. His invaluable contributions were recognised in 2023, when he was appointed an Honorary Member of IACS – an honour reflecting his tireless efforts on behalf of the Association.



Charles was a team leader at the WSL Institute for Snow and Avalanche Research SLF in Davos, Switzerland, where his work on snow research earned him international recognition. His passion for snow science was evident in his pioneering work on the SNOWPACK model, a key tool in snow cover modelling. He was particularly dedicated to making precise snow measurements, and many young scientists benefited from his instruction at the face of a freshly cut snow profile. His interest in detail made him perfect for developing classifications, and he was a driver of the International Classification for Seasonal Snow on the Ground, leading a working group that produced the widely recognised glossary published by UNESCO in 2009.

A significant part of Charles's legacy is his work on Global Cryosphere Watch (GCW), a crosscutting activity of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). His meticulous work, which included attending countless meetings, building consensus, and providing detailed technical and scientific contributions, has helped shape best practices for the global measurement of the cryosphere.

Charles's distinguished career was marked not only by his administrative acumen but also by his exceptional ability to bring people together. He encouraged scientists from around the world to join the IACS Bureau, to take on higher office, or establish IACS working groups. He had an instinct for recognising those with the right attributes for service roles and encouraged them, graciously but with persistence, until they accepted.

Charles was a quiet yet passionate leader, known for his knowledge, his commitment to collaboration, and his attention to detail. He was a friend and mentor, and his absence will be deeply felt by all those who worked with him. His legacy will continue in the many people he mentored, the research he advanced, and the future of cryospheric science he helped shape, especially in IACS where he was a force. We will miss him.

(Andrew Mackintosh and Liss Andreassen)

See full obituary and personal greetings from past and present IACS bureau members and other colleagues on Charles' passing on the IACS homepage: [Charles Fierz obituary – IACS](#)

Report from Patagonian Icefields Research Program (PIRP25)

The PIRP25 field trip took place from November 12 to December 1. It was an amazing experience of adventure, friendship and teamwork with participants from Chile, Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Nepal, India, España, EEUU and Canada. The team included early research students, faculties, local park rangers and mountain guides. The first days at Raky Hostel (Puerto Natales, Chile) were important to start to get to know each other, and we had time to prepare field gear, scientific equipment and the science projects chosen by each student. This preparation was essential because it prepared us for the next two weeks of field and tough teamwork in the Bernal Glacier (Parque Nacional Kawésqar, Chile).

In the first week we held workshops about glaciological/scientific disciplines and field-science techniques. Some interesting workshops were Glacial geomorphology, Dendochronology, Science communication, Ground penetrating radars (GPR) and Leave no trace. After that, in the second week, we focused on individual science projects, which involved the multi-technique study of the Bernal Glacier. Those projects were: Drone surveys, Supraglacial dynamics, River Streamflow, Sedimentology, Historical images, GPR, Geomorphology, GNSS Interferometric Reflectometry, Geothermal heatflow, Bathymetry and Ablation stakes-Lake Measurements.

Back in the Raky Hostel after the two-week trip, we enjoyed a delicious typical dinner of Patagonia. The final days were important to process the experience in the field, both scientific and emotional. The data pre-processing and the team meetings were important to organize the data and be able to understand what we did. To conclude PIRP25, we presented our experiences and served homemade cookies we made as a token of gratitude to the Puerto Natales community.

In the PIRP25 we worked on many scientific projects and learn to collaborate with other people with other traditions. This experience provided me with great field techniques and glaciology concepts, and also very valuable connections for future scientific work. I thank the International Association of Cryospheric Sciences (IACS) for supporting the program.

(Report and photos by Pedro Granovsky Moroni, Argentina. Ph.D. student, PIRP 2025 scholarship recipient)





Scientists crossing a blue-ice field in the Ellsworth Mountains, West-Antarctica, on 28 November 2025. Blue-ice areas cover about 1% of Antarctica. They represent old ice that initially formed through transformation of snow to ice in the inner parts of the ice sheet and then flowed to the outer reaches and became exposed there. Katabatic winds blow deposited snow from the surface, keeping the ice surface snow-free over large reaches. Net mass loss by sublimation is compensated by upward movement due to the typical ice-sheet flow pattern, which can bring bottom-derived debris to the surface. Meteorites that have fallen in the accumulation zones have also been collected in blue-ice areas. Isotope records from surface profiles have been compared with deep ice core records, suggesting that the blue-ice in the Ellsworth Mountains is 10-100 ka old and thus dates from the last glacial period. Photo and text by Thorsteinn Thorsteinsson, Icelandic Meteorological Office, during the 2025 Antarctic expedition organized by the Chilean Antarctic Institute (<https://inach.cl>).

Portrait of Mathieu Morlighem

Read the portrait of our IACS president Mathieu Morlighem in the [February IUGG newsletter](#). He writes about how he got into his career on ice sheets by accident and he encourages young students and researchers to get involved in IACS and IUGG. He also has some words of wisdom on maintaining a healthy work-life balance.



About IACS

The International Association of Cryospheric Sciences (IACS) is a constituent Association of the International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics (IUGG).

IACS promotes and sponsors workshops, symposia and educational activities.

IACS has targeted working groups, joint commissions and bodies on cryospheric topics.

IACS offers free individual membership: www.cryosphericosciences.org

The IACS newsletter is issued 2-4 times a year.

Previous newsletters are found on: cryosphericosciences.org/newsletter/