

## Alpine and Glacial Ecology in Norway (Field Course)

First year Biological Sciences optional module

Adobe Flash Player or QuickTime is required for video playback. [Get the latest Flash Player](#) [Get the latest version of QuickTime](#)

A lot of science is done out in the field and learning field techniques and experiencing biology in the field is really important. We run a series of field courses in the School of Biosciences, one of which is the alpine field Biology in Norway course. This runs in the summer between the first and second year. We go to Finse in Norway, which is 1,200 metres up and can only be accessed by train.

The field station is within two miles of a glacier and we spend a lot of time out in the field looking at adaptations of plants and animals to that harsh environment in which they find themselves. You experience a series of techniques building on the first year course that you may have done; using quadrats to assess plant distribution and using pitfall traps and even lemming traps to look at the distribution of animals in the area.

Obviously, with receding glaciers there's a good opportunity to look at succession as we move away from the glacier as new land becomes exposed. The course is taught in a week and in the course you have a series of lectures, you do some presentation and you do a group project out in the field. At the end of the course there's a short test that complements the work that you have done in the field to find out how much you know about field biology. It's an excellent course whether you're going to be a field biologist or not.

The course is taught by staff from the University of Birmingham who come out to Norway with you but if people drop into the research station from the universities of Oslo or Bergen they also help us and give us some lectures as well; be they on lemmings or climate change or whatever their research speciality happens to be.

So bear in mind when choosing your courses that not all biology is done in the lab. Some of it can be usefully done in the field and there may be careers that you need that type of experience for.

[Return to course page \(javascript:history.go\(-1\)\)](#)