

Frozen In Time – Book Review
Chapter 2 – Why Live in Siberia?
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A good question! Although I agree with Oard that mammoths probably did not migrate, his reasoning against this migration is flawed. He states, “There likely would be an adequate food supply in southern Siberia or further south. There would be no need to migrate north.” If this reasoning is applied to all migrating animals today, they would all live at southern locations. The birds which migrate north each spring in the United States have no need to do so, since there is adequate food at their winter locations in the tropics. If this were true, then all birds would end up living in the tropics around the equator, and we would have none in northern latitudes.

Oard mentions the bogs, and how they would make it very hard to move around. He goes on to quote another author, “Neither mammoth or bison could exist in the sort of tundra that exists there today.” I agree. So the real question is...what was it like thousands of years ago when the mammoth lived there? The study of past climates is called Paleoclimatology. For Siberia, one study¹ shows that from 60,000 to 55,000 years ago, Siberia had very cold winters. This was followed by a long stable period of cold winters, until about 24,000 years ago. Between 20,000 and 11,000 years ago, global warming is indicated, and more recently, since 4,500 years ago. However, reading Oard, one would assume that it only has one temperature range...very, very cold! In reality, temperatures have varied over thousands of years. Just like today, where we have vast grasslands over Canada (similar in latitude to Siberia), Siberia also has vast grasslands for the mammoth to graze on. It’s not as simple as Oard makes it out to be.

Starving to Death Amidst Abundance (Page 26)

“There is hardly any food in Siberia today for all those wholly mammoths and other animals.” It doesn’t matter how much food there is in Siberia today...the question is...what types of food were there in the past? Also, if you remember from earlier in the book, the stomachs of the frozen mammoths had plant matter, and in one case, an animal had food in its mouth. Clearly, there were plants there in the past, which the mammoth fed upon! If there were not, their stomachs and mouths would have been empty! He goes on to say a mammoth requires 400 to 650 pounds of food a day, and asks the question “Where is such feed going to come from in Siberia?” Obviously, it was there, since we have direct evidence from their stomachs that they were eating! Again, the issue is not what is in Siberia today (which Oard incessantly refers to), it is what plants were growing in Siberia thousands of years ago. An argument based on current conditions in Siberia is useless, but I’m afraid we will see this faulty argument throughout the book.

The Climate Enigma (Page 27)

One claim here is that many Ice Age computer simulations indicate an ice sheet in Siberia. Evidence from the field indicates otherwise. In one study, there was no evidence for an ice sheet.¹ (Just because there is no evidence for one, does not mean that it did not exist.) Thus, Oard's criticism of how the mammoth could survive in an ice sheet covered Siberia may be unfounded. He goes on to say that glacial debris indicates that only the mountains were glaciated. He basically set up a strawman argument.

Next he mentions that some scientists try to justify their model by claiming that a colder Ice Age climate would help the mammoth, as there would be less melting of the permafrost, hence less bogs. I agree with the scientists. Oard turns this around, saying it would cause a shorter growing season. True, but not a problem given the abundance of food in the tundra, which Oard has previously mentioned. Also, we don't know the animal population...it probably adjusted itself based on the available food. He goes on to say that some of the animals could not endure the cold weather. "Other animals" are not the issue...it is the mammoth we are concerned with. With its winter coat, it's not a problem.

He then contradicts himself. Earlier, he said we would be surprised by the amount of lush vegetation in the tundra...now he says "Not much edible vegetation would grow in such a climate." Which is it? Yes, colder Ice Age climates would make it worse...but his simplistic model does not account for the up and down cycling temperatures of the most recent Ice Age. There would be hard times during the colder temps, but warmth is just a few years away.

He mentions a paradox in a quote, basically how do you keep a mammoth alive and well in seemingly impossible conditions. Since mammoths obviously were living during the entire extent of the last Ice Age, they did not see it as a problem. Apparently, large numbers did not make it through the Ice Age, but the mammoth species survived the Ice Age...so they found a way. We merely have to strive to understand how.

He goes on to explain that Siberia was apparently a huge grassland during the Ice Age. A bit of a simplistic statement, but apparently true. It presents no issues for an old earth, however. It illustrates a huge strawman argument. He has spent several pages painting a bleak picture, and then gives a simplistic answer that apparently most scientists do not see. Of course, in the mind of the young earth creationist reader, Oard comes over as a genius for solving this dilemma! "Mr. Ice Age" (a nickname for Oard) does it again! (In reality, he is using references from secular science...they have already figured this out before he did.)

He then paints a picture of a long growing season, and lush vegetation. No problems here, as the warmer periods between the individual Ice Age segments, particularly from 20,000 to 11,000 years ago, provide an answer.

Oard is effectively using [strawman arguments](#) to set himself up as an expert, so that young earth creationists accept his statements at face value. Unfortunately, this is part of the young earth sub-culture. People are expected to accept the words of so-called experts, pastors, etc, as the truth, and there is no need to investigate it. When asked, they readily say they are free to investigate it for themselves, but they know that they will rely on young earth sources, and Morton's Demon (www.answersincreation.org/mortond.htm) will keep them from truly examining the evidence.

¹ Paleoclimate Studies on Bykovsky Peninsula, Northern Siberia
http://www.awi-bremerhaven.de/Publications/Mey2002a_abstract.html. This study uses ice wedges. For a description of what an Ice Wedge is, see Ice Wedges, Polygons, and Pingos (<http://arctic.fws.gov/permeycl.htm>).