



The contribution of satellite Earth observations to the International Polar Year

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Since the International Geophysical Year observations of the Earth from space have greatly increased the volume and variety of data available for the Polar Regions. Access to consistent, repeatable and coincident datasets with regional resolution for the large areas that the poles cover is of high value. This is particularly the case at high latitudes where hostile and remote environments make data collection by other means both difficult and expensive. A large proportion of scientific research during the current International Polar Year will make use of satellite observations as inputs to scientific studies or supporting operations. This paper will highlight the application of satellite observations to the International Polar Year and the legacy that these projects will contribute to the long-term understanding of the Polar Regions. Among the IPY projects highlighted will be the Landsat Image Mosaic of Antarctica (LIMA), Polar View and the Global Inter-agency IPY Polar Snapshot Year (GIIPSY). LIMA will result in the highest resolution colour satellite image mosaic of the Antarctic continent and Polar View is providing real-time observations of sea ice to support ship navigation and deliver sea ice datasets as inputs to operational models. GIIPSY is coordinating the requirements to obtain space borne snapshots of the Polar Regions and key high latitude processes.