MEaSUREs InSAR-Based Antarctica Ice Velocity Map, Version 2

USER GUIDE

How to Cite These Data

As a condition of using these data, you must include a citation:

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1 DETAILED DATA DESCRIPTION

1.1 Format

The data are formatted in Network Common Data Form, Version 4 (NetCDF-4) (.nc) following version 1.6 of the Climate and Forecast (CF) metadata conventions. For more information about working with NetCDF formatted data, visit the UCAR Unidata Network Common Data Form Web site.

1.2 File and Directory Structure

Data are available on the HTTPS site in the https://n5eil01u.ecs.nsidc.org/MEASURES/NSIDC-0484.002/ directory in one folder, 1996.01.01/. In this folder, there is one file: antarctica_ice_velocity_450m_v2.nc.

1.3 File Naming Convention

This data set includes one file named antarctica_ice_velocity_450m_v2.nc (450 m grid spacing).

1.4 File Size

The size of this data set is approximately 4 GB.

1.5 Spatial Coverage

The data set spans the continent of Antarctica. Figure 1 provides a map of the spatial coverage.

Southernmost Latitude: 90° S
Northernmost Latitude: 60° S
Westernmost Longitude: 180° W
Easternmost Longitude: 180° E
1.5.1 Spatial Coverage Map

Figure 1. Antarctic ice velocity derived from RADARSAT-1, ERS-1 and 2, ALOS PALSAR, ENVISAT ASAR, RADARSAT-2, Landsat-8, and Copernicus Sentinel-1, color-coded on a logarithmic scale and overlaid on a MODIS mosaic of Antarctica. Projection is polar stereographic at 71° S secant plane.
1.5.2 Spatial Resolution

The spatial resolution of the velocity map is 450 m.

1.5.3 Projection

Polar stereographic with true scale at 71° S. Refer to Polar Stereographic Projection and Grid page for more information and polar stereographic grid definitions.

1.6 Temporal Coverage

The data were collected between 1996 and 2016. Detailed information is provided in the 3 section.

1.7 Parameter or Variable

This data set provides a comprehensive ice velocity map of the Antarctic Ice Sheet posted at 450 m grid spacing. The velocity components for the x and y direction, as defined by the polar stereographic grid, are stored in the NetCDF variables named VX and VY and are recorded in m/yr. Error estimates for the velocity components are provided as variables ERRX and ERRY; however, these values should be used more as an indication of relative quality rather than absolute error. More information about the error estimates is provided in the 2.1 section as well as in Rignot, et al. 2011. The data also include the standard deviations for the velocity estimates (STDX,STDY), as well as a count of scenes (CNT) used to estimate the values for each pixel. Figure 2 shows the error and standard deviation estimates, and Figure 3 shows the total number of measurements used to estimate the velocity. Figure 4 shows a sample image of the data as a whole Table 1 provides a complete list of the variables and their descriptions.
Figure 2. Standard deviation of vx and vy (top row) and standard error of the mean vx and vy on a linear scale color-coded from 1 to greater than 32 m/yr
1.7.1 Variable Description

The variables included in the NetCDF file are described in Table 1. All variables have grid dimensions of 12445 x 12445 and are posted at 450 m spacing.
Table 1. Variable Description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Data Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VX</td>
<td>Component of velocity in m/yr in x direction</td>
<td>float</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VY</td>
<td>Component of velocity in m/yr in y direction</td>
<td>float</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERRX</td>
<td>Estimated error in m/yr in x direction</td>
<td>float</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERRY</td>
<td>Estimated error in m/yr in y direction</td>
<td>float</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STDX</td>
<td>Standard deviation of ( vx )</td>
<td>float</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STDY</td>
<td>Standard deviation of ( vy )</td>
<td>float</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNT</td>
<td>Count of scenes used per pixel</td>
<td>integer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To convert the \( VX \) and \( VY \) velocity components into magnitude (speed) and direction (angle), use the following equations:

1. \[
\text{speed} = \sqrt{(vx^2 + vy^2)}
\]
2. \[
\text{angle} = \arctan \left( \frac{vy}{vx} \right)
\]
3. \[
\text{error} = \sqrt{(errx^2 + erry^2)}
\]
4. \[
\text{error of flow direction} = \frac{\text{error}}{2 \times \text{speed}} \text{ (see Mouginot et al., 2012)}
\]

However, users should take care when computing the inverse tangent due to the function's inherent ambiguities. While the standard arctan function typically does not account for angles that differ by 180°, most modern computer languages and math software packages include the function \( \text{ATAN2} \), which uses the signs of both vector components to place the angle in the proper quadrant.
1.7.2 Sample Image

Figure 4. Antarctic ice velocity derived from RADARSAT-1, ERS-1 and 2, ALOS PALSAR, ENVISAT ASAR, RADARSAT-2, TerraSAR-X, TanDEM-X, Copernicus Sentinel-1, and Landsat-8, color-coded on a logarithmic scale.

2 SOFTWARE AND TOOLS

Unidata at the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research maintains an extensive list of freely available Software for Manipulating or Displaying NetCDF Data.

2.1 Quality Assessment

A detailed description of these data and their quality is provided in Rignot, et al., 2011. The precision of ice flow mapping varies with the sensor, the geographic location, the technique of interferometric analysis (refer to 3 for details), the time period of analysis, the repeat cycle, and the amount of data stacking. The error estimates are summarized in Table 2. The error map in Figure 2 takes into account the following error sources:
• Error of speckle tracking and interferometric phase analysis respectively (SAR only)
• Errors caused by ionospheric perturbations (strongest in the azimuth direction, stronger in L-band compared to C-band, stronger in the East Antarctic Ice Sheet (EAIS) compared to the West Antarctic Ice Sheet (WAIS) because ionospheric perturbations are more abundant near the magnetic pole
• Error of feature tracking analysis (Landsat-8 only)
• Data stacking (reduces the error noise as the square root of the number of interferometric pairs averaged)
• Respective weight of each instrument in the mosaicking

The total error is the square root of the sum of the independent errors squared. More details on the error estimates are provided in Mouginot, et al., 2017. Table 2 provides the error in ice velocity mapping for each sensor, without data stacking, in range (Rg) and azimuth (Az).

Table 2. Error in Ice Velocity Mapping (m/yr)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platform/Sensor</th>
<th>Nominal Repeat Cycle (day)</th>
<th>Error (m/yr)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALOS (WAIS)/PALSAR</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALOS (EAIS)/PALSAR</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENVISAT/ASAR</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RADARSAT-2/SAR</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RADARSAT-1/SAR</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentinel-1/SAR</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landsat-8/OLI</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>34*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TanDEM-X (TDX)/TerraSAR-X (TSX)/SAR</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tandem ERS-1 and -2 (phase)/SAR</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Landsat uses repeat image feature tracking in x and y

3 DATA ACQUISITION AND PROCESSING

3.1 Theory of Measurements

This data set provides a comprehensive ice velocity map for the entire Antarctic ice sheet, derived from a variety of satellite radar interferometry data. (See the 3.2.1 section for a complete list.) Several analysis techniques using SAR data were used to generate the maps:

• Speckle tracking in both along (azimuth) and across (range) track directions
• Calculation of two dimensional offsets in amplitude imagery
• Combinations of (range) interferometric phases along two independent tracks
• Combination of interferometric phases of two independent tracks to retrieve the surface flow vector
In all cases, surface parallel flow is assumed, a conventional approach for ice sheets. The Landsat-8 data are processed using repeat image feature tracking (see Mouginot, et al. 2017).

3.2 Data Acquisition Methods

This digital image mosaic was built from the sources listed in 3.2.1, as well as the following:

- The RADARSAT-2 data acquired during spring 2009 was augmented by a 2011 gap-filling campaign
- Advanced Land Observing Satellite (ALOS) Phased Array type L-band Synthetic Aperture Radar (PALSAR) data acquired during fall 2007-2008


3.2.1 Data Sources

Table 3 describes the data sources used in this data set.
Table 3. Temporal and spatial coverage of source satellite data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platform/Sensor</th>
<th>Space Agency</th>
<th>Look Dir.</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Repeat Cycle (day)</th>
<th>Incidence Angle</th>
<th>Resolution $Rg \times Az$ (m)</th>
<th>Frequency (GHz)</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ERS-1 &amp; 2/SAR</td>
<td>European Space Agency (ESA)</td>
<td>Right</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>13x4</td>
<td>5.33</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RADARSAT-1/SAR</td>
<td>Canadian Space Agency (CSA)</td>
<td>Left/Right</td>
<td>Varies</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>18-47</td>
<td>12x5-17x6</td>
<td>5.33</td>
<td>1997/2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENVISAT/ASAR</td>
<td>ESA</td>
<td>Right</td>
<td>IS2</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>13x5</td>
<td>5.33</td>
<td>2007-2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RADARSAT-2/SAR</td>
<td>CSA</td>
<td>Left</td>
<td>S5/EH4</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>41/57</td>
<td>12x5</td>
<td>5.33</td>
<td>2009-2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALOS/PALSAR</td>
<td>Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA)</td>
<td>Right</td>
<td>FBS</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>7x4</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>2006-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentinel-1/SAR</td>
<td>ESA</td>
<td>Right</td>
<td>IW-T OPS</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12x43</td>
<td>5.33</td>
<td>2014-2016</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landsat-8/OLI</td>
<td>USGS/NASA</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Panchromatic</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>15x15</td>
<td>2013-2016</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TanDEM-X/TerraSAR-X/SAR</td>
<td>German Space Agency (DLR)</td>
<td>right</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>1.4x1.8</td>
<td>9.65</td>
<td>2011-2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2.2 Version History

Version 2.0 was released April 2017. Refer to Table 4 for this data set's version history:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>V2.0</td>
<td>Added post 2011 SAR data (RADARSAT-2, Sentinel-1, TanDEM-X/TerraSAR-X) and Landsat-8 optical data (March 2017). The mosaicking method was updated to make best use of the large number of scenes used for the mosaic. New quality parameters including the standard deviation and count variables are provided in the NetCDF file.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V1.2</td>
<td>Binary data file format discontinued. Data available in NetCDF only (August 2015).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V1.1</td>
<td>Added a second mosaic at 450 m resolution (September 2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V1</td>
<td>Initial version (October, 2011)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3 References and Related Publications


3.3.1 RELATED DATA COLLECTIONS

- MEaSUREs Antarctic Grounding Line from Differential Satellite Radar Interferometry
- MEaSUREs InSAR-Based Ice Velocity Maps of Central Antarctica: 1997 and 2009
- MEaSUREs InSAR-Based Ice Velocity of the Amundsen Sea Embayment, Antarctica
- MEaSUREs Antarctic Boundaries for IPY 2007-2009 from Satellite Radar

3.3.2 RELATED WEB SITES

- NASA MEaSUREs Data at NSIDC
- NASA MEaSUREs

3.4 Contacts and Acknowledgments

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3.4.1 Acknowledgments:

These data were generated through a grant from the NASA MEaSUREs program.

Spaceborne Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) acquisitions were provided through the following data agencies:

ALOS PALSAR: Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA)
ENVISAT ASAR, ERS-1, ERS-2: European Space Agency (ESA)
Sentinel-1: Copernicus/ESA
RADARSAT-1, RADARSAT-2: Canadian Space Agency (CSA)

Landsat-8 (optical) data were made available by United States Geological Survey (USGS).

Data acquisitions between 2006 and 2016 are courtesy of the International Polar Year (IPY) Space Task Group and its successor, the Polar Space Task Group (PSTG).


4 DOCUMENT INFORMATION

4.1 Publication Date

April 2017

4.2 Date Last Updated

October 2020