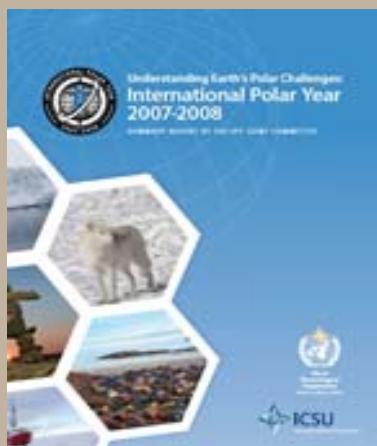


# Understanding Earth's Polar Challenges: International Polar Year 2007-2008

SUMMARY BY THE ICSU/WMO IPY JOINT COMMITTEE

Editors: **Igor Krupnik, Ian Allison, Robin Bell, Paul Culter, David Hik  
Jeronimo Lopez-Martinez, Volker Rachold, Eduard Sarukhanian, and Colin Summerhayes**



The International Polar Year (IPY) 2007–2008 co-sponsored by ICSU and WMO became the largest coordinated research program in the Earth's polar regions. IPY 2007-2008 involved a large range of disciplines, from geophysics to ecology, also embracing human health, social sciences, and the humanities. All IPY projects included partners from several nations and/or from indigenous communities and polar residents' organizations. An estimated 50,000 researchers, local observers, educators, students, and support personnel from more than 60 nations were involved in the 228 international IPY projects (170 in science, 1 in data management, and 57 in education and outreach) and related national efforts. IPY generated intensive research and observations in the Arctic and Antarctica over a two-year period, March 1, 2007–March 1, 2009, with many activities continuing beyond that date. IPY 2007–2008 generated a much anticipated 'pulse' (momentum) in the form of substantial new funding for polar research and monitoring programs, new observational and analysis technologies, integrated system-level approaches, and a broadened circle of stakeholders. It introduced new research and organizational paradigms that will have a lasting legacy of their own. It showed the power of integrative vision, and consolidated new trans-disciplinary approaches.

The ICSU-WMO Joint Committee for IPY produced this preliminary summary of IPY activities in which the Committee and associated teams were directly involved. Comprising 38 chapters in five parts (Planning, Research, Observations, Outreach, and Legacies), the report covers the development of IPY 2007–2008 for almost a decade, from 2001 till summer 2010. It has engaged hundreds of contributing authors from all disciplines and more than 20 nations. This broad overview demonstrates the extensive and essential contribution made by participating nations and organizations, and provides a prospective blueprint for future polar research.

Published by CCI Press in collaboration with the University of the Arctic

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Occasional Publications Series No. 69 (2011)

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