ENCyclopedia of
REMOTE SENSING
Encyclopedia of Earth Sciences Series

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF REMOTE SENSING

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About the Series Editor
Professor Charles W. Finkl has edited and/or contributed to more than eight volumes in the Encyclopedia of Earth Sciences Series. For the past 25 years he has been the Executive Director of the Coastal Education & Research Foundation and Editor-in-Chief of the international Journal of Coastal Research. In addition to these duties, he is Professor at Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton, Florida, USA. He is a graduate of the University of Western Australia (Perth) and previously worked for a wholly owned Australian subsidiary of the International Nickel Company of Canada (INCO). During his career, he acquired field experience in Australia; the Caribbean; South America; SW Pacific islands; southern Africa; Western Europe; and the Pacific Northwest, Midwest, and Southeast USA.

Founding Series Editor
Professor Rhodes W. Fairbridge (deceased) has edited more than 24 Encyclopedias in the Earth Sciences Series. During his career he has worked as a petroleum geologist in the Middle East, been a WW II intelligence officer in the SW Pacific and led expeditions to the Sahara, Arctic Canada, Arctic Scandinavia, Brazil and New Guinea. He was Emeritus Professor of Geology at Columbia University and was affiliated with the Goddard Institute for Space Studies.
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contributors</th>
<th>xi</th>
<th>Calibration, Optical/Infrared Passive Sensors</th>
<th>47</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preface</td>
<td>xxiii</td>
<td>Calibration, Synthetic Aperture Radars</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>xxv</td>
<td>Anthony Freeman</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acoustic Radiation, Ocean</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Calibration, Scatterometers</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acoustic Tomography, Ocean</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>David Long</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acoustic Waves, Propagation</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Climate Data Records</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acoustic Waves, Scattering</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Mathew R. P. Sapiano</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aerosols</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Cloud Liquid Water</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural Expansion and Abandonment</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Fuzhong Weng</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural and Remote Sensing</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Cloud Properties</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Pollution</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Matthew Lebsock and Steve Cooper</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atmospheric General Circulation Models</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Coastal Ecosystems</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calibration and Validation</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>William Gail</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calibration, Microwave Radiometers</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Cosmic-Ray Hydrometeorology</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributors</td>
<td>xi</td>
<td>Cost Benefit Assessment</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preface</td>
<td>xxiii</td>
<td>Crop Stress</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>xxv</td>
<td>Susan Moran</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acoustic Radiation, Ocean</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Cryosphere and Polar Region Observing System</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acoustic Tomography, Ocean</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mark Drinkwater</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acoustic Waves, Propagation</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acoustic Waves, Scattering</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aerosols</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural Expansion and Abandonment</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural and Remote Sensing</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Pollution</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atmospheric General Circulation Models</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calibration and Validation</td>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calibration, Microwave Radiometers</td>
<td>46</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Page</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cryosphere, Climate Change Effects</td>
<td>98</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Aixue Hu</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cryosphere, Climate Change Feedbacks</td>
<td>101</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Peter J. Minnett</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cryosphere, Measurements and Applications</td>
<td>104</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Roger Barry</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Access</td>
<td>119</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ron Weaver</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Archival and Distribution</td>
<td>121</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Mark A. Parsons</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Archives and Repositories</td>
<td>127</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ruth Duerr</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Assimilation</td>
<td>131</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Dennis McLaughlin</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Policies</td>
<td>134</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ray Harris</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Processing, SAR Sensors</td>
<td>136</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Jakob van Zyl</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision Fusion, Classification of Multisource Data</td>
<td>140</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Björn Waske and Jón Atli Benediktsson</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earth Radiation Budget, Top-of-Atmosphere Radiation</td>
<td>145</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Bing Lin</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earth System Models</td>
<td>146</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Andrea Donnellan</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electromagnetic Theory and Wave Propagation</td>
<td>150</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Yang Du</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging Applications</td>
<td>159</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>William Gail</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging Technologies</td>
<td>162</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Jason Hyon</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging Technologies, Free-Space Optical Communications</td>
<td>163</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Hamid Hemmati</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging Technologies, Lidar</td>
<td>177</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>David M. Tratt</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging Technologies, Radar</td>
<td>185</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Alina Moussessian</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Treaties</td>
<td>196</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Alexander de Sherbinin</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging Technologies, Radiometer</td>
<td>186</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Todd Gaier</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging Technologies, Sensor Web</td>
<td>190</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Mahta Moghaddam, Agnelo Silva and Mingyan Liu</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Treaties</td>
<td>196</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Alexander de Sherbinin</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisheries</td>
<td>201</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Frank S. Marzano</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisheries</td>
<td>202</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Cara Wilson</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forestry</td>
<td>210</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Dar Roberts</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gamma and X-Radiation</td>
<td>219</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Enrico Costa and Fabio Muleri</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geomorphology</td>
<td>237</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>David Pieri</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geological Mapping Using Earth’s Magnetic Field</td>
<td>232</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Vernon H. Singhroy and Mark Pilkington</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geophysical Retrieval, Forward Models in Remote Sensing</td>
<td>241</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Eugene Ustinov</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geophysical Retrieval, Inverse Problems in Remote Sensing</td>
<td>247</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Eugene Ustinov</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geophysical Retrieval, Overview</td>
<td>251</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Eugene Ustinov</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Climate Observing System</td>
<td>254</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Jean-Louis Fellous</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS)</td>
<td>257</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Steffen Fritz</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Land Observing System</td>
<td>261</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Johannes A. Dolman</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Programs, Operational Systems</td>
<td>263</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Mary Kicza</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPS, Occultation Systems</td>
<td>264</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Chi O. Ao</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Page</td>
<td>Subtitle</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ice Sheets and Ice Volume</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>Robert Thomas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Icebergs</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>Donald L. Murphy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Collaboration</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>Lisa Robock Shaffer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ionospheric Effects on the Propagation of Electromagnetic Waves</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>Attila Komjathy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irrigation Management</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>Steven R. Evett, Paul D. Colaizzi, Susan A. O'Shaughnessy, Douglas J. Hunsaker and Robert G. Evans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Surface Emissivity</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>Alan Gillespie</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Surface Roughness</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>Thomas Farr</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Surface Temperature</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>Alan Gillespie</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Surface Topography</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>G. Bryan Bailey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land-Atmosphere Interactions, Evapotranspiration</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>Joshua B. Fisher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landslides</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>Vernon H. Singhroy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law of Remote Sensing</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>Joanne Irene Gabrynowicz</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lidar Systems</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>Robert Menzies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lightning</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>Rachel I. Albrecht, Daniel J. Cecil and Steven J. Goodman</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limb Sounding, Atmospheric</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>Nathaniel Livesey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO)</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>Baijun Tian and Duane Waliser</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magnetic Field</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>Nils Olsen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media, Electromagnetic Characteristics</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>Yang Du</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microwave Dielectric Properties of Materials</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>Martti Hallikainen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microwave Horn Antennas</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>Yahya Rahmat-Samii</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microwave Radiometers</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>Niels Skou</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microwave Radiometers, Conventional</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>Niels Skou</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microwave Radiometers, Correlation</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>Christopher Ruf</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microwave Radiometers, Interferometers</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>Manuel Martin-Neira</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microwave Radiometers, Polarimeters</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>David Kunkee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microwave Subsurface Propagation and Scattering</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>Alexander Yarovoy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microwave Surface Scattering and Emission</td>
<td>403</td>
<td>David R. Lyzenga</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission Costs of Earth-Observing Satellites</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>Randall Friedl and Stacey Boland</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission Operations, Science Applications/Requirements</td>
<td>407</td>
<td>David L. Glackin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observational Platforms, Aircraft, and UAVs</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>Jeffrey Myers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observational Systems, Satellite</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>David L. Glackin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ocean Applications of Interferometric SAR</td>
<td>426</td>
<td>Roland Romeiser</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ocean Data Telemetry</td>
<td>429</td>
<td>Michael R. Prior-Jones</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ocean Internal Waves</td>
<td>433</td>
<td>Werner Alpers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ocean Measurements and Applications, Ocean Color</td>
<td>437</td>
<td>Samantha Lavender</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ocean Modeling and Data Assimilation</td>
<td>446</td>
<td>Detlef Stammer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ocean Surface Topography</td>
<td>455</td>
<td>Lee-Lueng Fu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Page</td>
<td>Authors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ocean Surface Velocity</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>Bertrand Chapron, Johnny Johannessen and Fabrice Collard</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ocean, Measurements and Applications</td>
<td>469</td>
<td>Ian Robinson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ocean-Atmosphere Water Flux and Evaporation</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>W. Timothy Liu and Xiaosu Xie</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operational Transition</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>Richard Anthes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optical/Infrared, Atmospheric Absorption/Transmission, and Media Spectral Properties</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>Gian Luigi Liberti</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optical/Infrared, Radiative Transfer</td>
<td>495</td>
<td>Knut Stamnes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optical/Infrared, Scattering by Aerosols and Hydrometeors</td>
<td>498</td>
<td>Gian Luigi Liberti</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pattern Recognition and Classification</td>
<td>503</td>
<td>Björn Waske and Jón Atli Benediktsson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polar Ice Dynamics</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>James Maslanik</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polar Ocean Navigation</td>
<td>512</td>
<td>Lawson Brigham</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policies and Economics</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>Roberta Balstad</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Precision Agriculture</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>Kelly Thorp</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processing Levels</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>Ron Weaver</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public-Private Partnerships</td>
<td>520</td>
<td>William Gail</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radar, Altimeters</td>
<td>525</td>
<td>Keith Raney</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radar, Scatterometers</td>
<td>532</td>
<td>David Long</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radar, Synthetic Aperture</td>
<td>536</td>
<td>Keith Raney</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radars</td>
<td>547</td>
<td>Keith Raney</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radiation (Natural) Within the Earth’s Environment</td>
<td>558</td>
<td>Anthony England</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radiation Sources (Natural) and Characteristics</td>
<td>574</td>
<td>Anthony England</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radiation, Electromagnetic</td>
<td>576</td>
<td>Frank S. Marzano</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radiation, Galactic, and Cosmic Background</td>
<td>581</td>
<td>David M. Le Vine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radiation, Multiple Scattering</td>
<td>585</td>
<td>Frank S. Marzano</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radiation, Polarization, and Coherence</td>
<td>588</td>
<td>Yang Du</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radiation, Solar and Lunar</td>
<td>591</td>
<td>David M. Le Vine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radiation, Volume Scattering</td>
<td>595</td>
<td>Leung Tsang and Kung-Hau Ding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radiative Transfer, Solution Techniques</td>
<td>606</td>
<td>Rodolfo Guzi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radiative Transfer, Theory</td>
<td>624</td>
<td>Frank S. Marzano</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio-Frequency Interference (RFI) in Passive Microwave Sensing</td>
<td>634</td>
<td>David Kunkee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rainfall</td>
<td>640</td>
<td>Ralph Ferraro</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rangelands and Grazing</td>
<td>653</td>
<td>Hunt E. Raymond, Jr.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflected Solar Radiation Sensors, Multiangle Imaging</td>
<td>658</td>
<td>David J. Diner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflected Solar Radiation Sensors, Polarimetric</td>
<td>663</td>
<td>David J. Diner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflector Antennas</td>
<td>668</td>
<td>Yahya Rahmat-Samii</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remote Sensing and Geologic Structure</td>
<td>681</td>
<td>Vernon H. Singhroy and Paul Lowman</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remote Sensing, Historical Perspective</td>
<td>684</td>
<td>Vincent V. Salomonson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publication Title</td>
<td>Page Numbers</td>
<td>Authors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remote Sensing, Physics and Techniques</td>
<td>691</td>
<td>David L. Glackin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource Exploration</td>
<td>702</td>
<td>Fred A. Kruse and Sandra L. Perry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAR-Based Bathymetry</td>
<td>719</td>
<td>Han Wensink and Werner Alpers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sea Ice Albedo</td>
<td>722</td>
<td>Donald Perovich</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sea Ice Concentration and Extent</td>
<td>727</td>
<td>Josefino C. Comiso</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sea Level Rise</td>
<td>743</td>
<td>Josh Willis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sea Surface Salinity</td>
<td>747</td>
<td>Gary Lagerloef</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sea Surface Temperature</td>
<td>754</td>
<td>Peter J. Minnett</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sea Surface Wind/Stress Vector</td>
<td>759</td>
<td>W. Timothy Liu and Xiaosu Xie</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severe Storms</td>
<td>767</td>
<td>Charles A. III Doswell</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snowfall</td>
<td>780</td>
<td>Ralf Bennartz</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soil Moisture</td>
<td>783</td>
<td>Yann Kerr</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soil Properties</td>
<td>788</td>
<td>Alfredo Huete</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solid Earth Mass Transport</td>
<td>791</td>
<td>Erik Ivins</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stratospheric Ozone</td>
<td>796</td>
<td>Michelle Santee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsidence</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>Stuart Marsh and Martin Culshaw</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surface Radiative Fluxes</td>
<td>806</td>
<td>Rachel T. Pinker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surface Truth</td>
<td>815</td>
<td>Christopher Ruf</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surface Water</td>
<td>816</td>
<td>Michael Durand</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrestrial Snow</td>
<td>821</td>
<td>Son V. Nghiem, Dorothy K. Hall, James L. Foster and Gregory Neumann</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thermal Radiation Sensors (Emitted)</td>
<td>830</td>
<td>Simon Hook</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trace Gases, Stratosphere, and Mesosphere</td>
<td>834</td>
<td>Nathaniel Livesey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trace Gases, Troposphere - Detection from Space</td>
<td>838</td>
<td>Pieterernel F. Levet, J. P. Veekind and K. F. Boersma</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trafficability of Desert Terrains</td>
<td>846</td>
<td>Charles Hibbitts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tropospheric Winds</td>
<td>849</td>
<td>Chris Velden</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ultraviolet Remote Sensing</td>
<td>853</td>
<td>Arlin Krueger</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ultraviolet Sensors</td>
<td>860</td>
<td>Arlin Krueger</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Environments, Beijing Case Study</td>
<td>869</td>
<td>Son V. Nghiem, Alessandro Sorichetta, Christopher D. Elvidge, Christopher Small, Deborah Balk, Uwe Deichmann and Gregory Neumann</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Heat Island</td>
<td>878</td>
<td>Lela Prashad</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetation Indices</td>
<td>883</td>
<td>Alfredo Huete</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetation Phenology</td>
<td>886</td>
<td>John Kimball</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volcanism</td>
<td>890</td>
<td>Michael J. Abrams</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water and Energy Cycles</td>
<td>895</td>
<td>Taikan Oki and Pat J.-F. Yeh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Resources</td>
<td>903</td>
<td>Taikan Oki and Pat J.-F. Yeh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Vapor</td>
<td>909</td>
<td>Eric Fetzer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weather Prediction</td>
<td>912</td>
<td>Peter Bauer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wetlands</td>
<td>921</td>
<td>John Melack</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author Index</td>
<td>923</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject Index</td>
<td>925</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tr>
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During the past few decades, the emergence of remote sensing as a discipline – its science, instruments, missions, and applications – has inspired new and comprehensive studies of the Earth. Detailed observations of Earth’s land, ocean and atmospheric processes, and measurements of hitherto unexplored geophysical phenomena have been made possible by remote sensing instruments on ground-based, airborne, and spaceborne platforms. In particular, the unique vantage point of space provides spatially extensive and global perspectives of Earth. Frequent measurements, made hourly, daily, or weekly, over extended periods of years to decades, depending on the observing system and its configuration, have enabled comprehensive studies of Earth’s global system. Remote sensing has thus profoundly altered our understanding of the world in which we live, and has revolutionized the approaches we use to study our environment. Each year the growing number of Earth observing satellites, and the increasingly huge amounts of data and information provided, yield new knowledge and greater appreciation of the changes occurring on our planet, with important implications for future generations of Earth inhabitants. This encyclopedia is a comprehensive reference work on Earth remote sensing that presents the foundations, principles, and state of the art of remote sensing and describes the diverse applications it serves. It covers the concepts, techniques, instrumentation, data analysis, interpretation, and applications of remote sensing. This volume is part of the Encyclopedia of Earth Science series and is organized in the same style as other volumes in the series. The scientific disciplines covered by the series have all benefited in one way or another from the new understanding and discoveries afforded by remote sensing. It is thus timely for publication of an encyclopedia that can link these disciplines and the remote sensing techniques relevant to them in an integrated framework.

The focus of the encyclopedia is on remote sensing of Earth – its atmosphere, oceans, cryosphere, and land surface and subsurface. Some of the techniques described in this volume have their origins in the disciplines of astronomy and astrophysics, and the study of the stars and planets for which, until recently, remote sensing was the only means of obtaining observational scientific data. When applied to Earth, these techniques have blossomed into a remarkably diverse and increasingly sophisticated set of scientific, technological, and computational approaches that all fall under the umbrella of remote sensing. The rapid growth of remote sensing as a discipline is evidenced by the large number of scientific journals now devoted to this field, and the number of courses and degree programs offered at universities around the world. The measurement and interpretation of radiation scattered and emitted by Earth’s atmosphere, surface, and subsurface is what we generally mean when we speak of Earth remote sensing. These measurements are obtained by instruments on remote platforms that include satellites, aircraft, balloons, drones, trucks, and stationary towers. Remote sensing instruments take many forms and are designed to measure electromagnetic radiation in specific wavelength regions of the broad electromagnetic spectrum; some instruments use other forms of radiation such as acoustic radiation. Measurements from the wide array of instruments, operating on the variety of available platforms available, can be processed and analyzed to extract characteristic information about Earth and its constituent biological, chemical, and physical structures, at resolutions from centimeters to thousands of kilometers. This remotely sensed information can be used on its own or combined with direct or ‘in situ’ measurements and geophysical models to give a more comprehensive understanding of the diversity of Earth science phenomena, some of which would be very limited without the unique perspective brought by remote sensing.

It is clear that an attempt to fully cover the breadth and depth of topics in remote sensing is a daunting task. Nevertheless, the need for a compendium that can be used as a reference work for this field, as a living document that
can be updated periodically to capture new advances, is a pressing one. It is with this aim in mind that the Springer Encyclopedia of Remote Sensing was conceived. Both this print version of the encyclopedia, which can be updated with revisions once every several years, and an online version, which can be updated on a more frequent basis by authors of individual entries, are provided. The online version can accommodate introduction of new entries as the need for new topics or treatments emerges. The encyclopedia entries cover topics that include broad introductory surveys as well as more in-depth treatment of some subjects. The entries treat topics of the physical principles of remote sensing in different wavelength regimes, propagation and scattering of radiation, geophysical models, remote sensing instrumentation, retrieval methods, remote sensing platforms and observational configurations. The models and retrieval methods are described with reference to specific applications in atmosphere, ocean, cryosphere, land, and solid earth geophysics. These applications include human impacts of climate change, and the enabling interdisciplinary science, as well as applications of direct societal benefit such as human health, food security, and prediction and mitigation of natural hazards. Earth remote sensing from space has flourished in the past few decades, and has become a truly global enterprise through development of international collaborations and partnerships, with investments from an increasing number of countries in building and operating satellite observational systems. Several entries in this volume have been devoted to describing these programs, and associated international policies and principles.

This encyclopedia is designed to support the needs of students, teachers, and professionals across a broad spectrum of science, technology, and societal applications related to Earth remote sensing. The intended audience includes those with observational interests in the fields of oceanography, atmospheric sciences, meteorology, climate, cryospheric studies, hydrology, geology, solid earth geophysics, ecology, agronomy, forestry, environmental pollution, geography, land use and social studies, among others. The target audience also includes those with interests in remote sensing theory and practice, electromagnetic propagation, radiative transfer modeling, remote sensing instruments, spacecraft systems and orbits, environmental policy and decision-making, resource planning, and monitoring and forecasting of extreme events and natural hazards. In the commercial sector, economists, legal and insurance companies, and commercial and industrial concerns relying on the production, marketing and availability of value-added remote sensing products will also find the encyclopedia a valuable resource. The entries are presented in alphabetical order with titles that are designed to aid searches for specific topics. Cross-referencing using keywords to related entries is also provided to support efficient searches for information of interest to readers. The entries provide bibliographies for further in-depth reading. In summary, though it cannot be claimed that this encyclopedia represents an exhaustive treatment or complete coverage of the field of Earth remote sensing, it is hoped that the volume will serve as a comprehensive and dynamic introduction, and initial entry point, to inspire further reading and study of this exciting and rapidly developing field.

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