



Polar Satellite Imagery for Fire Monitoring and Analysis

Carl Dierking, Jennifer Delamere, Jay Cable, Owen Larsen University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF)/Geographic Information Network of Alaska (GINA)







Outline

- VIIRS Fire Imagery products for fire monitoring & analysis:
 - 1. VIIRS i04 Shortwave IR (3.74 μ m)
 - 2. DayFire RGB (FireColor RGB)
 - 3. VIIRS i05 Longwave IR (11.5 μ m)
 - 4. DayLandCloud RGB
 - 5. TrueColor RGB
 - 6. FireTemperature RGB
- Other satellites and sensors



VIIRS Fire Point Detections in Use

The Alaska Interagency Coordination Center (AAIC) manages logistical support for state and federal agencies involved in Wildfire suppression in Alaska. It is one of 10 centers in the US.

AICC Situation Report - 14 Jun 2021

Daily Report From: 06	/13					28.0 Ac	reage On 06	/13
N2TH	Lat:	64 54.0900	Status: S/U		Acres:	28.0	Option:	Full
111186	Lon:	149 26.8300	Personnel:	33	Start Date:	06/13	Area:	FAS
	Owner:	State	Unit:	AKDN	S-AK Dept. Na	tural Res	ources	
186	Name:	Minto Lakes					Cause:	Undetermined

11N called in a smoke in the area of Minto Lakes. H-120SH, A/A, 2 fire bosses, 1 tanker and jumpers responded to a 28 acre fire burning in black spruce with group torching. North Star and Tanana Chief crews en route.

Daily Report From: 06/1	3				10.0 Ac	reage On 06	/13
N2S2	Lat:	66 28.8444	Status: U/U	Acres:	10.0	Option:	Limited
	Lon:	150 24.1080		Start Date:	06/13	Area:	UYD
	Owner:	BLM	Unit:	AKCYD-Central Yuk	on Field (Office	
185	Name:	Kanuti River				Cause:	Lightning

N9011N flew reconnaissance of the fire today and reported it to be 10 miles east of the Dalton Highway. The fire is 10 acres 50% active, smoldering and creeping in tundra and brush.

Daily Report From: 0	6/13				0.2 Acre	eage On 06/1	3
N2SW	Lat:	65 33.9800	Status: U/U	Acres:	0.2	Option:	Full
131184	Lon:	144 54.7083		Start Date:	06/13	Area:	UYD
	Owner:	State	Unit:	AKDNS-AK Dept. Na	tural Rese	ources	
184	Name:	Boulder	1911-1820 C-83400 - 10			Cause:	Human

AICC Situation Report – 21 Jun 2021

New		Count: 3	Acres:	175.0					
Daily Report From	m: 06/20					5.0 Acro	eage On 06/2	20	
N3E8	Lat:	68 11.0267	Status: Out	06/20	Acres:	5.0	Option:	Limited	
	Lon:	159 07.6017			Start Date:	06/20	Area:	GAD	
PDN3E8	Owner:	NPS	Unit:	AKNOI	P-Noatak Pres	serve			
245	Name:	Anisak River					Cause:	Lightning	
At 1931 agency a	ircraft N864SF r	eported a new fire	e 83 miles NW	of Ambl	er. Fire was a	oproximate	d at 5 acres a	nd plotted in	
Limited suppress	ion. Fire is a natu	ral out.				•		• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •	
Daily Report From	m: 06/20					20.0 Ac	reage On 06	/20	
N3EN	Lat:	64 44.1100	Status: S/U		Acres:	20.0	Option:	Full	
111244	Lon:	148 39.0750	Personnel:	30	Start Date:	06/20	Area:	FAS	
PNN3EN	Owner:	ANCSA	Unit:	AKVLN	N-Toghotthele	Corporati	on		
244	Name:	Straight Creek					Cause:	Lightning	
to a 5 acre (that g responded. Yukor	rew to 20 acres)	rank 4 fire in blac	ck spruce. A/A,	2 tanker	rs, FBs, jumpe	rs and addi	tional helicop	oter also	
N3D0	I at:	67 49 7150	Statue: 11/11		Acros	150.0 A	Ontion:	Limited	
11307	Lon	163 32 5617	Status. 0/0		Start Date:	06/20	Area:	GAD	
PDN3D9	Owner:	State	Unit:	AKDNS	AK Dent. N	atural Res	ources	GAD	
243	Name:	Tutak Creek					Cause:	Lightning	
At 1403, a VIIRS advised the fire w	signature approv as approximately cen at this time.	kimately 24 miles y 150 acres in size	s NW of Noatak e, smoldering, r	appeare unning,	ed on the map. creeping, back	AA 131 re ing in tund	sponded to th Ira in Limited	ne area and I suppression.	

Alaska Interagency Coordination Center: https://fire.ak.blm.gov/content/aicc/sitreport/AICC%20Situation%20Report.pdf

Primary VIIRS Satellite Bands (i-bands)

Resolution: 375 meters

- i04 Shortwave IR (3.74 $\mu m)$ highly sensitive to fire emissions:
 - Primary band used in fire applications
 - Wide spectrum range (3.55 3.93 μm)
 - Sensor saturates at ~367K (94 °C) *
 - Sensitive to reflected solar energy
- i05 Longwave IR (11.5 $\mu m)$ IR emissions only, no reflected solar energy
- i01 Red Visible (0.64 $\mu m)$ red visible, strong solar reflectance from clouds, smoke, snow
- i02 Veggie band (0.86 $\mu m)$ solar reflectance from vegetation (used in RGBs)
- i03 Snow/Ice band (1.61 $\mu m)$ solar absorption by snow/ice (used in RGBs)



More on sensor saturation at:

https://rammb.cira.colostate.edu/projects/npp/blog/index.php/uncategorized/a-wild-week-of-wildfires/

Secondary VIIRS Satellite Bands (m-bands)

Resolution: 750 meters

- m13 Fire Band (4.0 μm) highly sensitive to fire emissions
 - Sensitive to reflected solar energy
 - Narrow spectral range
 - Sensor saturation 600K (326 °C)
 - Used for the calculation of FRP
- m03 Blue Visible (0.49 μm)– sensitive to smoke and aerosols. Hazy due to Rayleigh scattering
- m11 Cloud Particle Size (2.25 μm) moderately sensitive to fire. Moderate solar absorption by snow/ice



More on sensor saturation at:

https://rammb.cira.colostate.edu/projects/npp/blog/index.php/uncategorized/a-wild-week-of-wildfires/

1. VIIRS i04 "Shortwave IR" Band (3.74 μ m)



Benefits:

- Highly sensitive shortwave emissions of fires
- Map of SW thermal energy emissions day or night
- Resolution 375 m.
- Basis for most fire-related products.

6

1. VIIRS i04 "Shortwave IR" Band (3.74 μ m)



Benefits:

- Highly sensitive shortwave emissions of fires
- Map of SW thermal energy emissions day or night
- Resolution 375 m.
- Basis for most fire-related products.
- Fire emissions not impacted by solar reflectance

Limitations

- Reflected solar radiation adds to background energy
- Sensor saturates at 368K or 95 °C
- Surface features are relative to the background
- Fires can be obscured by clouds, smoke, or terrain

Shortwave IR (3.74 µm) Colormaps



- Single band infrared images are a map of shortwave thermal emissions received by the satellite
- Thermal radiation units are "Brightness Temperatures"
- Colors are assigned to highlight specific temperature ranges shown in a color legend
- Reflected solar energy (daytime) adds to the thermal pattern and changes colors

Shortwave IR (3.74 um) Cloud Tops



Shortwave IR Sensor Saturation

VIIRS i04 (3.74 μm)



- Intense fires saturate the sensor (BT = 95 °C)
- Saturation causes "fold-over" where high BT pixels appear to be cold.
- VIIRS m13 (4.0 μm) should be checked for saturation

- Similar characteristics as the VIIRS i04
- Lower resolution (750 m)
- Much higher sensor saturation: 600K (326 °C) .
- Used in calculation of Fire Radiation Power (FRP)

VIIRS m13 (4.0 μm)

2. VIIRS DayFire RGB

Aka: FireColor, DayLandCloudFire, NaturalFireColor



Zitziana River Fire 18 Jul 2018

Daytime only

- Two reflectance bands
- SW IR: additional reflected solar energy taken into account

28 Feb 2023

2. VIIRS DayFire RGB

Aka: FireColor, DayLandCloudFire, NaturalFireColor





Color	Band (chnl)	Туре	Res (m)	Large Contribution	Small Contribution
Red	3.74µm (i04)	Shortwave IR	375	wildfires, volcanos, industrial burns, solar reflections (sun glint, solar farms)	water, ice, snow
Green	0.87µm (i02)	Veggie band (reflectance)	375	thick clouds, vegetation, snow	water, bare ground, burn scars
Blue	0.64µm	Red visible (reflectance)	374	thick clouds, snow	water, bare ground, burn

2. VIIRS DayFire RGB

Aka: FireColor, DayLandCloudFire, NaturalFireColor

Frequent afternoon passes:

- Monitor fire evolution
- Determine smoke source and distribution
- Identify clouds/pyrocumulus



Considerations:

- Clouds, snow, ice similar color
- No intensity information
- Small fires hard to distinguish

Swan Lake Fire - 19 Aug 2019

VIIRS i04 Sensor Saturation & DayFire RGB

VIIRS i04 (3.74 μm)

VIIRS DayFire RGB



- Intense fires cause saturation of the sensor (BT = 95 C) and pixels appear cold due to "fold-over"
- DayFire RGB: cold pixels cause the red contribution to be negligible.
- Because of saturation, The hottest pixels in the fire are not apparent in the RGB.
- VIIRS i04 should be checked for saturation

DayFire RGB: Fire Detection and Context

VIIRS i04 (3.74 µm)

VIIRS DayFire RGB



At times a detected heat point can seem suspicious in the shortwave IR when the thermal signal is weak and there are many other warm pixels from cloud reflectances in the area (left). The DayFire RGB (right) shows the warm pixel as faint red compared to the surroundings with no clouds are in the vicinity. The context suggests this fire detection is valid.

3. VIIRS DayLandCloud RGB

24 May 2016

25 May 2020



Similar to DayFire RGB except uses Snow/ice band (1.61 µm) instead of Shortwave IR for red.

Identifies: Snow and ice (cyan – blue)

- Vegetation and land surface types (green brown)
- Smoke (blue-grey) and large or Intense fires (red)
- Large, intense fires (red) ... not as sensitive to fire as the Shortwave IR.

VIIRS DayLandCloud RGB

Aka: NaturalColor





Color	Band (chnl)	Туре	Res (m)	Large Contribution	Small Contribution
Red	1.61µm (i03)	Snow-Ice band (reflectance)	375	water clouds, desert, very large fires	snow, ice, water.
Green	0.87µm (i02)	Veggie band (reflectance)	375	thick clouds, vegetation, snow	water, bare ground, burn scars
Blue	0.64µm (i01)	Red visible (reflectance)	375	thick clouds, snow	water, bare ground, burn scars

DayLandCloud RGB vs DayFire RGB

DayLandCloud RGB

DayFire RGB



- Only sensitive to large or intense fires
- Easier to distinguish smoke from white cloud
- More color variation for ground and vegetation
- Better identification of snow and ice.

- Greater fire sensitivity for:
 - fire perimeter tracking
 - Identifying small fires
 - Identifying fires through thin clouds or smoke
 - Distinguishing smoke source

4. VIIRS i05 "Longwave IR" Band (11.5 μ m)



- Shows location of clouds day or night that can obscure fires or look like smoke
- Emitted energy only no solar reflectance
- Light shades (colder) = higher clouds; Dark shades (warmer) = lower clouds or ground
- Used by fire detection algorithm to identify clouds; Resolution: 375 m

Shortwave IR & Longwave IR: Verifying Fires



- Longwave IR helps to identify clouds that can obscure fires or be misinterpreted in the Shortwave IR
- Fires generate some longwave IR emissions: darker (warmer) pixels
- Lighter (colder) pixels indicate clouds (clouds will usually be colder than smoke)

Shortwave IR & Longwave IR: Verifying Fires

High latitude summer nights with steep sun angles can have exaggerated shortwave IR values (VIIRS i04 – 3.74μ m) due to cloud top reflectances.



Check for false detections due to cloud reflectances at night by comparing the VIIRS i04 Shortwave IR with the VIIRS i05 Longwave IR.

Shortwave IR & Longwave IR: Verifying Fires

Left: the VIIRS i04 Shortwave IR (3.74 μ m) shows a single hot pixel where a fire point was detected at night.



Right: the VIIRS i05 Longwave IR shows warm pixels in the same location and no cold cloud tops. Warm BTs and no clouds in the Longwave IR confirms the point is a valid fire.

Clear Lake Fire 01 Jul 2022



1041Z – Nighttime event, so no reflectance imagery available. Hot atmosphere and shaded ground from clouds creates unstable thermal layer

Clear Lake Fire 01 Jul 2022



1131Z - Clearing skies increase updrafts and oxygen-rich inflow. Trapped pockets of flammable gas aloft are suddenly ignited. Note: West of the yellow line, Shortwave IR shows some hot fire pixels and Longwave IR shows fewer clouds.

Clear Lake Fire 01 Jul 2022



1220Z Clouds have moved east and fire pixels are now farther east. Note that dark hot pixels in the Longwave IR are east of the yellow line.

Clear Lake Fire 01 Jul 2022



1310Z Clouds have moved well east and fire pixels are remain east of the yellow line. Note that dark hot pixels in the VIIRS i05 are also all east of the yellow line.

Clear Lake Fire 01 Jul 2022



1401Z – Longwave IR shows clear skies in area of fire with all dark hot pixels east of the line. Shortwave IR also shows all fire pixels east of the yellow line.

Hot Smoke

Clear Lake Fire 01 Jul 2022



VIIRS Shortwave IR (3.74 μm) 1131 UTC 01 Jul 2022 Landsat DayLandCloud RGB 21?? UTC 01 Jul 2022

- Difficult to diagnose. Often evaluated in terms of context or trends.
- The 1131Z VIIRS Shortwave IR above showed hot pixels well to the west of the previous known perimeter
- Nighttime events have no visible products or RGBs for analysis. Longwave IR can be helpful.
- Later in the day, burn scars in the DayLandCloud RGB confirms fire perimeter had not moved west.
- Compare previous and subsequent Shortwave IR/Longwave IR images for unusual perimeter movement

5. VIIRS TrueColor RGB

- Made from red, green and blue visible bands
- Similar to what the human eye sees
- Sensitive to smoke and aerosols
- Can be hazy unless atmospheric "Raleigh" scattering removed
- Resolution: 750 m (some sharpening possible with i01 band)



11 Jun 2022

5. VIIRS TrueColor RGB



Color	Band (chnl)	Туре	Res	Large Contribution	Small Contribution
Red	0.64µm (i01)	Red visible band	375	clouds, snow	water, bare ground
Green	0.57µm (m04)	Green visible band	750	clouds, snow, green vegetation	water, dry or bare ground
Blue	0.49µm (m03)	Blue visible band	750	clouds, snow, smoke & aerosols	water, bare ground

6. VIIRS FireTemperature RGB

Swan Lake Fire

- Provides qualitative estimate of fire intensity
- Color contribution from each band based fire sensitivity:
 - Red = most sensitive (all detectable fires)
 - Yellow = green + red (moderate fires)
 - White = red + green + blue (most intense fires)
- Color combination similar to real fires.
- Resolution: 750 m
- Daytime only (uses 1 reflectance bands)
- Does not show smoke



VIIRS FireTemperature (RGB): 3,74 µm/2.25 µm/1.61 µm Sun 20:372 18-Aug-19 VIIRS_bayLand(LoudFire (RGB): 3.74 µm/2.87 µm/0.64 µm Sun 20:372 18-Aug-19

Color	Band (chnl)	Туре	Large Contribution	Small Contribution
Red	3.74 μm (i04)	Shortwave IR band (infrared)	Warm land surfaces, hot spots or fires	Cold land surfaces, snow, ice, cold clouds.
Green	2.25 μm (m11)	Veggie band (reflectance)	Dry grass, bare ground, moderate fires, small cloud particles	Water, forests, snow, ice, large cloud particles
Blue	1.61 µm (i03)	Red visible (reflectance)	Dry vegetation, bare ground, very intense fires, liquid clouds	Snow, Ice, Green vegetation, water, ice clouds

Other Important Satellites, Sensors, and Fire Products

GOES Shortwave IR (3.9 μ m) and DayFire RGB



- Similar characteristics as VIIRS i04 Highly sensitive to shortwave emissions of fires, day or night.
- High frequency updates: 10 min 30 sec
- Coarse resolution 6-10 km over interior Alaska (2 km at equator)
- Greater parallax for clouds, smoke and terrain: fires can be more easily obscured.
- Sensor saturation at 410K or 137 °C

GOES ABI Red Visible (0.64 µm)

- Highest resolution visible band with some aerosol sensitivity:
 - 2-3 km AK interior
 - 0.5 km at nadir (equator)
- Blue visible band more sensitive to smoke but lower in resolution
- High frequency refresh:
 - Full disk: 10 min
 - Mesoscale sector: 1 min
- Helps identify pyrocumulus and other convective development



30 Jun 2022

Other Polar Satellites with Fire Channels



AVHRR

- Metop-B & C, NOAA 18 & 19
- Wavelength: 3.74 μm
- Resolution: 1km
- Sensor saturation temperature: 227 °C



MODIS

- Aqua & Terra
- Wavelength: 3.75 μm (also 3.96 μm, 4.05 μm)
- Resolution: 1km
- Sensor saturation temperature: 137 °C

Other Satellite Products for Smoke



VIIRS Aerosol Optical Depth (AOD)



OMPS Aerosol Index

Summary: Fire Analysis with Polar Satellite Imagery

- Look for hot pixels in the Shortwave IR (VIIRS iO4) imagery at night, (or) red pixels in the DayFire RGB (FireColor RGB) during the day:
 - □ Check how they compare with the surroundings.
 - □ Are there nearby clouds, terrain, or shadows that could be impacting the detection?
 - □ Are there other fires in the area?
 - □ Are there adjacent anomalously cold pixels suggesting fold-over from saturation?
 - Could they be from persistent anomalies such as volcanoes, industrial sites, solar farms, etc.
 - Remember during the day the Shortwave IR (VIIRS i04) will be warmer overall due to reflected solar energy.
 - Keep in mind that fires near the swath edge will have pixels with a larger footprint and a greater chance of being affected by obscurations.
- Examine the Longwave IR (VIIRS i05) at the location of the hot pixel for clouds. This is especially important at night when reflectance bands are not available:
 - □ If the corresponding pixels are also warm it would support the existence of a fire. Cold pixels in the Longwave IR would likely be caused by cloud tops.
 - Are there low clouds (darker grey) around the hot pixel obscuring adjacent pixels? This could make a single pixel appear to stand out from its surroundings.

Summary: Fire Analysis with Polar Satellite Imagery

Continued

- Examine the DayLandCloud RGB (day)
 - Check for clouds in the proximity of the hot pixels.
 - Look for other causes of high reflectances, such cloud tops, sun glint, solar farms, etc.
 - Look for burn scars or vegetation
- Examine the TrueColor RGB for evidence of smoke. Other products to check include: red visible bands (0.64 μ m) from GOES ABI or VIIRS (i01), or DayLandCloud RGB:
 - Smoke will have a grey thin wispy appearance compared to the opaque brighter clouds.
 - Check the trajectory and dispersion of the smoke from the fire source for changing wind direction/speed.
 - Look for sudden surge of fire detections in areas with significant smoke which could be caused by hot smoke.
 - Keep in mind that elevated smoke and clouds near the edge of a swath will have some parallax displacement away from the center of the pass.

Online Data Links

- Alaska Interagency Coordination Center Dashboard: https://blm-egis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/a23a625f4d18412ea13cffeefcbe7f5e
- GINA ESRI Map Service: <u>https://www.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=d7e7050c4b34437c938c3b1de5e6314e</u>
- RealEarth: https://realearth.ssec.wisc.edu/
- CIRA Slider (imagery only): https://rammb-slider.cira.colostate.edu
- GINA Alaska Direct Broadcast Satellite Data Portal: <u>http://feeder.gina.alaska.edu/</u>

References

- C. J. Seaman, W. Line, R.. Ziel, J. Jenkins, C. Dierking, G. Hanson, (2023), Multispectral Satellite Imagery Products for Fire Weather Applications, J. Atmos. Ocean. Technol., <u>https://doi.org/10.1175/JTECH-D-22-0107.1</u>
- VIIRS 3.74µm Shortwave IR Band for Fire Detection <u>https://gina.alaska.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/VIIRS_3_74</u> um_FireDetection_Quick_Guide.pdf
- VIIRS DayFire RGB Quick Guide, available from: <u>https://rammb2.cira.colostate.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/VIIRS Day Fire RGB Quick Guide v1.pdf</u>
- VIIRS TrueColor RGB Quick Guide, available from: <u>https://gina.alaska.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/QuickGuide True Color Final.pdf</u>
- DayLandCloud RGB Quick Guide, available from https://gina.alaska.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/DayLandCloud QuickGuide JPSS final.pdf
- [CIRA blog post] A Wild Week of Wildfires, available from: <u>https://rammb.cira.colostate.edu/projects/npp/blog/index.php/uncategorized/a-wild-week-of-wildfires/</u>
- [CIRA blog post] The Land of 10000 Fires, available from: <u>https://rammb2.cira.colostate.edu/viirsblogs/the-land-of-10000-fires/</u>
- [CIRA blog post] Funny River Isn't Laughing, available from: <u>https://rammb2.cira.colostate.edu/viirsblogs/funny-river-isnt-laughing/</u>





Acknowledgements

NOAA JPSS Program

Alaska Fire Service and AICC agencies

National Weather Service

University of Alaska Fairbanks

Cooperative Institute for Research in the Atmosphere (CIRA)

Cooperative Institute for Meteorological Satellite Studies (CIMSS)



