

From IGY to IPY: Photo documentation of Norwegian scientific polar research during the last 50 years

Institution / company (norwegian name): Norsk Polarinstitut

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Principal objective

The project will document and disseminate images of Norway's polar research in the period spanning the 1957-58 IGY through the upcoming IPY. This will be achieved by collecting photographs from scientific expeditions from this period.

Sub-goals:

- a) to document scientific research in Antarctica from 1956 until today;
- b) to document scientific research in Svalbard after WWII;
- c) to make these photographs available to the IPY organisation, IPY projects, national and international media and others throughout the IPY and after its conclusion. Use of the photos will be free of charge during the IPY 2007-2008. After the IPY, use of the photos will be free of charge for research purposes to the extent that the photographers agree to this.

Project summary

The project is owned by the Norwegian Polar Institute (www.npolar.no). The result will be special galleries in the NPI photo database (Fotoweb). The NPI Photo library contains 80 000 polar photos, around 60 000 of which can be labelled historical photos. However, there are few photos from the periods that this project will cover.

Most of the photos taken from 1956 until the NPI was relocated to Tromsø in 1998 are still with the photographers and have not been registered by the Institute. The NPI photo librarian is fully occupied working on existing material and collecting/registering current photos. Thus the photo library has no extra capacity to collect the missing material and register it. As many of the scientist who participated in these interesting expeditions are older people with health problems, it is urgent to make an effort before it is too late. Also, the original material is deteriorating and will be seen lost.

The IPY is an excellent opportunity to collect and preserve this "missing link". Fotoweb will be accessible to the general public/media through the Internet. The photo galleries generated through the Polar Photos project will be entered into the database in a steady stream, so that the first will be available from early autumn 2007.

The work will consist of collecting photos, scanning them and registering them. By connecting photos with texts about the expeditions (location, participants, objective, accomplishments), additional information about the expeditions will be made available. This will be an extra source of information for the media, scientists, schools, the IPY committee, IPY projects and others.

The material will be put into a broader historical context by cooperation with the project "Norsk polarhistorie på nett" (Norwegian polar history on the Internet, www.polarhistorie.no) which will be launched as a website in March 2008. This will be Norway's leading site for Norwegian polar history.