Case Study:British Schools Exploring Society

The main aims of this project were to introduce young explorers to modern field work techniques through practical experience, to investigate variation in vegetation with altitude and provide a baseline record of vegetation in the Kugssuaq valley.

Secondary aims were to collect Normalised Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) readings and associated data with the potential for use in future research relating satellite NDVI data to vegetation characteristics for low arctic vegetation, to identify different vegetation community types and investigate differences in average NDVI between these.

Skye loaned the expedition a SpectroSense2+ logging meter NDVI system, fitted with two 2-channel incident & reflected light sensors, matched to the Red and Near Infra-red bands of the AHVRR satellite.

Relative percentage cover of different functional vegetation groups changed with altitude, as did species diversity with more deciduous shrubs and diversity at higher altitudes. Variation in average NDVI was found between five community types with willow scrub having the highest NDVI and mossy heath the lowest. These NDVI records will be made available online in the near future.

The young explorers gained experience in field techniques as well as project planning, teamwork and communication. Both the full science report and the students' informal report can be found on Skye's website at www.skyeinstruments.com.

Acknowledgements and Contacts

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For more information please visit: www.bses.org.uk

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