

1 Impact of Spatial, Spectral, and Radiometric Properties of Multispectral Imagers on Glacier

2 Surface Classification

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11

12 Abstract

13 Using multispectral remote sensing, glacier surfaces can be classified into a range of zones. The
14 properties of these classes are used for a range of glaciological applications including mass balance
15 measurements, glacial hydrology, and melt modelling. However, it is not immediately evident that
16 multispectral data should be optimal for imaging glaciers and ice caps. Thus, this investigation takes an
17 inverse perspective. Taking into account spectral and radiometric properties, *in situ* spectral reflectance
18 data were used to simulate glacier surface response for a suite of multispectral sensors. Sensor-simulated
19 data were classified and compared. In addition, airborne multispectral imagery was classified for a range
20 of spatial resolutions and intercompared in three different ways. In these analyses, the most important
21 property which determined the suitability of a multispectral imager for glacier surface classification was
22 its radiometric range (i.e. gain settings). Low resolution imagery (250 m pixels) is too coarse to represent
23 the true complexity present on a glacier while medium resolution imagery (60 m, 30 m, or 20 m)

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24 accurately represented the results derived from high resolution airborne imagery. Of those studied here,
25 the satellite imagers currently in use that are most suitable for glacier surface classification are Landsat
26 TM/ ETM+ and ASTER (all with particular gain settings). Both Sentinel-2 and the OLI on Landsat 8 are
27 also expected to be similarly qualified. Landsat MSS is also found to be radiometrically well-suited for
28 glacier surface classification, but its lower spatial resolution makes it a secondary selection.

29

30 **1. Introduction**

31 The world's glaciers and ice caps (GIC), which respond much more quickly to shifting climate than the
32 continental ice sheets, provide information about past and present climate variability, are central parts of
33 the world's hydrological cycle, and are key to understanding regional and global climate change (e.g.
34 Cogley et al., 2011; Oerlemans, 1994). In addition, glaciers contribute to local biodiversity (Jacobsen et
35 al., 2012), mediate the hydrology and flooding of some mountain systems (Dahlke et al., 2012), and
36 provide crucial water resources for large populations of the world (Baraer et al., 2011; Barry, 2011;
37 Björnsson & Pálsson, 2008; Bolch et al., 2012; Hopkinson & Demuth, 2006).

38 Glacier surface properties are integral to the behaviour of GIC. The division of GIC into
39 accumulation and ablation areas is just the beginning of classification of glacier facies, or zones (Benson,
40 1960; Williams et al., 1991). The equilibrium line altitude (ELA) and accumulation area ratio (AAR;
41 Cogley et al., 2011) can be used as proxies for glacier mass balance (Braithwaite, 1984; Dyurgerov,
42 1996). In addition, the glacier surface controls much of a glacier's energy balance (Cuffey & Patterson,
43 2010). Energy balance models both assimilate remotely sensed data about glacier surfaces to improve
44 their results (Machguth et al., 2009; van Angelen et al., 2012), as well as validate their results (Braun et
45 al., 2007; de Woul et al., 2006).

46 Multispectral imagery is often the best tool for studying glaciers surfaces (Pellikka & Rees,
47 2010). Reflectance information over a range of wavelengths, good spatial resolution, frequent repeat
48 imaging, an extensive image archive, and often cost-free data access are all important. However,
49 multispectral sensors were not designed by glaciologists. Satellites like the original Landsat were (and

50 continue to be) designed for a range of tasks including agricultural, oceanographic, and atmospheric
51 monitoring (Markham & Helder, 2012). Therefore, it is not self-evident that they should be optimal for
52 imaging GIC. Thus, the roles that the various spectral, spatial, and radiometric properties of each sensor
53 play in the success and output of resulting classifications remain unquantified.

54

55 **1.1 Research Aims**

56 Multispectral imagers are powerful tools, and with the increasing availability of a range of high quality
57 multispectral data including the recently launched Landsat 8 (Irons et al., 2012) and upcoming Sentinel 2
58 (Drusch et al., 2012), it is increasingly crucial that they are fully understood. This investigation therefore
59 takes an inverse perspective; it aims to start with *in situ* data to investigate the extent of information
60 available from full-spectrum data and what that means for efficient and consistent application across
61 multispectral sensors with different band capabilities and combinations. We ask the questions: How do
62 the spectral and radiometric properties of these sensors limit or enhance their performance in glacier
63 classification? Because sensors are characterised by both spatial and spectral properties, how does the
64 spatial resolution of these various sensors impact the resultant surface classification? And what does this
65 mean for glaciological applications?

66

67 **2. Background**

68 **2.1 Glacier Facies**

69 Glacier surfaces exhibit a range of zones – wet and dry, snowy and icy, clean and dirty. In order
70 to understand better the changing conditions of a glacier’s surface, the area can be considered to be
71 divided into a set of systematic, idealised facies that are characterised by a particular set of properties
72 relating to the metamorphosis of the snow or ice surface; facies range from dry snow at colder, higher
73 elevations through to melting ice near the glacier terminus (Benson, 1960; Williams et al., 1991).
74 Although there is a wide range of glacier facies, a glacier can be divided into two larger regions: the
75 accumulation zone and the ablation zone. The transition between these two areas is the line of net zero

76 annual mass change known as the equilibrium line (Cogley et al., 2011; Cuffey & Patterson, 2010). Each
77 different configuration of facies is evidence of a different metamorphic history. Facies distributions vary
78 across glaciers both within seasons and across years, and not all facies are necessarily present on all
79 glaciers.

80 In addition, beyond these zones which are considered ‘facies,’ further surface classes can be
81 identified *in situ* and remotely. For example, there are extensive areas of wind glaze and sastrugi in
82 Antarctica (Kuchiki et al., 2011; Orheim & Lucchitta, 1987; Scambos et al., 2012). The presence of snow
83 algae imparts a reddish tinge to an evolving wet-snow facies (Takeuchi, 2009), and dust or black carbon
84 will darken the snow surface (e.g. Painter, 2011). Debris cover on the glacier can be considered another
85 type of surface class (e.g. Casey et al., 2012; Shukla et al., 2009), as can volcanic ash deposited on glacier
86 surfaces from a nearby eruption. In this study, ‘facies’ are considered to be the idealised zones of glacier
87 surfaces which relate directly to accumulation and melt, while ‘surface classes’ are the zones which can
88 be distinguished from the surface.

89 Identification of accumulation versus ablation classes (through the ELA or the AAR) can be used
90 as a proxy for a glacier’s mass balance, often in combination with further data such as a digital elevation
91 model (e.g. Braithwaite & Müller, 1978; Dyurgerov, Meier, & Bahr, 2009; Rabatel et al., 2005; Shea et
92 al., 2013). Also, glacier facies can be related to mass balance in other ways. Snow is bright (i.e. highly
93 reflective in much of the visible and near-infrared) and ice is darker, therefore as the melt season
94 progresses the glacier as a whole gets darker overall - specifically in proportion to the relative
95 contributions of different glacier facies. In this way, it is possible to monitor glacier albedo as a tool for
96 monitoring glacier mass balance (Dumont et al., 2012; Greuell & Oerlemans, 2005; Greuell et al., 2007).

97 Shortwave radiation is crucial to the energy balance of a glacier. Glacier facies meaningfully
98 contribute to this radiation balance and therefore to the surface energy balance of GIC. A clear example of
99 the interrelated nature of energy balance and glacier facies can be seen in the simple parameterization of
100 the degree-day melt model where ice and snow have different degree day factors (e.g. Hock, 2003).
101 Information about the interannual and intra-annual evolution of glacier surfaces is also a key parameter in

102 building energy balance models. Fuller consideration of glacier facies in glacier melt modelling is gaining
103 increasing traction within the glaciological community (e.g. Dumont et al., 2010; Machguth et al., 2009).
104 This is true not just for GIC, but also for the larger ice sheets, where better classification and description
105 of the unique properties of different facies improve melt model behaviour (e.g. van Angelen et al., 2012).

106 Snow and ice reflectances are heavily wavelength-dependent (e.g. Wiscombe & Warren, 1980).
107 In particular, the NIR (near infrared, ~700-1400 nm) has been seen as containing quantitative information
108 about snow and ice surfaces (Kokhanovsky & Zege, 2004; Li et al., 2001; Nolin & Dozier, 1993). Glacier
109 facies classification, too, has focused on the NIR to the exclusion of the visible, although snow studies
110 have highlighted both ranges (Zeng et al., 1983). Sidjack and Wheate (1999) and Braun et al. (2007) cited
111 some saturation in the visible and enhanced performance in the NIR as reasons for choosing linear
112 combinations of input multispectral bands which contained large contributions from the NIR and SWIR
113 (shortwave infrared, ~1400-2500 nm) and minimal contributions from the visible.

114 Based on these examples, it is natural to hypothesise that sensors with enhanced capabilities in
115 the NIR will be able to classify glacier facies better than their counterparts. This belief will be
116 investigated below.

117

118 **2.2 Multispectral Remote Sensing, Classification, and Glacier Facies**

119 Multispectral remote sensing images are some of the most prevalent, easily available, and
120 versatile forms of data available for the Earth Observing glaciologist. There are a variety of factors which
121 must be weighed in choosing an appropriate multispectral sensor; each separate investigation or task
122 requires an imager which is fit for purpose. Major considerations include spatial resolution, spectral
123 resolution (i.e. band wavelengths), radiometric resolution and range, temporal resolution (i.e. revisit
124 time), data cost and ease of access, length of data archive, data availability, and availability of pre-
125 processed products. From the range of different options, it is highly unlikely that any one sensor will be
126 optimal for all studies. Nevertheless, sensors were chosen to span a wide range of properties (i.e. spatial
127 scales, spectral bands, and gain settings) and priority was placed on wide use and easy data access.

128 Although many imagers could have been included, those not included (e.g. SPOT, WorldView, etc.) will
129 be able to find analogous properties in those considered here. Figure 1 includes the range of popular and
130 prominent multispectral imagers that are considered in this study.

131

132 ***INSERT Figure 1 approximately here***

133

134 Glaciological uses of multispectral imagery include glacier maps and inventories (Albert, 2002;
135 Hendriks & Pellikka, 2008; Kargel et al., 2005; Paul & Kääb, 2005; Paul, 2000), albedo calculation
136 (Greuell et al., 2002; Knap, Reijmer, & Oerlemans, 1999), distinguishing snow from cloud (Hall et al.,
137 1995), identification of surface and basal crevasses (Luckman et al., 2012), feature tracking (Heid &
138 Kääb, 2012), interpolating digital elevation models (Pope et al., 2013), identifying ice sheet grounding
139 lines (Bindschadler et al., 2011), and much more (Pellikka & Rees, 2010; Rees, 2006).

140 Classification, the process that takes quantitative information from every pixel and places each into
141 one of a group of discrete categories, is crucial for image interpretation. Many different techniques have
142 been applied to multispectral data to identify glacier surface classes. It should be noted that (automated)
143 classification of glacier extent is considered to be a separate problem, one which has been largely solved,
144 with the exception of debris-covered areas (Paul et al., 2013). Unsupervised classifications have had
145 significant success in classifying glacier facies not only because they are easily reproducible but also
146 because they are often able to exploit subtle features within data sets. ISODATA (Iterative Self-
147 Organizing Data Analysis; e.g. Aniya et al., 1996; De Angelis et al., 2007; Nolin & Payne, 2007; Sidjak
148 & Wheate, 1999; Wolken et al., 2009) and k-means classification (e.g. Barcaza et al., 2009; König et al.,
149 2004) are the most widely and easily implemented clustering algorithms for glacier surface classification.
150 This study will therefore implement these two iterative, unsupervised classification techniques.

151

152 **2.2.1 Impact of Spatial Resolution on Multispectral Classification**

153 Data is not bad or good because of coarse or fine resolution, but difference scale imagery is better
154 or worse suited to particular applications. Coarse imagery often confounds land cover classification as a
155 result of pixels representing a mixture of classes. In this case, increasing resolution would increase
156 classification success. Resolution effects have been investigated in a range of different applications
157 (Baker et al., 2013; Battersby et al., 2012; Michishita et al., 2012; Phinn et al., 2012; Sobrino et al., 2012).
158 The results of these comparisons have shown that agreement between spatial scales varies depending on
159 the type of surface and the scale of inhomogeneity. In other words, although it is not immediately
160 intuitive, increasing spatial resolution can decrease classification success. This happens in the case where
161 coarser imagery serves to smooth out spatial inhomogeneity within classes.

162 To the authors' knowledge, no study has directly considered this subject for glaciers. Previous
163 studies have used higher resolution imagery (~10 and ~1 m) to assess the accuracy of glacier extent
164 measurements using medium resolution (~30 m) imagery (Paul, 2000; Paul et al., 2013). There is no
165 significant difference in measured glacier area using imagery at 60 m resolution and finer; lower
166 resolution imagery was not tested (Paul et al., 2002). In glacier albedo calculations, the scale of albedo
167 variations is smaller than 30 m Landsat pixels (Reijmer et al., 1999), but because albedo can vary within
168 facies this does not necessarily mean glacier facies vary on the same scales. Albedo variations within
169 facies would then confound glacier surface classifications with spatial resolution finer than 30 m.

170

171 **3. Field Sites and Data**

172 **3.1 Field Spectra**

173 For this study, visible through shortwave infrared (350-2500 nm) hemispherical-directional
174 reflectances (HDRs; Schaepman-Strub et al., 2006) were collected during two field campaigns. In August
175 2010, data were collected on Midtre Lovénbreen, Svalbard. In August 2011, data were collected on the
176 major western outlet of Langjökull, Iceland. These two locations were chosen so as to include sampling of
177 glaciers that had undergone different accumulation and melting histories. Additional differences were
178 introduced by the springtime eruption of Grímsvötn volcano in Iceland. The data, as well as consideration

179 of available snow and ice spectral reflectance measurements and modelling efforts, are fully presented in
180 Pope and Rees (In Press) and are also available upon request to the corresponding author.

181

182 **3.2 Multispectral Imagery**

183 Imagery collected with the UK Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) Airborne Research
184 and Survey Facility's (ARSF) Airborne Thematic Mapper (ATM) was used to investigate the effects of
185 spatial resolution. The ATM was designed to mimic many of Landsat 7 ETM+'s bands but with added
186 spectral coverage and spatial resolution (30 vs. ~2 m, determined by flight height and processing; see
187 Figure 1).

188

189 ***Insert Figure 2 approximately here***

190

191 The ARSF flew a campaign over Midtre Lovénbreen on 9 August 2003 (see Figure 2); the ATM
192 was mounted inside the ARSF's Dornier 228 aircraft. Simultaneously collected laser ranging data (Rees
193 & Arnold, 2007) were used to orthorectify the imagery. Azgcorr version 5.0.0, produced by Azimuth
194 Systems UK and provided by the ARSF, was used to perform the orthorectification (Azimuth Systems,
195 2005). ATM measurements are delivered as at-sensor radiance. No measurements of incoming radiation
196 were available coincident with airborne data collection, and calibration to reflectance with pseudo-
197 invariant off-glacier targets from Landsat imagery was attempted, but no nearby surface was found to be
198 consistent in its reflectance. Therefore, ATM data were left as at-sensor radiance. No surface anisotropy
199 or slope corrections were implemented. The meteorological records at the nearby Ny-Ålesund research
200 station also indicate that the glacier surface froze overnight and that frost deposition was likely. Angular
201 crystals on the surface may increase surface reflectance (Casacchia et al., 2001). These combined effects
202 may have some impact on glacier surface classification. However, as this study is concerned mainly with
203 intercomparison of classifications at different resolutions, and the ATM image is only compared to

204 spatially degraded versions of itself, possible classification-confounding factors will be self-consistent
205 and therefore should not impact the results of this study.

206

207 **4. Methods**

208 **4.1 Spectral Response Matching**

209 A narrow to broadband (NTB) conversion is necessary to use spectral reflectance to replicate
210 multispectral reflectance. This is done with a known relative spectral response function for each band
211 obtained via NASA, ESA, and the NERC Field Spectroscopy Facility. Sentinel-2 and OLI are both
212 approximated with “top hat functions” (i.e. uniform spectral response across each band), as no further
213 data were available. In addition, spectra are not used to simulate Landsat-8 OLI data because calibration
214 values were not available at the time of writing. The 12 bit radiometric resolution of the OLI is assessed
215 by comparing the effect of radiometric resolution on the full-spectrum data. In addition, only MODIS
216 bands 1-16 are considered because higher bands are in unsuitable wavelengths (e.g. water absorption) and
217 their spectral response functions were not available. More detail on spectral response matching is
218 available in the supplementary material.

219

220 **4.2 Multispectral Sensor Radiometric Properties**

221 Beyond the NTB conversion, further calibration parameters from each multispectral band must be taken
222 into account to fully simulate the measurements which would be taken by a multispectral sensor – had the
223 user been holding an extremely portable version of a satellite rather than a FieldSpec’s photodiodes. Full
224 details on how field data were used to simulate sensor radiometric properties are available in the
225 supplementary material.

226

227 **4.3 Principal Component Analysis**

228 The spectra measured in this study are highly multidimensional data, and multispectral data have a
229 number of dimensions (in this case, bands) themselves. That is to say, each data “point” is characterised

230 by many values rather than a single number. Therefore, some method is needed to reduce the
231 dimensionality of the data for analysis – without losing important information – in order to understand
232 what the most important input wavelengths are for glacier surface classification. Concisely put, PCA is a
233 transformation that reduces the dimensionality of a dataset by reprojecting it into a new coordinate space
234 (e.g. Boresjö Bronge & Bronge, 1999; Sidjak & Wheate, 1999). Thus, each principal component (PC) is a
235 linear combination of the input data.

236 The first two or three PCs produced from full-spectrum reflectance can be used to create
237 transferrable linear combinations (LCs) which are optimised for particular satellite bands for glacier
238 surface using appropriate relative response functions (Pope & Rees, In Press). Here, PCs were calculated
239 separately for Langjökull and Midtre Lovénbreen field spectra, and coefficients were rounded and
240 compared. This has two benefits: one, it aids in a conceptual understanding of what each LC is
241 emphasizing within the data; two, it facilitates wider transferability of LCs by not being specifically
242 tailored to the field data. A unified set of LCs was produced for each satellite for later analysis (see
243 below). For glaciers, LC1 is representative of VNIR albedo, LC2 emphasizes the difference in reflectance
244 at blue / green wavelengths and red / NIR wavelengths, and LC3 highlights the difference in blue / NIR
245 reflectance and green / red reflectance. All LCs are available in the supplementary material. LC1 in each
246 case is representative of VNIR albedo, LC2 emphasizes the difference in reflectance at blue / green
247 wavelengths and red / NIR wavelengths, and LC3 highlights the difference in blue / NIR reflectance and
248 green / red reflectance. All LCs are available in the supplementary material.

249

250 **4.4 Classification**

251 Both ATM data and LCs are clustered using very similar techniques. Following previous studies
252 (Braun et al., 2007; de Woul et al., 2006; Pope & Rees, In Press), an arbitrary number of classes were
253 identified with a clustering algorithm, ISODATA for ATM data and k-means for LCs, respectively. For
254 ATM imagery, output classes were subsequently grouped into accumulation and ablation areas for
255 statistical analysis. For LCs, grouped classes are discussed below.

256

257 **4.5 Statistical Classification Comparison**

258 This study requires that two main classification accuracy assessments be conducted. The first is a
259 clustering analysis where the classification of field spectra is compared to knowledge from fieldwork. The
260 second compares the results of classification of ATM imagery degraded to different spatial resolutions. A
261 contingency matrix is created which shows the number of times (i.e. number of pixels or number of
262 spectra) where two classifications agree or disagree. This matrix provides information on errors of both
263 omission and commission and is the basis for statistical analysis (Congalton & Green, 1999; Congalton,
264 1991; Foody, 2002; Rees, 2008).

265 From the information in the contingency matrix, the most basic statistic is “A,” or the overall
266 accuracy agreement. This is the sum of the times for which the classifications agree divided by the total
267 number of samples. Put another way, A is the trace of the normalised contingency matrix (Rees, 2008).
268 However, random chance can lead to agreement of classes, and therefore A can overestimate classification
269 accuracy.

270 In response, Cohen’s Kappa (K , Cohen, 1960) is a statistic which accounts for random effects
271 within the classification comparison and remains an indexed value (i.e. perfect agreement result in $K = 1$).
272 In this way, K reduces the overestimation of classification success included in A . K values can also be
273 described by qualitative descriptions rather than simply numerical values (Monserud & Leemans, 1992).

274

275 **5. Results & Interpretation**

276 This study aims to answer the question of what qualities define the best multispectral imagers for
277 glacier surface classification. Therefore, this section begins with spectral and radiometric considerations,
278 transitions to an investigation of the impact of spatial resolution, and then combines the two to understand
279 the advantages and limitations of a range of popular multispectral sensors to glacier surface classification.

280

281 **5.1 Impact of Spectral and Radiometric Properties on Glacier Surface Classification**

282 5.1.1 Midtre Lovénbreen Clustering and Classification Analysis

283 For this study, Midtre Lovénbreen provides an example of a largely “clean” and simple glacier.
284 LCs 1, 2, and 3 are calculated for each sensor; all cases are described in Table 1 and presented in Figure
285 3. The data were merged into three larger groups defined as snow surfaces, ice surfaces, and wet surfaces;
286 these three main classes are circled in Figure 3a. Classification success is assessed, and the results
287 presented in Table 1 are ranked in order of descending K .

288

289 ***Insert Table 1 and Figure 3 approximately here***

290

291 Overall, all sensors in all settings are largely able to classify the three clusters. Even the worst case
292 attains almost 80% success and is considered “very good.” This success is tempered by the fact that the
293 classification task is idealistically easy because there are no pixels as there would be in real imagery.
294 There is one setup which does not group the wet classes as well as the other sensors: MODIS using bands
295 8 and higher in a low gain setting (Figure 3o). This is possibly due to lack of contributions to the LCs
296 from NIR wavelengths.

297 Radiometric resolution on its own does not appear to be important in the “clean glacier” case on
298 Midtre Lovénbreen, as can be seen by comparing Figures 1a, 1d, 1e, and 1c which are all clustered using
299 full spectra but at unrestricted, 16 bit, 12 bit, and 8 bit resolution, respectively. However, when combined
300 with a limited set of bands to use in LCs, the quantisation does begin to appear (e.g. Equations 11 and 12
301 in the supplementary material used to produce Figures 1g and 1i, emulating ASTER). This example
302 supports the importance of using LCs with a higher number of band combinations which better represent
303 the full spectrum surface reflectance.

304 Radiometer properties (i.e. radiance range and gain settings) do appear to play some role in
305 classification accuracy, but it is hard to assess fully with such widespread success for the Midtre
306 Lovénbreen spectra. Saturation is clearly visible in some Landsat settings; its distinctive signature is a
307 linear alignment of spectra with high LC1 values for Landsat TM/ ETM+ HHHH (i.e. high gain for Bands

308 1-4) and Landsat MSS in Figures 1l and 1f, respectively. Landsat TM/ETM+ LLLH replicates original
309 spectra biplots better than Landsat LLLL (i.e. low gain for Bands 1-4; Figures 1k and 1p, respectively),
310 which makes sense given the high to lower reflectance transition of glacier surfaces from visible to NIR
311 wavelengths. Interestingly, ASTER in a high gain setting (Figure 3b) appears to have such success in
312 classification because all of the bright, snowy surfaces were compressed into the same saturated point in
313 the plot, thereby making the entire class almost entirely homogeneous.

314 Ultimately, while varying slightly in performance, imager radiometric properties do not provide
315 significant limitations or guidance in selecting the most appropriate multispectral imager for surface
316 classification of clean glaciers.

317

318 **5.1.2 Langjökull Clustering and Classification Analysis**

319 Langjökull provides an example of a glacier with a more complex set and larger range of surface
320 classes, furnished in this case by ash from the Grímsvötn eruption in spring 2011. For Langjökull spectra,
321 a very similar analysis to Midtre Lovénbreen is performed. All cases are described in Table 2 and
322 presented in Figure 4. However, the results were merged into only two classes (clean ice and other; this is
323 indicated by the circle in Figure 4a). Again, classification is assessed using knowledge from fieldwork,
324 and the results are presented in Table 2 ranked in order of descending K .

325

326 ***Insert Table 2 and Figure 4 approximately here***

327

328 While the “clean” glacier ice was easily classified across all sensors, and despite the apparently
329 simpler task of dividing into two groups rather than Midtre Lovénbreen’s three, there is a much larger
330 range of success between sensors and settings for the Langjökull spectra. For the ash-covered glacier, no
331 imager emulation is fully able to represent the range of information contained in the full spectrum data.
332 From the spread of data points, it appears this is largely due to lack of sensitivity in LC2, although

333 saturation in LC1 also plays a role. Nevertheless, because of the simpler task (i.e. identifying clean ice), it
334 is possible to achieve “perfect” classification success (for terminology see Monserud & Leemans, 1992).

335 Radiometric resolution, again, is not found to be important on its own, but the quantising effects are
336 again seen in ASTER because of the smaller number of bands contributing to the LCs (see Figures 2g, 2i,
337 and to a lesser extent 2n). Even without restricting spectral range and rounding for radiometric resolution
338 only (no scaling, 16 bit, 12 bit, and 8 bit in Figures 2a, 2b, 2c, and 2d, respectively), saturation does
339 appear to be present in the data; this is because some spectra were measured at higher than 100%
340 reflectance as a result of a specular component of reflectance (see Section 3.5.2).

341 Indeed, radiometric resolution is overshadowed by other factors. For example, 12 bit MODIS
342 sensors would be expected to perform well given their higher radiometric resolution compared to
343 Landsat’s 8 bits. However, MODIS gain settings are tuned for darker land and ocean surfaces and so are
344 less suitable to the task of glacier surface classification. As this demonstrates, radiometric range is more
345 important than radiometric resolution.

346 The importance of radiometric range and gain settings is also demonstrated by ASTER and
347 Landsat. ASTER hi gain (Figure 4n), Landsat TM / ETM+ LLLL (Figure 4m), Landsat MSS (Figure 4h),
348 and Landsat TM / ETM+ HHHH (Figure 4k) all show a linear feature influencing the higher ranges of
349 both LC1 and LC2, the result of “sensor” saturation. This is more pronounced for ASTER than Landsat
350 because more contributing “bands” are saturated, and LC2 shares more coefficients in common with LC1
351 for ASTER. Landsat MSS is actually very similar to Landsat TM / ETM+ HHHH, but Landsat LLLH
352 performs better than other Landsat setups. For ASTER, as in the Midtre Lovénbreen case, the brightest
353 classes (New Drifted Snow 1, New Drifted Snow 3, and White Ice 2) are compressed to a single point.

354 The LC1-LC2 biplots for MODIS 8+ in both gain settings (Figure 4o and p) demonstrate an
355 intriguing chevron shape. Various theories were considered for why this would occur, including lack of
356 band representation in the NIR or perhaps particular placement of bands in higher and lower wavelengths
357 causing anomalous effects in LC2. In order to find the real culprit, it is necessary to return to exactly what
358 LC1 and LC2 are (see Equations 26 and 17 in supplementary material). Unlike for other bands, the

359 magnitude of all coefficients of bands contributing to the LCs for MODIS 8+ are identical, except for a
360 flip in sign for higher bands. Where reflectance in Bands 8 to 12 is much higher than 13 to 16, there is a
361 positive linear pattern, and when the opposite is true there is a negative linear pattern. The linear pattern is
362 more pronounced than it would be otherwise because snow and ice spectra have fairly uniform reflectance
363 across the range of wavelengths observed by Bands 8 to 16. Although PCs are uncorrelated, rounding in
364 the coefficients of the LCs caused an artefact in this case.

365 Ultimately, as can be seen with the K rankings in Table 2, while a large number of sensors do a
366 “perfect” job identifying clean ice on Langjökull, others perform very poorly. There is a pronounced
367 division between the two, jumping from $K = 0.9081$ for ASTER normal gain down to 0.6579 for MODIS
368 1-7. It should be noted that these results hold only for a simple unsupervised classification; supervised or
369 iterative approaches have the potential to yield more specific classes but would lose transferability and
370 ease of implementation. For surface classification of “dirty” or ash-covered glaciers, these results indicate
371 that sensors with “Good,” “Fair,” or “Poor” K values should be foregone in preference for the many
372 alternative sensors which rank higher in performance.

373

374 **5.2 Impact of Spatial Resolution on Glacier Surface Classification**

375 **5.2.1 Experimental Strategy and Considerations**

376 ATM imagery of most of Midtre Lovénbreen was used in this experiment. LCs were calculated for
377 the 2 m imagery (Equations 8 and 9 in supplementary material), and the image is masked using a manual
378 outline of the glacier. LCs were degraded to 20, 30, 60 and 250 m pixels analogous to Sentinel-2, Landsat
379 TM / ETM+ / OLI, Landsat MSS, and MODIS Bands 1-2, respectively; 500 m imagery is considered too
380 coarse to resolve smaller mountain glaciers. LCs were then input into an ISODATA classification (10
381 classes, maximum 10 iterations, 95% convergence); output classes were merged by the user into
382 meaningful glaciological classes (i.e. ablation and accumulation facies).

383 As spatial resolution is varied, the radiometric content of all images remains constant as a control.

384 As alluded to earlier, the impact of resolution will depend on the fractal scale of the surfaces being

385 considered. For this purpose, Midtre Lovénbreen is taken to be a representative glacier surface because
386 there is no reason to believe otherwise. Most classification accuracy and quality assessments suffer from
387 their inability to fulfil some assumptions, namely co-registration and random sampling (e.g. Comber,
388 Fisher, Brunsdon, & Khmag, 2012); this experiment uses all pixels to assess accuracy, and because
389 coarser imagery is created from finer imagery, co-registration is a not an issue.

390 By definition, the detail available in the 2 m results will be blurred out (to the lower resolution), but
391 it is unknown what beneficial or detrimental effects this may have on surface classification accuracy and
392 what this will mean for individual sensors which provide imagery at a variety of spatial resolutions. In
393 this case, only pixel-based classification is considered because pixel-based classifications have been
394 traditionally easier to implement with a range of software tools. Although object-based image analysis has
395 been shown to have benefits for very-high resolution imagery (1 m), at any lower resolutions it does not
396 produce statistically significantly different results from pixel-based classification (Baker et al., 2013).

397

398 **5.2.2 Spatial Resolution Assessment 1**

399 For each resolution, the ISODATA classification outputs 10 classes (see Figure 5). Classes 1 and 2
400 are mixes of shadow and thin debris cover, classes 3 through 8 are interpreted as ablation classes, and
401 classes 9 and 10 are interpreted as accumulation classes. For reasons described in earlier sections
402 concerning the potential presence of frost and the use of radiance rather than reflectance, from
403 investigation of the visible imagery it appears this interpretation (i.e. merging of classes) may slightly
404 overestimate the accumulation area. Nevertheless, this is deemed to be preferable to significant
405 underestimation of the area of accumulation facies.

406 Percentages of each class and the aggregated accumulation and ablation areas are presented in
407 Table 3. Most classifications have very similar accumulation and ablation area measurements, with the
408 exception of the 250 m pixel classification, which results in slightly less ablation and more accumulation,
409 although the differences are below 5%. While these figures agree, that does not mean the classification
410 results agree on the pixel level; to understand this, further analysis is necessary.

411

412 ***Insert Table 3 and Figure 5 approximately here***

413

414 **5.2.3 Spatial Resolution Assessment 2**

415 To begin to understand pixel-level agreement of glacier surface classification at various resolutions,
416 a majority filter was used to down-sample high resolution images to lower resolutions (see Table 4).

417 Because class numbers are not indicative mathematically of their similarity or difference, mathematic
418 convolution would not be meaningful. As would be expected, similarity is the most meaningful between
419 images with similarly sized pixels (see Table 4). However, the 2 and 30 m images and 2 and 20 m images
420 are more similar than the 20 and 30 m images. While this could be the result of a resampling artefact, it
421 does indicate that medium resolution imagery is doing a good job at reproducing the results obtained with
422 high resolution imagery. The 2 m classification results are approximately as similar to the 60 m results as
423 all of the medium resolution classifications are to each other, potentially indicating that 20 or 30 m
424 imagery is more suited to glacier surface classification than 60 m resolution imagery. At the bottom, the
425 low resolution imagery (250 m pixels) by a large step shows the lowest agreement with all other results;
426 according to this result, MODIS imagery is not appropriate for glacier surface classification.

427 The *A* and *K* rankings of the classification comparisons differ slightly in the relative position of the
428 comparison of 60 m and higher resolution results, 250 m to 2 m and 20 m images. The inferences drawn
429 above are consistently supported by both *A* and *K*, but divisions are more visible in the *K* values than in
430 the *A* values. This lends some confidence to the conclusions, because *K* values should contain more signal
431 and less false agreement than *A* values.

432

433 ***Insert Table 4 approximately here***

434

435 **5.2.4 Spatial Resolution Assessment 3**

436 In addition to downscaling high resolution imagery, the low resolution imagery is resampled to
437 high resolution by converting each pixel in the high resolution image to a host of small pixels of the same
438 class (i.e. one 250 m pixel becomes 15,625 corresponding 2 m pixels). Pixels in the original high
439 resolution and the down-sampled classifications are compared and assessed using A and K (see Table 5).
440 A and K ranks and relative values are in better agreement than in the previous section. For this round of
441 comparisons, similarity in pixel size was the unambiguous driver of similarity in results. Again, there is a
442 clear break between high (2 m) / medium (20, 30, or 60 m) resolution image results and any comparison
443 to the 250 m resolution classification results.

444

445 ***Insert Table 5 approximately here***

446

447 **6. Discussion**

448 Using full-spectrum *in situ* reflectance data to emulate the spectral and radiometric properties of a
449 range of imagers and settings is a controlled experiment of sorts, removing uncertainty introduced by
450 unknown or changing surface conditions. For both clean and dirty glacier surfaces, although radiometric
451 resolution is largely insignificant, selecting the sensor / gain settings with the most appropriate
452 radiometric range is very important. For the data presented here, Landsat TM / ETM+ LLLH, Sentinel-2,
453 Landsat MSS, ASTER low 1, and ASTER normal perform the classification tests the best. The
454 radiometric properties of the recently-launched OLI were not available at the time of writing, but by
455 considering analogues for its spectral bands and radiometric resolution, it is possible to envision that it
456 would yield results which are a cross between full-spectrum 12 bit results, Sentinel-2, and Landsat TM /
457 ETM+ and would therefore be quite well suited to glacier surface classification, too.

458 Moving on to spatial resolution, each method used to compare glacier surface classification at
459 different pixel sizes gives a slightly different impression of the importance of sensor spatial resolution.
460 Figure 5 clearly shows the loss of detail associated with observation at lower resolutions, but the relative
461 area of shadow, debris, accumulation and ablation facies is very similar among images of all classes.

462 However, relative accuracy at different spatial scales is dependent on the scale of inhomogeneity within
463 and between classes. For Midtre Lovénbreen, classes appear to be similarly behaved at high and medium
464 resolutions, but the glacier is definitely more complex than 250 m pixels can capture. Although 15 m
465 pixels (analogous to ASTER bands or fused ETM+ images) are not explicitly considered, in view of these
466 results, such an analysis would appear to have been superfluous. Based upon this analysis, for glacier
467 surface classification, high resolution imagery would indeed be desirable. It appears that even the highest
468 resolution that MODIS is capable of providing (250 m) is insufficient for glacier surface classification.
469 Medium resolution imagery is found to be adequate for the task, and 20 or 30 m imagery is preferable to
470 60 m imagery but not drastically.

471 However, it is important to question how representative the surfaces of Langjökull (spectrally) and
472 Midtre Lovénbreen (both spectrally and spatially) are of glaciers in general. The selection of field spectra
473 sampling locations was based upon the exploration of the field party. For Midtre Lovénbreen, the glacier
474 is small and therefore it is highly unlikely that any major classes were omitted. Langjökull is much larger,
475 and measurements were limited to a single outlet. Nevertheless, Landsat classification of this outlet
476 indicates the presence of the full range of facies along the transect which was used, and therefore it is
477 unlikely that any major classes were omitted there, either.

478 The question then turns to the relative proportion of each class as measured; to an extent, it is
479 important to recognize that these relative proportions will have some impact on the statistics, in particular
480 the proportions in any contingency table. The ranking of sensors according to *K* values could conceivably
481 have been more impacted by different proportions of facies. For example, for Midtre Lovénbreen,
482 inclusion of more ‘coarse snow’ and ‘dry ice’ spectra would likely have depressed all *K* values. Similarly,
483 for Langjökull, including more spectra from the classes near the ‘white ice’ spectra could have had a
484 similar impact. However, although the magnitude of the statistics would have changed, this would have
485 impacted (beneficially or detrimentally) all simulated clustering analyses, and it is therefore unlikely that
486 the conclusions thereof (based on relative rank) would change. This study based conclusions on all

487 available data, choosing not to filter out spectra. Nevertheless, potential impacts of relative proportions of
488 classes would be testable with further sampling campaigns.

489 It is crucial for this study that the spectra measured on Midtre Lovénbreen and Langjökull (and
490 principal components thereof) are considered to be representative of other glaciers. Because spectra are a
491 result of a combination of physical processes (snow formation, accumulation, compaction, melt, etc.), it is
492 reasonable to expect that this will be the case. Indeed, the similarity of the first and second principal
493 components of spectra between the two glaciers supports this interpretation. In addition, preliminary
494 principal component analysis of satellite imagery from other glaciers at other times yield nearly identical
495 principal component band combinations. Indeed, for a particular glacier, if the user wanted a customised
496 band combination, it would be reasonable to use PC1 and PC2 of a site-specific PCA. Thus, because
497 spectra from the two chosen field sites and satellite images from others agree upon the principal
498 components, it is reasonable to assume that Midtre Lovénbreen and Langjökull are representative glaciers
499 for study.

500 Nevertheless, although the major classes of Midtre Lovénbreen and Langjökull will be spectrally
501 representative of many glaciers, there are still surface features on other subsets of glaciers that are not
502 considered but could and would impact transferability of results. The largest subset of glaciers will be
503 those in colder climates, in particular those with dry snow facies, for example in Greenland and
504 Antarctica. Other surfaces which fall outside the remit of this study include those influenced by debris
505 cover, dust, black carbon, and snow algae. It is entirely possible that the LCs presented here will be
506 appropriate for classification of these facies; earlier work (Boresjö Bronge & Bronge, 1999) classified
507 snow and ice zonation in Antarctica (even including sea ice) using PCA as a guide. More work will be
508 needed to confirm or deny this hypothesis, but that is beyond the scope of this study.

509 The analysis of the impact of spatial resolution on classification success raises the question of
510 whether Midtre Lovénbreen is also spatially representative of other glaciers. Processes which impact the
511 spatial distribution and scale of facies include the accumulation distribution, wind and avalanche
512 redistribution, melt patterns, and local slopes, to name a few. In these regards, there is nothing that sets

513 Midtre Lovénbreen apart as a special glacier. By contrast, factors such as crevasses or incised supraglacial
514 streams are glacier-specific and may have some impact on the impact of resolution on surface
515 classification. However, such features are small on Midtre Lovénbreen and would likely manifest
516 themselves as an important difference between high- and mid-resolution images, rather than influencing
517 the conclusion that low-resolution images are inappropriate for facies classification. Thus, while there is
518 no reason to suspect that Midtre Lovénbreen would have a different spatial character than other glaciers,
519 it is recognized as a limitation of this study. Investigation of a wider study area would confirm or confine
520 this extrapolation, so it is suggested as a potential future research direction.

521 Accepting the transferability of this study, efficient and effective multispectral glacier surface
522 classification has many implications for glaciological research. The most immediate use is selection of
523 optimal imagery for widespread measurements of AAR (and therefore ELA) as mass balance proxies (e.g.
524 Rabatel et al., 2008; Rabatel et al., 2005; Shea et al., 2013). Some of the studies upon which the
525 classification method developed in this thesis were used for validation of glacier melt and hydrology
526 models (Braun et al., 2007; de Woul et al., 2006). The effective identification of wet facies on clean
527 glaciers by a wide range of sensors predisposes this classification scheme to effective application to
528 hydrological applications. Increased application to validate models studying glacier surface hydrology
529 would therefore be appropriate. In addition to small mountain glaciers (e.g. Dahlke et al., 2012), there is
530 increasing interest in water-saturated areas in Greenland, so this may be a promising research direction. In
531 addition, energy balance models may find some overlap with hydrological modelling, driving the liquid
532 contributions to the glacier system. This study provides another step in the direction of successfully
533 applying such an assimilation or validation mechanism.

534 Other areas of research which will be impacted eventually include, as mentioned earlier, studies
535 of climate variability, understanding of water resources, study of geomorphologic hazards, and
536 investigation of high altitude and latitude biodiversity. These all tie back to better process-based
537 understanding of glacier surface processes enabled by application of multispectral remote sensing. Here,
538 two data sets were used to investigate the wider application of glacier surface classification across many

539 platforms. For the new sensors whose properties are not fully quantified (OLI on Landsat 8 and Sentinel-
540 2), it will be interesting to confirm the conclusions drawn here from the assumptions made here. Further
541 principal component analysis of multispectral remote sensing imagery of glaciers would confirm the
542 linear combinations of bands presented here for surface classification.

543 In addition, the transferability of the conclusions about the necessity of medium-to-high spatial
544 resolution has wide implications. It is pragmatic and efficient to identify the lowest reasonable resolution
545 of data to use for studying glacier surface properties. This is especially true if the techniques are going to
546 be used across wide areas or long time series. Although not expected that the conclusions will change
547 significantly, it would still be beneficial to confirm with ATM images from other glaciers, in other areas,
548 and across larger areas as well. Beyond application of ATM images, coordinated campaigns allowing for
549 intercomparison of coincident, multi-resolution data would lead to even more robust conclusions in the
550 future.

551

552 **7. Conclusion**

553 Increasing availability of multispectral data requires that researchers know what data types are best suited
554 for their own research questions. For glacier surface classification, the radiometric, spectral, and spatial
555 properties of a suite of popular sensors (ATM, ASTER, MSS, TM, ETM+, OLI, Sentinel-2, and MODIS)
556 are investigated using data sets in common to perform controlled analyses. Linear combinations for all
557 sensors were created based on principal component analysis of *in situ* spectra. Among these sensors,
558 spectral resolution and range or radiometric resolution were not important on their own. The most
559 important property which determined the suitability of a multispectral imager for glacier surface
560 classification was its radiometric range. In particular, it was found to be beneficial to have a low gain in
561 the visible and a higher gain in the NIR.

562 Spatial resolution can, seemingly paradoxically, be either beneficial or detrimental to classification,
563 depending on the fractal scale of the surface being classified. For glaciers, it was found that low
564 resolution imagery (250 m pixels) is too coarse to represent the true complexity present on a glacier.

565 However, medium resolution imagery (60 m, 30 m, or 20 m) did accurately represent the results derived
566 from high resolution airborne imagery. Nevertheless, 30 m imagery was preferable to 60 m imagery.

567 From this, it was inferred that inhomogeneity on glaciers is significant on a scale between ~60 and 250 m.

568 Based upon these radiometric, spatial, and spectral requirements, the sensors emulated here that are
569 most suitable for glacier surface classification are Landsat TM / TM+ (with gain settings of LLLH) and
570 ASTER (low 1 or normal gain). Both Sentinel-2 and the OLI on Landsat 8 are also expected to be
571 similarly qualified. Landsat MSS is also found to be radiometrically well-suited for glacier surface
572 classification, but its lower spatial resolution makes it a secondary selection. However, MSS has historical
573 imagery whereas other sensors have more recent (or future) data ranges, and therefore these imagers
574 could be used in conjunction with each other. This demonstrates, once again, that although priority can be
575 given to sensor capabilities, temporal resolution and data availability will still remain important
576 considerations.

577 Consideration was given to the transferability of the results presented here. The result of universal
578 physical processes, Midtre Lovénbreen and Langjökull are deemed to be representative of the classes
579 present on many GICs, both spatially and spectrally. Future work should focus on downstream impacts,
580 related to mass balance proxies, integrated with glacier modelling, and related to applied studies of glacier
581 behaviour. The potential exists for further confirmation of the conclusions presented here using further
582 data sets.

583 In sum, the work presented in this paper has contributed to the understanding of glaciological
584 applications of multispectral remote sensing imagery, a field which will be sure to remain innovative and
585 vital to glaciology for many years to come.

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600

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835 **Figures:**

836 **Figure 1:** Comparison of spectral bands of the multispectral sensors considered in this study. Background
837 spectrum is the same as ‘Fine Snow’ in Figure 2.3. See Table S2 for further details.

838 **Figure 2:** False-colour ATM image of Midtre Lovénbreen collected on 9 August, 2003. ATM bands 4, 3,
839 and 2 are used for red, green, and blue respectively. Full colour versions for this and other figures are
840 available online.

841 **Figure 3:** Biplots of the first and second linear combinations of *in situ* spectral data from Midtre
842 Lovénbreen modified to mimic the spectral and radiometric properties of a range of multispectral
843 imagers. See Table 1 for the details of all individual plots, (a) through (p). The ellipses in Figure 3a also
844 show the three groups into which the data were classified.

845 **Figure 4:** Biplots of the first and second linear combinations of *in situ* spectral data from Langjökull
846 modified to mimic the spectral and radiometric properties of a range of multispectral imagers. See Table 2
847 for the details of all individual plots, (a) through (p). The ellipse in Figure 4a highlights the clean ice
848 spectra which were classified as distinct from the rest.

849 **Figure 5:** Midtre Lovénbreen surface classification using ATM imagery at 2 m resolution (a) and the
850 same image degraded to 20 m (b), 30 m (c), 60 m (d), and 250 m pixels (e).

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853 **Tables:**

854 **Table 1:** For Midtre Lovénbreen spectra: sensors, radiometric resolution, gain settings, *K* (Cohen’s
855 *Kappa*) of clustering success, description of classification success (Monserud & Leemans, 1992), and
856 corresponding panel in Figure 3.

Sensor	Radiometric Resolution	Gain Settings	K	Monserud Agreement	Figure 6.1
ASTER	8 bit	hi	0.9816	Excellent	b
ASD FieldSpec	8 bit	-	0.9742	Excellent	c
ASD FieldSpec	16 bit	-	0.9742	Excellent	d
ASD FieldSpec	12 bit	-	0.9742	Excellent	e
Landsat MSS	8 bit	-	0.9705	Excellent	f
ASTER	8 bit	low 1	0.9669	Excellent	g
ASD FieldSpec	-	-	0.9669	Excellent	a
ATM	16 bit	-	0.9631	Excellent	h
ASTER	8 bit	normal	0.9595	Excellent	i
Sentinel-2	12 bit	-	0.9484	Excellent	j
Landsat TM / ETM+	8 bit	LLLH	0.9448	Excellent	k
Landsat TM / ETM+	8 bit	HHHH	0.9267	Excellent	l
MODIS 1-7	12 bit	-	0.9158	Excellent	m
MODIS 8+	12 bit	hi	0.8938	Excellent	n
MODIS 8+	12 bit	lo	0.8721	Excellent	o
Landsat TM / ETM+	8 bit	LLLL	0.7977	Very Good	p

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860 **Table 2:** For Langjökull spectra: sensors, radiometric resolution, gain settings, K (Cohen’s Kappa) of
861 clustering success, description of classification success (Monserud & Leemans, 1992), and corresponding
862 panel in Figure 4.

Sensor	Radiometric Resolution	Gain Settings	K	Monserud Agreement	Figure 6.2
ASD FieldSpec	-	-	1	Perfect	a
ASD FieldSpec	16 bit	-	1	Perfect	b
ASD FieldSpec	12 bit	-	1	Perfect	c
ASD FieldSpec	8 bit	-	1	Perfect	d
Sentinel-2	12 bit	-	1	Perfect	e
Landsat TM / ETM+	8 bit	LLLH	1	Perfect	f
ASTER	8 bit	low 1	1	Perfect	g
Landsat MSS	8 bit	-	1	Perfect	h
ASTER	8 bit	normal	0.9081	Excellent	i
MODIS 1-7	12 bit	-	0.6579	Good	j
Landsat TM / ETM+	8 bit	HHHH	0.6559	Good	k
ATM	16 bit	-	0.5979	Good	l
Landsat TM / ETM+	8 bit	LLLL	0.5841	Good	m
ASTER	8 bit	hi	0.5101	Fair	n
MODIS 8+	12 bit	hi	0.4879	Fair	o
MODIS 8+	12 bit	lo	0.3522	Poor	p

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866 **Table 3:** Comparison of the results of the classifications presented in Figure 5 by considering relative
 867 area of each class as well as their aggregation into glaciologically meaningful groups of accumulation and
 868 ablation area.

Class	2 m Pixels	Percent	Interpretation			
1	124,425	9.7	Shadow / Debris			
2	196,744	15.3	Shadow / Debris			
3	57,694	4.5	Ablation			
4	67,947	5.3	Ablation		Total Area:	5.15 km ²
5	107,323	8.3	Ablation			
6	158,711	12.3	Ablation		Shadow/Debris:	25.0 %
7	205,371	16.0	Ablation		Ablation:	60.4 %
8	179,783	13.0	Ablation		Accumulation:	14.7 %
9	116,938	9.1	Accumulation			
10	72,040	5.6	Accumulation			
Class	20 m Pixels	Percent	Interpretation			
1	1,383	10.5	Shadow / Debris			
2	1,932	14.7	Shadow / Debris			
3	610	4.6	Ablation			
4	653	5.0	Ablation		Total Area:	5.26 km ²
5	1,023	7.8	Ablation			
6	1,479	11.3	Ablation		Shadow/Debris:	25.0 %
7	2,307	17.6	Ablation		Ablation:	60.5 %
8	1,883	14.3	Ablation		Accumulation:	14.2 %
9	1,107	8.4	Accumulation			
10	765	5.8	Accumulation			
Class	30 m Pixels	Percent	Interpretation			
1	630	10.6	Shadow / Debris			
2	889	15.0	Shadow / Debris			
3	287	4.8	Ablation			
4	288	4.9	Ablation		Total Area:	5.33 km ²
5	454	7.7	Ablation			
6	624	10.5	Ablation		Shadow/Debris:	25.7 %
7	1,005	17.0	Ablation		Ablation:	60.0 %
8	895	15.1	Ablation		Accumulation:	14.3 %
9	491	8.3	Accumulation			
10	358	6.0	Accumulation			

Class	60 m Pixels	Percent	Interpretation			
1	167	10.8	Shadow / Debris			
2	228	14.8	Shadow / Debris			
3	93	6.0	Ablation			
4	87	5.6	Ablation		Total Area:	5.55 km ²
5	92	6.0	Ablation			
6	153	9.9	Ablation		Shadow/Debris:	25.6 %
7	240	15.6	Ablation		Ablation:	60.2 %
8	264	17.1	Ablation		Accumulation:	14.2 %
9	119	7.7	Accumulation			
10	100	6.5	Accumulation			
Class	250 m Pixels	Percent	Interpretation			
1	15	13.4	Shadow / Debris			
2	16	14.3	Shadow / Debris			
3	7	6.3	Ablation			
4	11	9.8	Ablation		Total Area:	7.0 km ²
5	7	6.3	Ablation			
6	6	5.4	Ablation		Shadow/Debris:	27.7 %
7	13	11.6	Ablation		Ablation:	54.5 %
8	17	15.2	Ablation		Accumulation:	17.9 %
9	11	9.8	Accumulation			
10	9	8.0	Accumulation			

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871

872 **Table 4:** Comparison of the results of the classifications presented in Figure 5 by down-sampling results

873 with majority filtering to lower resolutions. A is overall agreement and K is Cohen's Kappa, both

874 presented in Section 4.5; perfect agreement would lead to a value of 1 for both A and K.

Starting Resolution	Final Resolution	A	A, grouped	A, ranked	K	K, grouped	K, ranked
2 m	30 m	0.6315	0.9477	1	0.5825	0.9035	1
2 m	20 m	0.7217	0.9459	2	0.6837	0.9017	2
20 m	30 m	0.5788	0.9324	3	0.5226	0.8746	3
30 m	60 m	0.6414	0.9084	6	0.5927	0.8360	4
2 m	60 m	0.5284	0.9135	4	0.4662	0.8359	5
20 m	60 m	0.6126	0.9090	5	0.5605	0.8326	6
60 m	250 m	0.2857	0.7727	7	0.1881	0.5956	7
30 m	250 m	0.1923	0.7612	8	0.0878	0.5681	8
20 m	250 m	0.1975	0.6857	10	0.1023	0.4554	9
2 m	250 m	0.2405	0.6912	9	0.1425	0.4322	10

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877

878 **Table 5:** Comparison of the results of the classifications presented in Figure 5 by downscaling results to
879 higher resolutions. A is overall accuracy agreement and K is Cohen's Kappa, both described in Section
880 4.5; perfect agreement would lead to a value of 1 for both A and K.

Starting Resolution	Final Resolution	A	A, grouped	A, ranked	K	K, grouped	K, ranked
30 m	20 m	0.7381	0.9603	1	0.7030	0.9269	1
20 m	2 m	0.6393	0.9585	2	0.5918	0.9233	2
30 m	3 m	0.5976	0.9450	3	0.5443	0.8983	3
60 m	30 m	0.6383	0.9338	4	0.5902	0.8778	4
60 m	20 m	0.5958	0.9252	5	0.5422	0.8609	5
60 m	2 m	0.4977	0.9065	6	0.4317	0.8253	6
250 m	60 m	0.2612	0.6909	7	0.1690	0.4469	7
250 m	30 m	0.2342	0.6833	8	0.1400	0.4223	8
250 m	20 m	0.2165	0.6711	9	0.1207	0.3985	9
250 m	2 m	0.2145	0.6647	10	0.1190	0.3883	10

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