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fires and IMS network: A case study of wildfire outbreak in Canada in the summer of 2023

Extreme wildfires have become more frequent and widespread in recent years, causing negative impacts on society, infrastructure, air quality, terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. The International Monitoring System (IMS) facilities operate worldwide in remote locations, sometimes in regions regularly suffering from forest fires. This could pose a significant risk for a station's routine operation and maintenance and potentially make an IMS station vulnerable during fire season. The 2023 wildfire season was a record-breaking event in Canadian history: the total area burned exceeded 17 million hectares and was the largest recorded number in the last fifty years. In this work we will take a close look at the wildfire situation using a case study of wildfire outbreak in Canada in 2023 and examine how this situation affected the performance of some IMS stations (Yellowknife in the Northwest Territories). The study is based on statistical data published by the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre (CIFFC) in the form of yearly reports (2016-2024) and data from the CTBTO IMS Reporting System and Operational Status of Certified IMS Facilities in Canada.

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