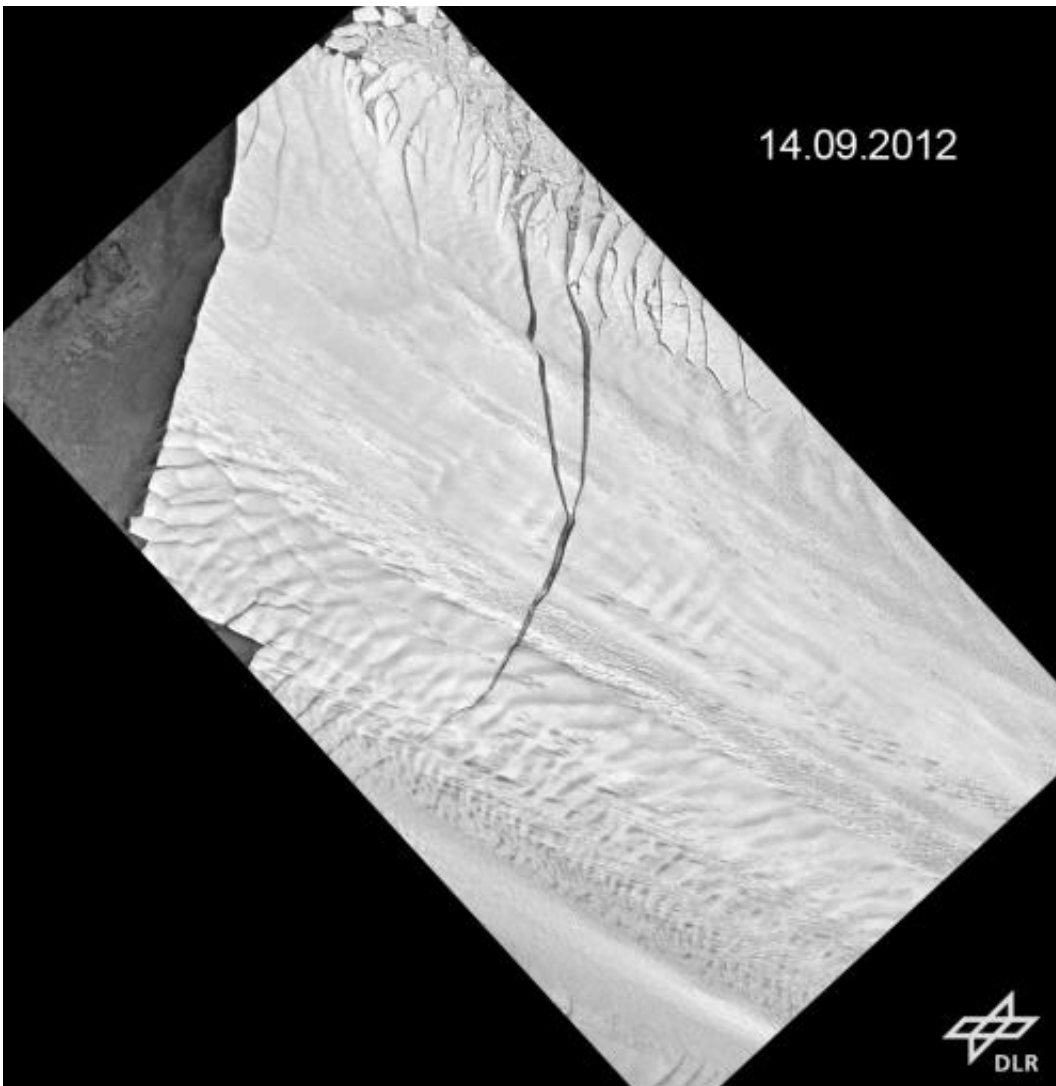


Antarctic rift subject of international attention

October 16 2012, by George Hale



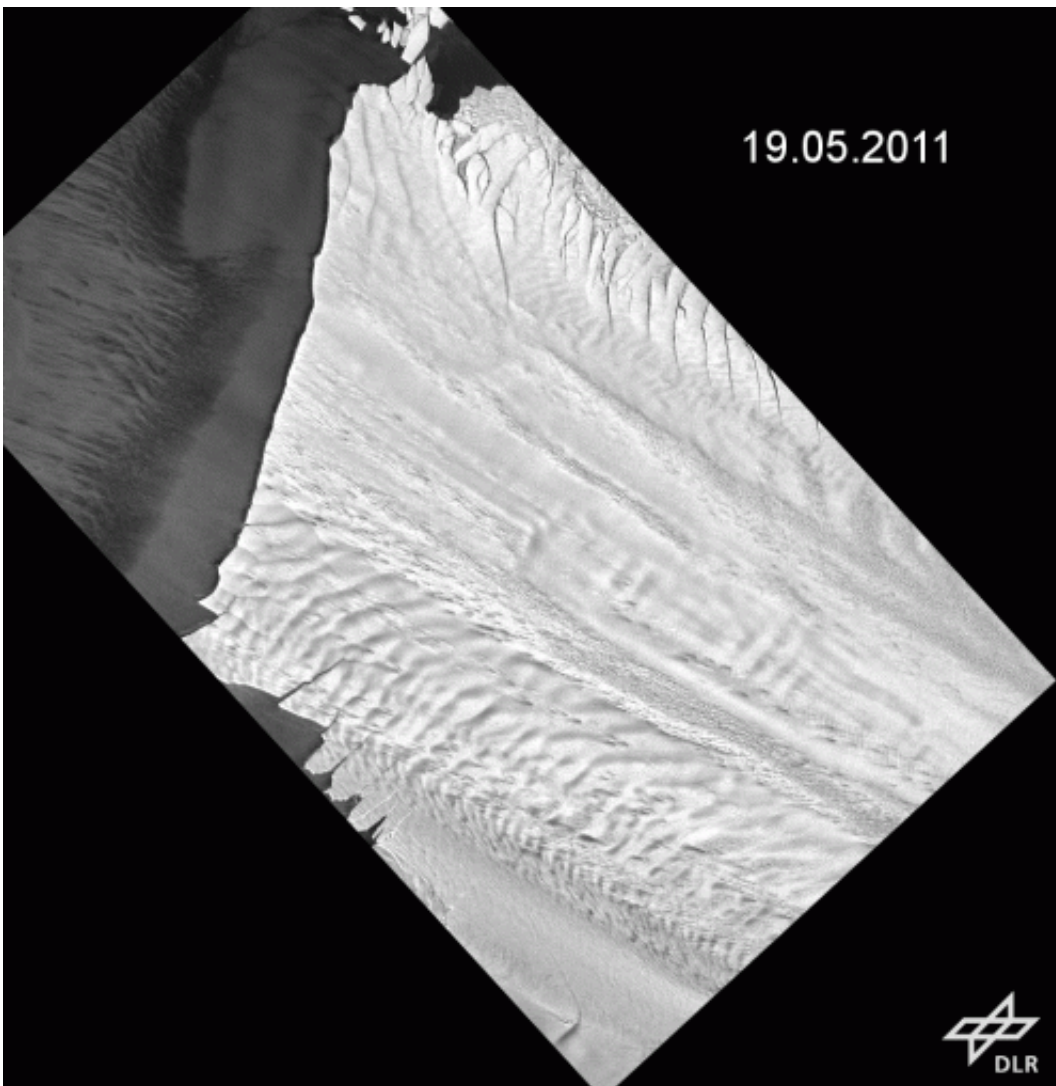
A synthetic aperture radar image of the Ping Island Glacier rift was taken by the German Aerospace Center's TerraSAR-X satellite on Sept. 14, 2012. There have not been any changes to the glacier since that time. Credit: German Aerospace Center

As NASA's Operation IceBridge resumed Antarctic science flights on Oct. 12, 2012, researchers worldwide had their eyes on Antarctica's Pine Island Glacier ice shelf, the site of a large rift measured during last year's campaign. This 18-mile-long crack is the start of a calving event that could potentially create a massive iceberg. The Pine Island Glacier broke large icebergs in 2001 and 2007, but the 2011 IceBridge survey marked the first time a rift has been measured in great detail from the air. IceBridge will be based out of Punta Arenas, Chile, in October and November.



A cloudless sky on Oct. 12, 2012 allowed NASA's Terra satellite to use its MODIS instrument to capture this image of the rift in Antarctica's Pine Island Glacier. Credit: NASA Goddard MODIS Rapid Response Team

The ice shelf remained stable throughout the 2011 IceBridge campaign and in the months since then. Scientists around the world have been keeping tabs on the rift using various satellite instruments. The images displayed here show changes in the [Pine Island Glacier](#) rift over the past several months and are from the MODIS instruments on NASA's Aqua and Terra spacecraft and the [synthetic aperture radar](#) instrument aboard the TerraSAR-X satellite operated by the German Aerospace Center.



Germany's TerraSAR-X satellite recording these images from Oct. 2011 through Sept. 14, 2012. Credit: German Aerospace Center

More information: For more information about MODIS, visit:
modis.gsfc.nasa.gov/
For more information about TerraSAR-X, visit:
www.dlr.de/dlr/en/desktopdefault.aspx?tab=10377/565_read-436/
For more information, images, and video of Operation Ice Bridge, visit:
www.nasa.gov/icebridge/

Provided by NASA

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