Video: Operation IceBridge completes 11 years of polar surveys

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For eleven years from 2009 to 2019, the planes of NASA's Operation IceBridge flew above the Arctic, Antarctic and Alaska, gathering data on the height, depth, thickness, flow and change of sea ice, glaciers and ice sheets.

Designed to collect data during the years between NASA's two Ice,

Cloud, and land Elevation Satellites, ICESat and ICESat-2, IceBridge made its final polar flight in November 2019, one year after ICESat-2's successful launch. The fleet of aircraft carried more than a dozen instruments, from elevation-mapping lasers and ice-penetrating radars to optical and infrared cameras. And the mission did much more than bridge the altimetry gap—it enabled many other discoveries, too, from diminishing snow cover over Arctic sea ice to impact craters hidden beneath Greenland's ice.

As the team and planes move on to their next assignments, the scientists and engineers reflected on a decade of IceBridge's most significant accomplishments.

Provided by Science@NASA