

Helicopterborne EM ice thickness surveys during SafeWin 2011 field campaign



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Introduction

The EU SafeWin project aims to improve the safety of winter navigation in the ice-covered Baltic Sea and other polar seas. It includes modeling and observational studies. As part of the latter, two winter field campaigns have been performed to provide data for the development and improvement of models and ship-in-ice studies, and for their validation. Ice thickness is one of the key parameters governing navigation in ice. Therefore, extensive ground-based, ship-borne, underwater, and airborne ice thickness surveys have been performed. This report summarizes the results of airborne electromagnetic (EM) ice thickness surveys undertaken during the second SafeWin winter field campaign in 2011, using a helicopter-towed EM Bird.

Surveys were flown during and after the RV Aranda sea ice cruise in the Sea and Bay of Bothnia, between March 2 and 7, 2011. Due to severe ice conditions, RV Aranda arrived late at her final destination in the Bay of Bothnia. Therefore, and due to further delays related to technical problems with the helicopter and contaminated fuel, surveys from the ship could only be performed on two days, before the ship had to return south. However, we decided to keep the EM Bird on land in Kokkola, and after some careful training by Alec Casey, Mikko Lensu was able to perform surveys on four more days.

In total, 11 flights were performed, covering large parts of the Bay of Bothnia, the Quarcken, and the northern Sea of Bothnia (Figure 1). While some flights were designed to provide the best overview of the regional ice thickness distribution, several flights were performed over the buoy array in the region surrounding the ship, to observe thickness changes resulting from changes in ice deformation.

The University of Alberta participants in the 2011 sea ice cruise were Alec Casey, John Lobach, and Christian Haas.

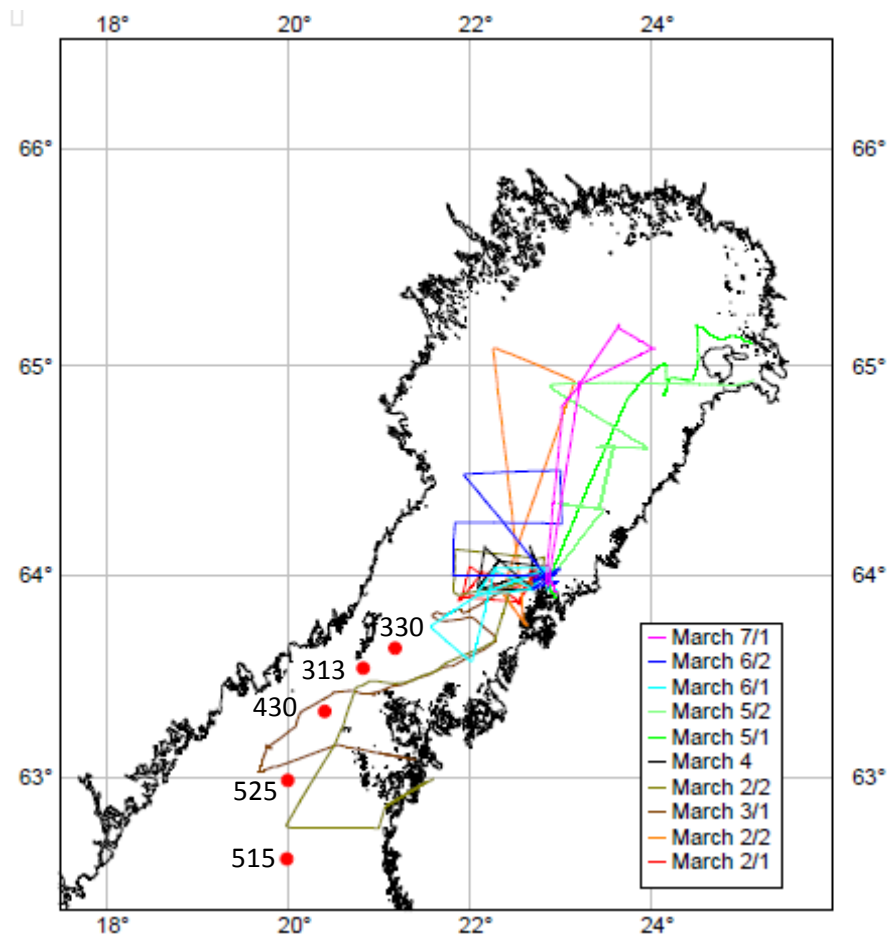


Figure 1: Overview of all EM ice thickness flights performed during SafeWin2011. Red circles show locations of CTD profiles and respective surface seawater conductivities in mS/m.

EM thickness sounding

An EM system consists of an assembly of coils for the transmission and reception of low-frequency EM fields, and a laser altimeter. The EM components are sensitive to the sensor's height above the conductive sea water surface, while the sensor's altitude above the ice or snow surface is determined with the laser altimeter. Over sea ice, the water surface coincides with the ice underside. Therefore, the difference of the height measurements of both components corresponds to the ice-plus-snow or total thickness.

We used a small, lightweight, helicopter-borne EM Bird, 3.5 m long and weighing 100 kg. It was suspended 20 m below the helicopter and towed at heights of 10 to 20 m above the ice surface. The EM bird operates at a frequency of 4.06 kHz, with a coil spacing of 2.7 m. The EM system is calibrated by means of internal calibration coils with a known response. EM sampling frequency

is 10 Hz, corresponding to a measurement point spacing of approximately 3 to 4 m. Measurements are interrupted every 15 to 20 minutes by ascents to high altitude, to monitor electrical system drift. More information about the sensor and procedures can be found in Haas et al. (2009).

Comparison with drill-hole data shows that the EM derived ice thicknesses agree well within ± 0.1 m over level ice. However, the accuracy is worse over ridges. Because the low-frequency EM field is diffusive, its strength represents the average thickness of an area of approximately 3.7 times the instruments altitude above the ice surface. Due to this “footprint”, the maximum ridge thickness can be underestimated by as much as 50% in the worst cases, depending on the geometry and consolidation of the ridge keel.

In the Baltic Sea, measurements are challenging due to the brackish nature of the sea water, with salinities of only around 5 ppt in the Sea of Bothnia and 3 ppt in the Bay of Bothnia, with a sharp salinity gradient in the Quarken region (see Figure 1). However, surveys have successfully been performed by a team from the Finish Geological Survey in the 1990s, and during the EU IRIS project between 2003 and 2005 (Haas, 2004), during PolIce in 2006, and during SafeWin2010. Note that with such low salinities/conductivities, the Quadrature component Q of the secondary EM field is larger than the Inphase I. Therefore, Q also has a better signal-to-noise ratio, and all thickness retrievals have been based on this component. This is different from measurements over ocean sea water, where the Inphase component is mostly used. Haas (2006) has shown that Quadrature measurements are less sensitive to the sea floor in shallow water.

The accuracy of the EM measurements is further compromised by the existence of shallow water and the formation of a freshwater layer under fast ice fed by river runoff from land. Haas (2006) has shown that ice thicknesses will be overestimated in brackish water shallower than 10 to 15 m, because currents are induced in the seafloor, which typically has a lower conductivity than the seawater. Similarly, the freshwater layer under the fast ice has negligible conductivity and cannot be distinguished from the ice. These two effects strongly influenced the results obtained during flights over fast ice, which resided near the coasts, most notably in the region around Hailuoto and along the shores west of Vasa, and east of the Quarken.

The data from the laser altimeter included in the bird can be used to retrieve the ice surface profile which can then be used to derive pressure ridge distributions. Surface heights have been obtained with the “Hibler Method” (Hibler, 1972) to remove the helicopter altitude variations inherent to the raw laser range measurements. These data have also been delivered to project participants.

Note that thicknesses have been obtained with a sampling frequency of 10 Hz, while the laser altimeter was operated with a sampling frequency of 100 Hz.

Results

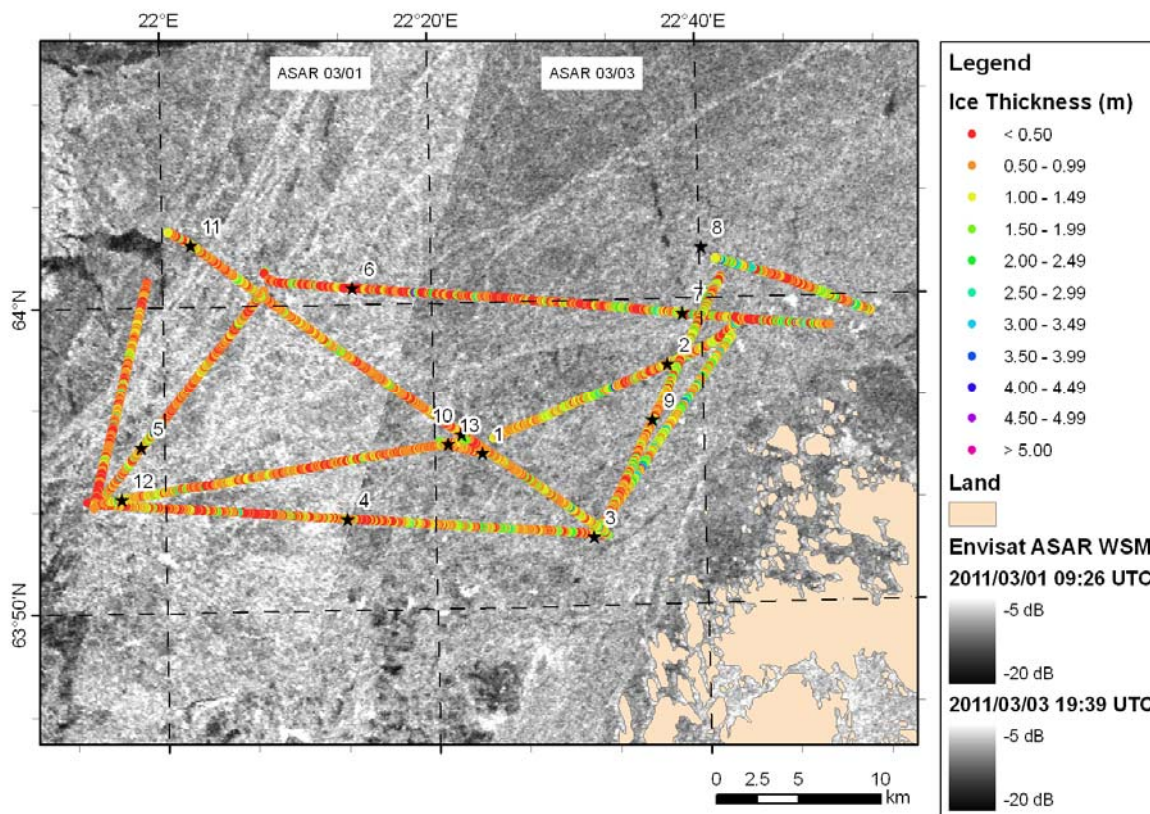
On the following pages, details of ice thicknesses along the flight tracks are given by means of profile plots of the corrected laser surface profiles and EM thickness profiles. Graphs show 20 km sections, with ice thickness plotted with negative sign to approximately resemble the draft profile. Data have been subdivided into 20 km sections for programming convenience only, and may therefore not best represent the involved flight tracks which were often characterized by many turns and curves. The users of the data can subsequently subdivide the data according to their own needs.

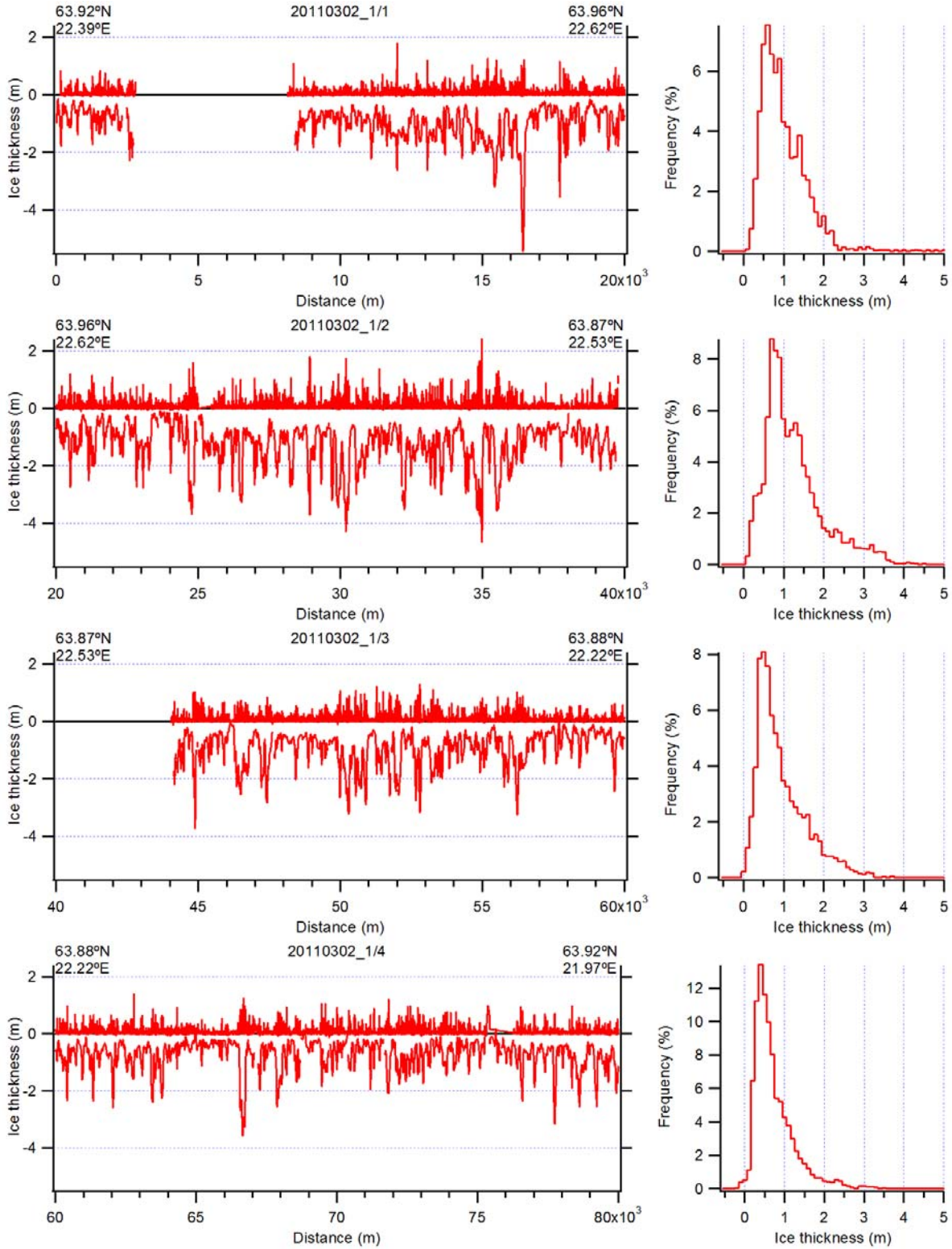
For each flight, a SAR image is shown for information about general ice conditions, with ice thicknesses overlaid. Subsequently, main results for 20 km sections are summarized in tables, profile figures, and histograms. Tables show the start and end position of each section, which are also displayed by the stars and associated segment number in the thickness maps.

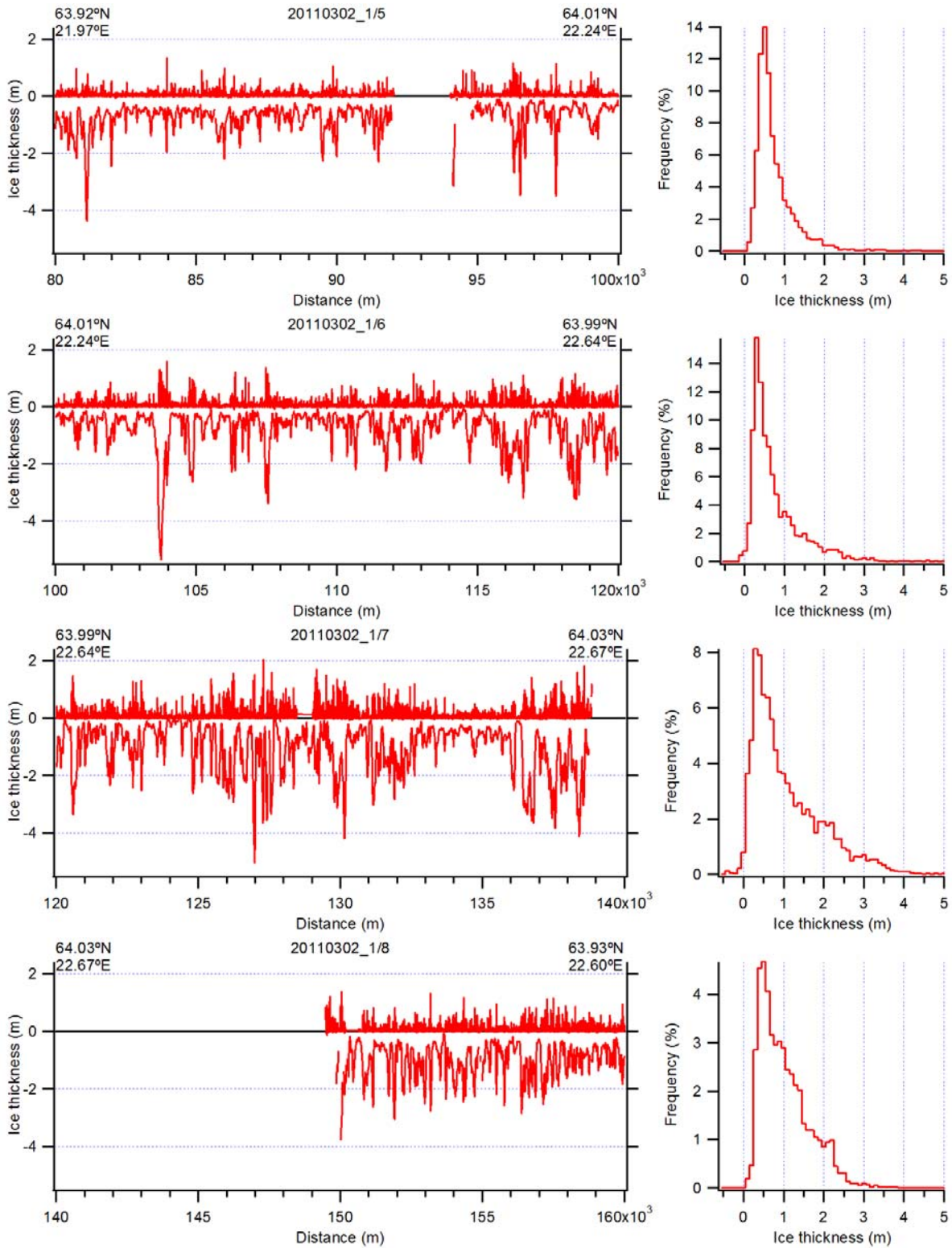
March 2, 2011, morning flight over buoy array

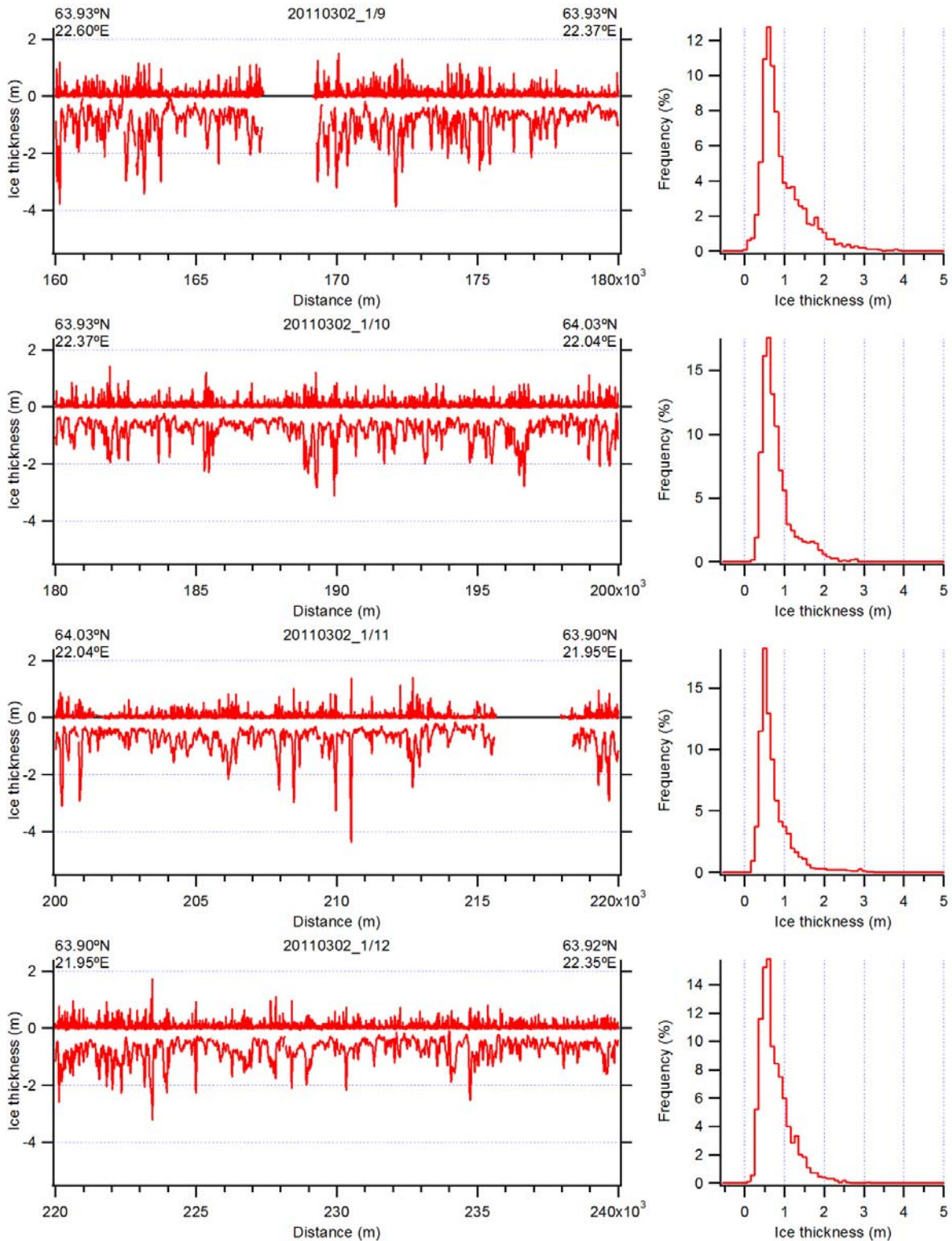
Segment No.	GPS time start (decimal hour)	GPS time end (decimal hour)	Mean thickness (m)	Standard deviation (m)	Modal thickness (m)
1	7.83017	7.96806	1.00417	0.585632	0.55
2	7.96806	8.32356	1.25393	0.733633	0.65
3	8.32356	8.48186	0.945975	0.611057	0.45
4	8.48186	8.67117	0.72974	0.511156	0.35
5	8.67117	8.80883	0.753142	0.508326	0.45
6	8.80883	8.93664	0.781615	0.700165	0.25
7	8.93664	9.17456	1.07741	0.855848	0.25
8	9.17456	9.3935	1.02192	0.602169	0.45
9	9.3935	9.54761	0.949472	0.567729	0.55
10	9.54761	9.68669	0.814186	0.416853	0.55
11	9.68669	9.86567	0.744964	0.454924	0.45
12	9.86567	9.98836	0.772241	0.392079	0.55
13	9.98836	9.99486	0.822701	0.387474	0.55

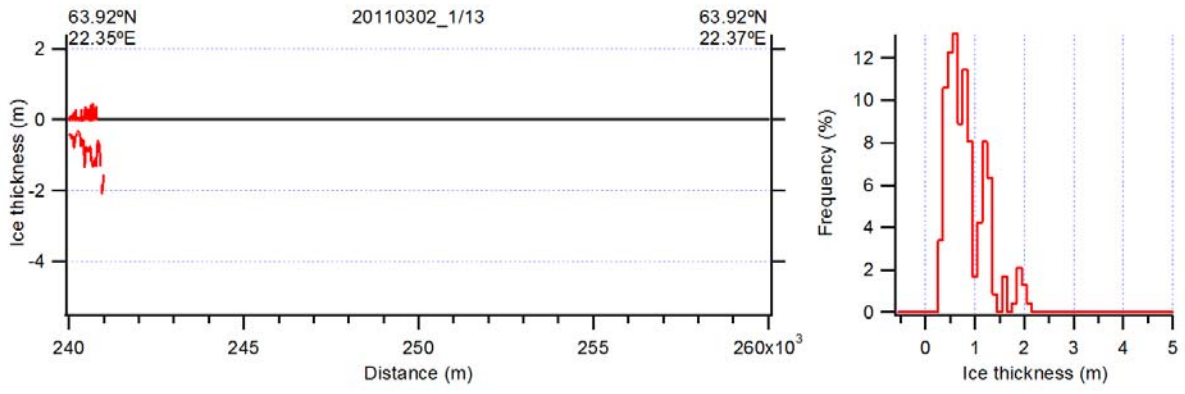
HEM Flight 2011/03/02 Morning







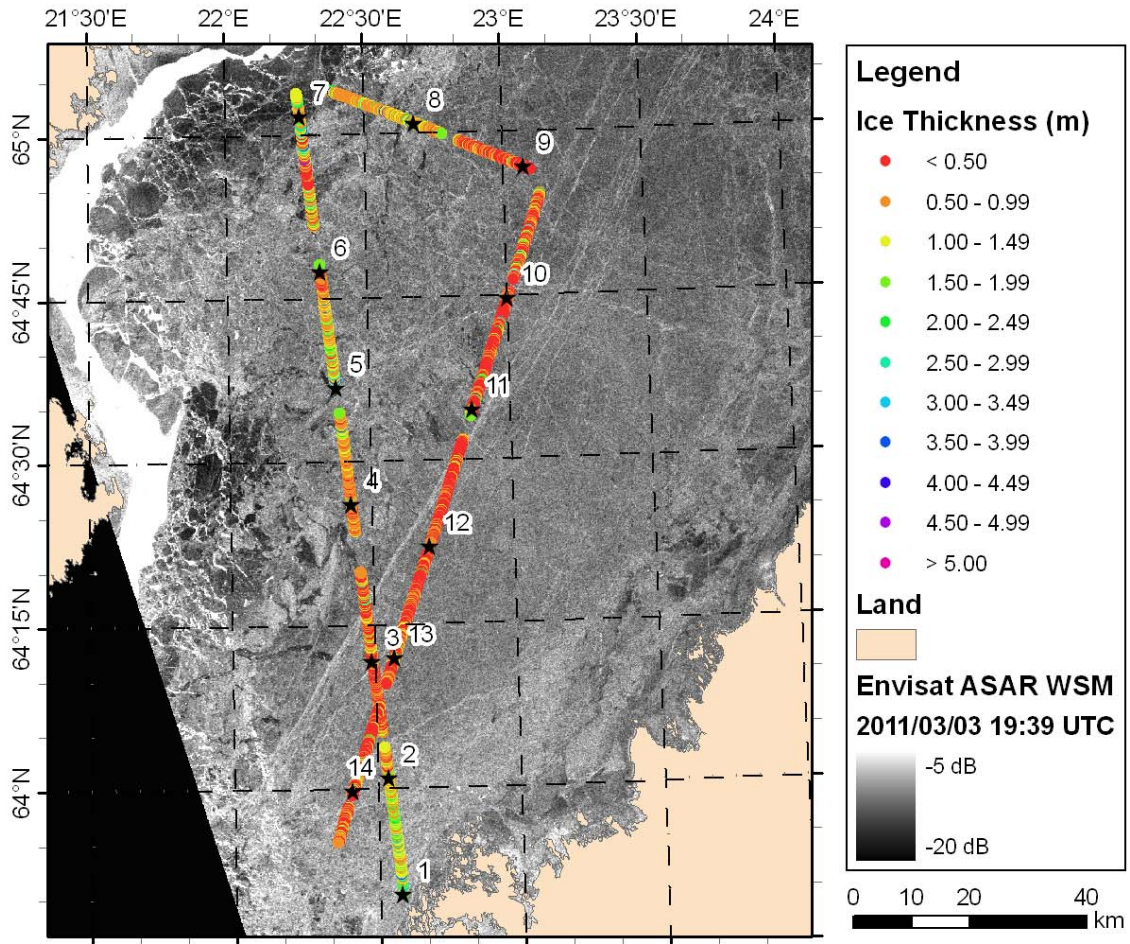


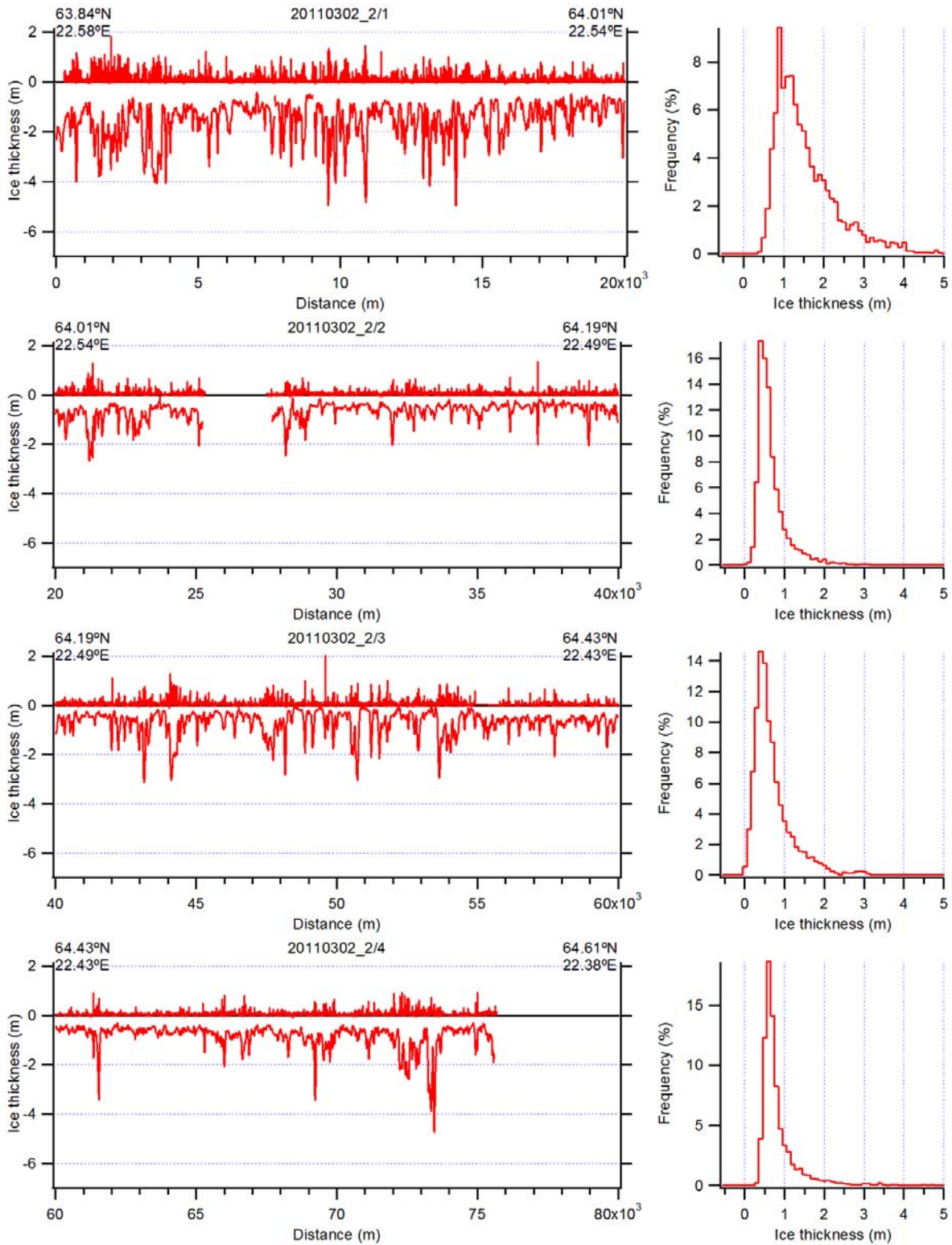


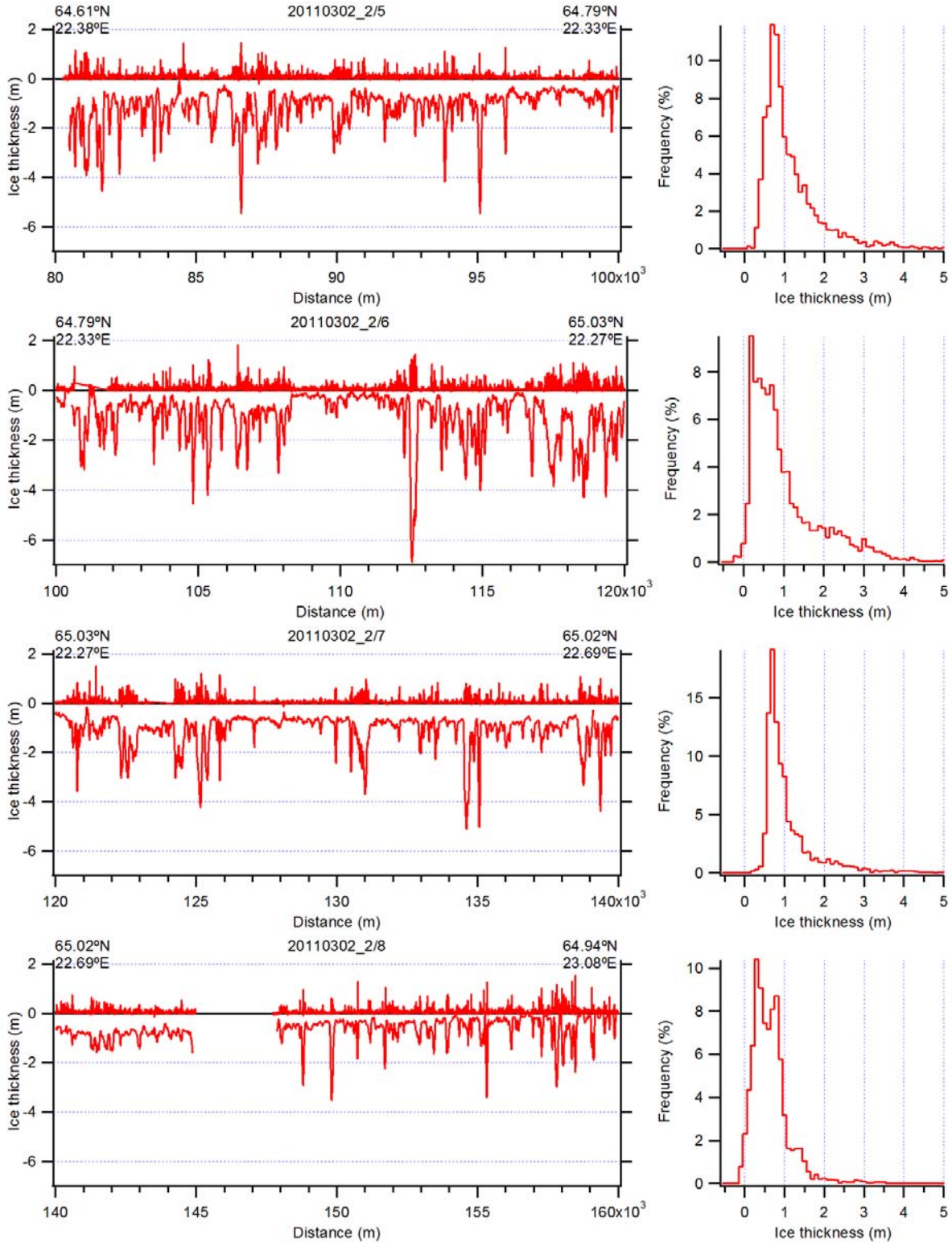
March 2, 2011, afternoon flight along CryoSat track to Norstroemsgrund (near Lulea)

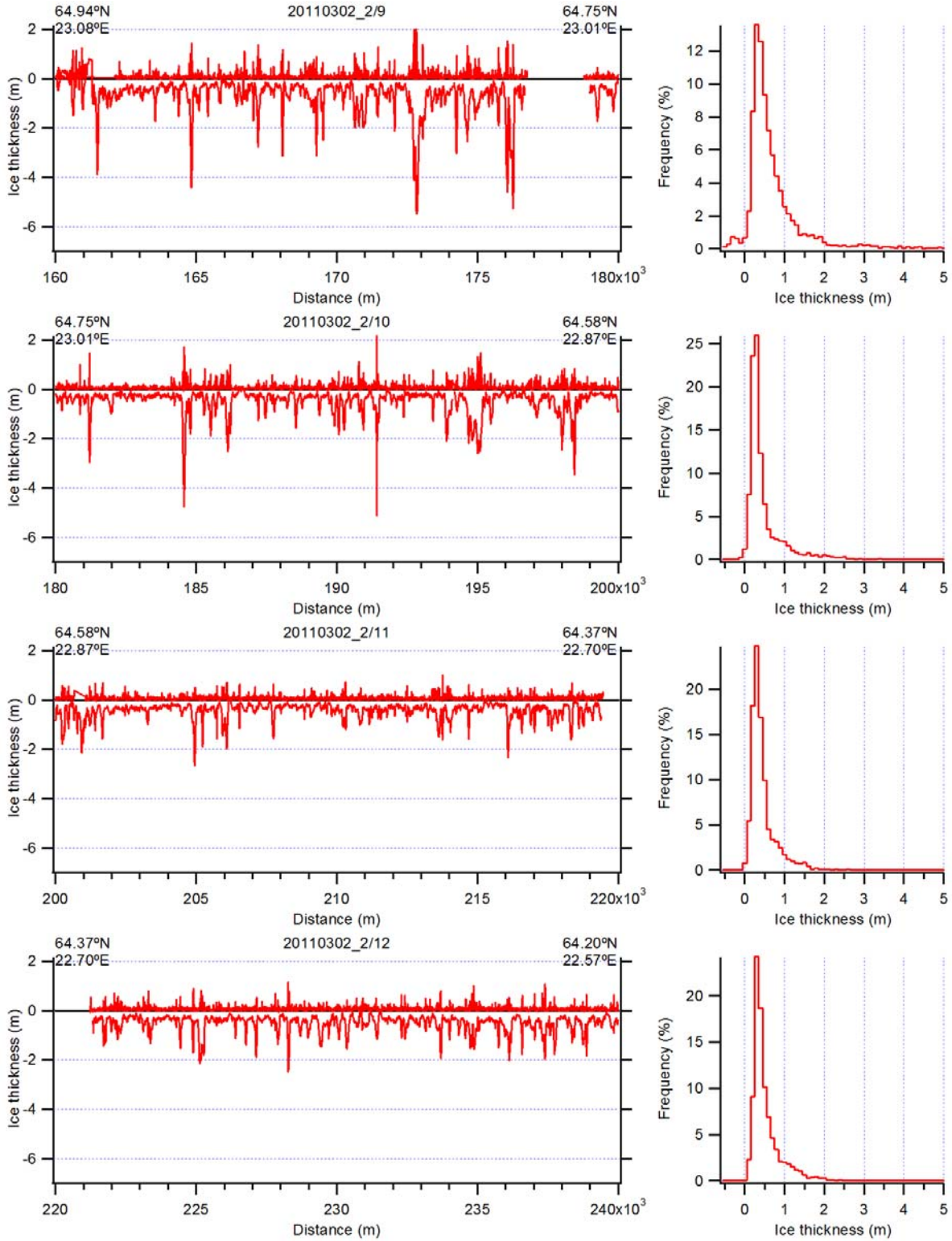
Segment No.	GPS time start (decimal hour)	GPS time end (decimal hour)	Mean thickness (m)	Standard deviation (m)	Modal thickness (m)
1	11.84	11.9712	1.54929	0.76351	0.85
2	11.9712	12.0986	0.670421	0.380157	0.35
3	12.0986	12.2666	0.693321	0.488198	0.35
4	12.2666	12.3902	0.837055	0.501877	0.55
5	12.3902	12.5089	1.15589	0.742053	0.65
6	12.5089	12.6613	1.06348	0.972963	0.15
7	12.6613	12.8244	1.09337	0.693173	0.65
8	12.8244	12.9459	0.640959	0.470235	0.25
9	12.9459	13.1428	0.693338	0.731776	0.25
10	13.1428	13.294	0.484931	0.518387	0.25
11	13.294	13.4785	0.443548	0.323835	0.25
12	13.4785	13.6282	0.515981	0.345722	0.25
13	13.6282	13.8004	0.539426	0.417146	0.25
14	13.8004	13.8664	0.530731	0.369114	0.25

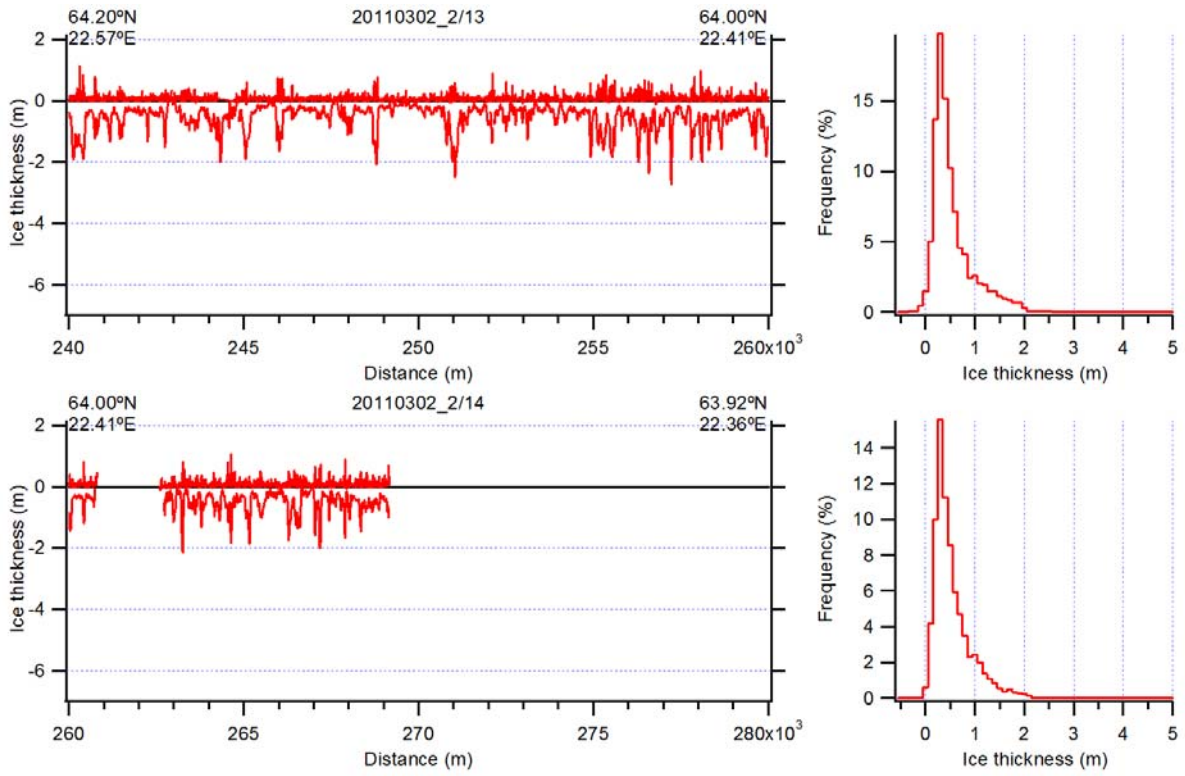
HEM Flight 2011/03/02 Afternoon





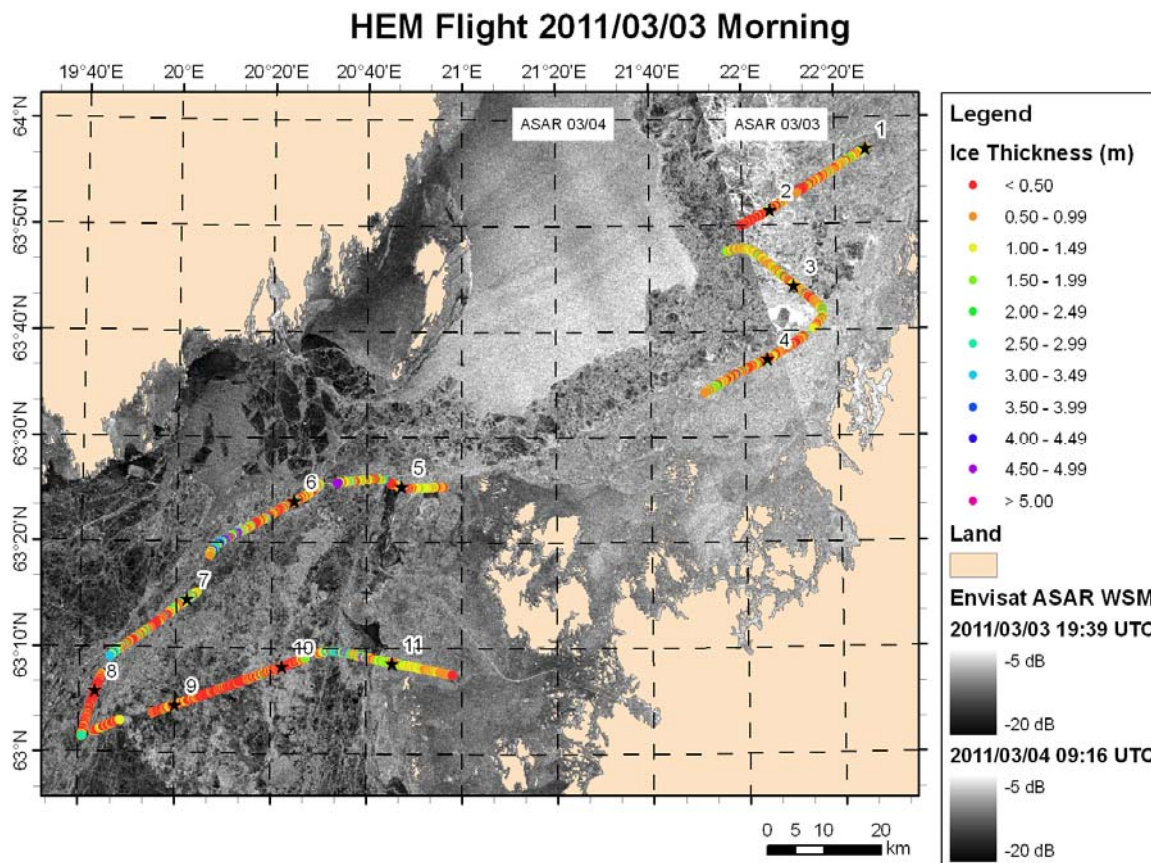


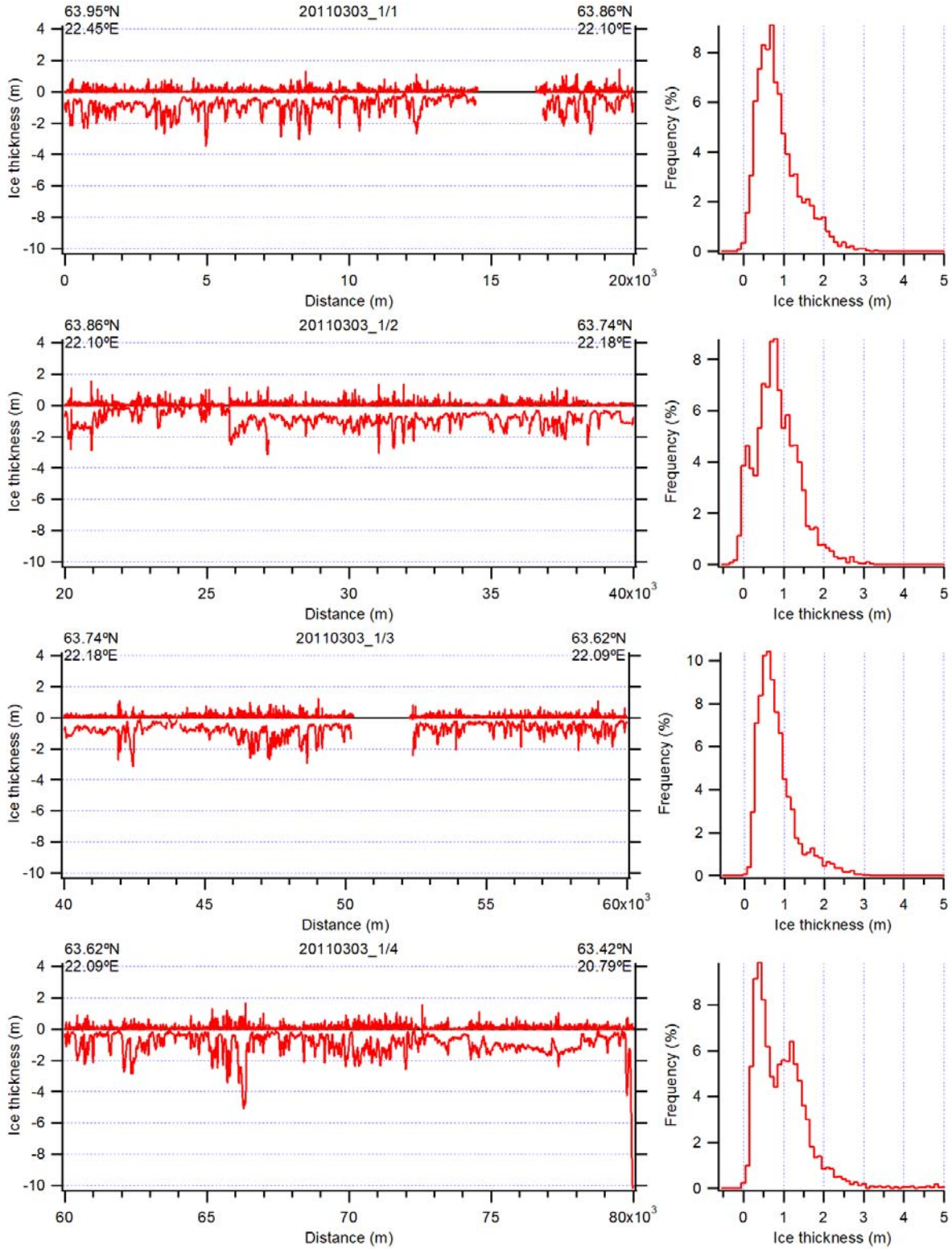


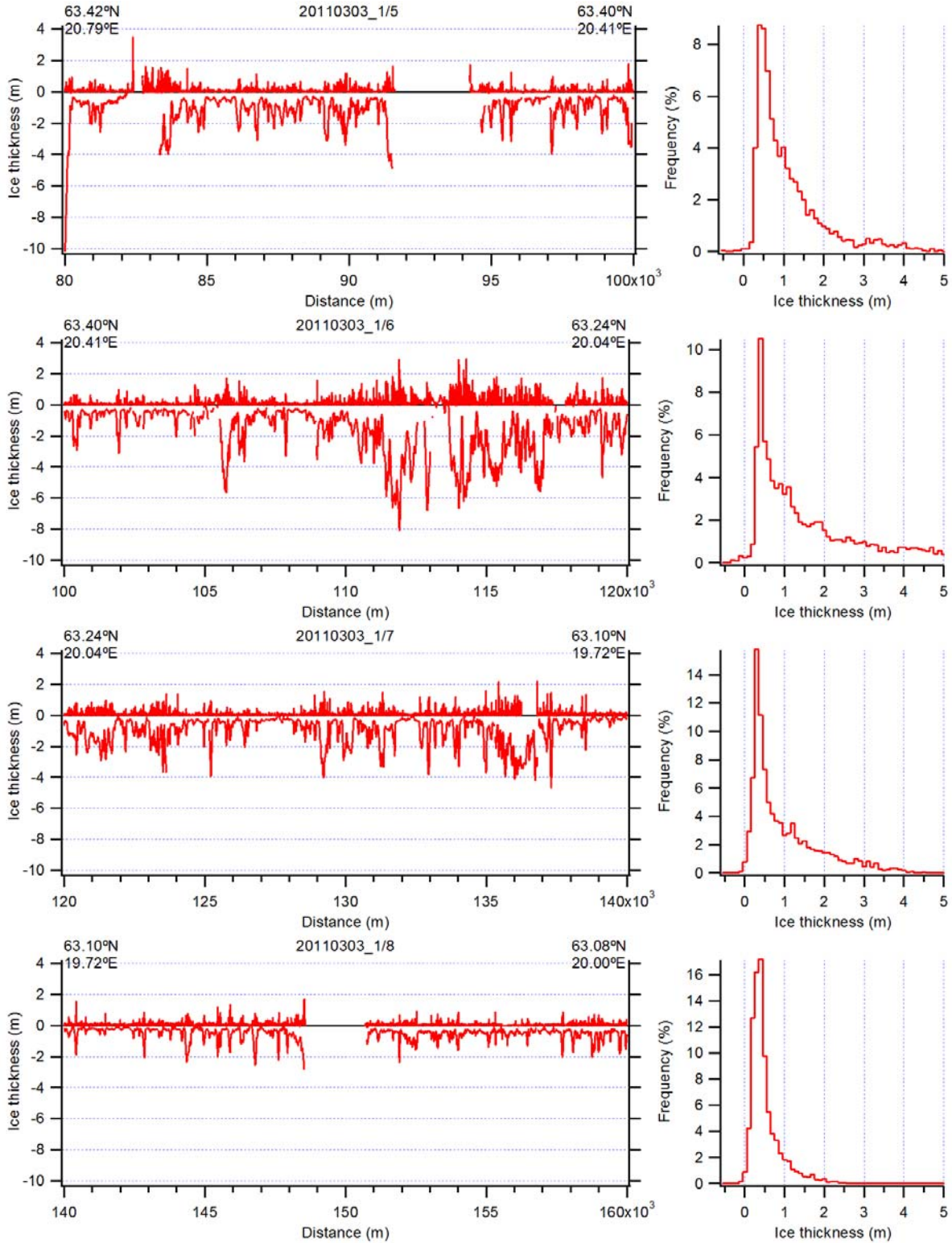


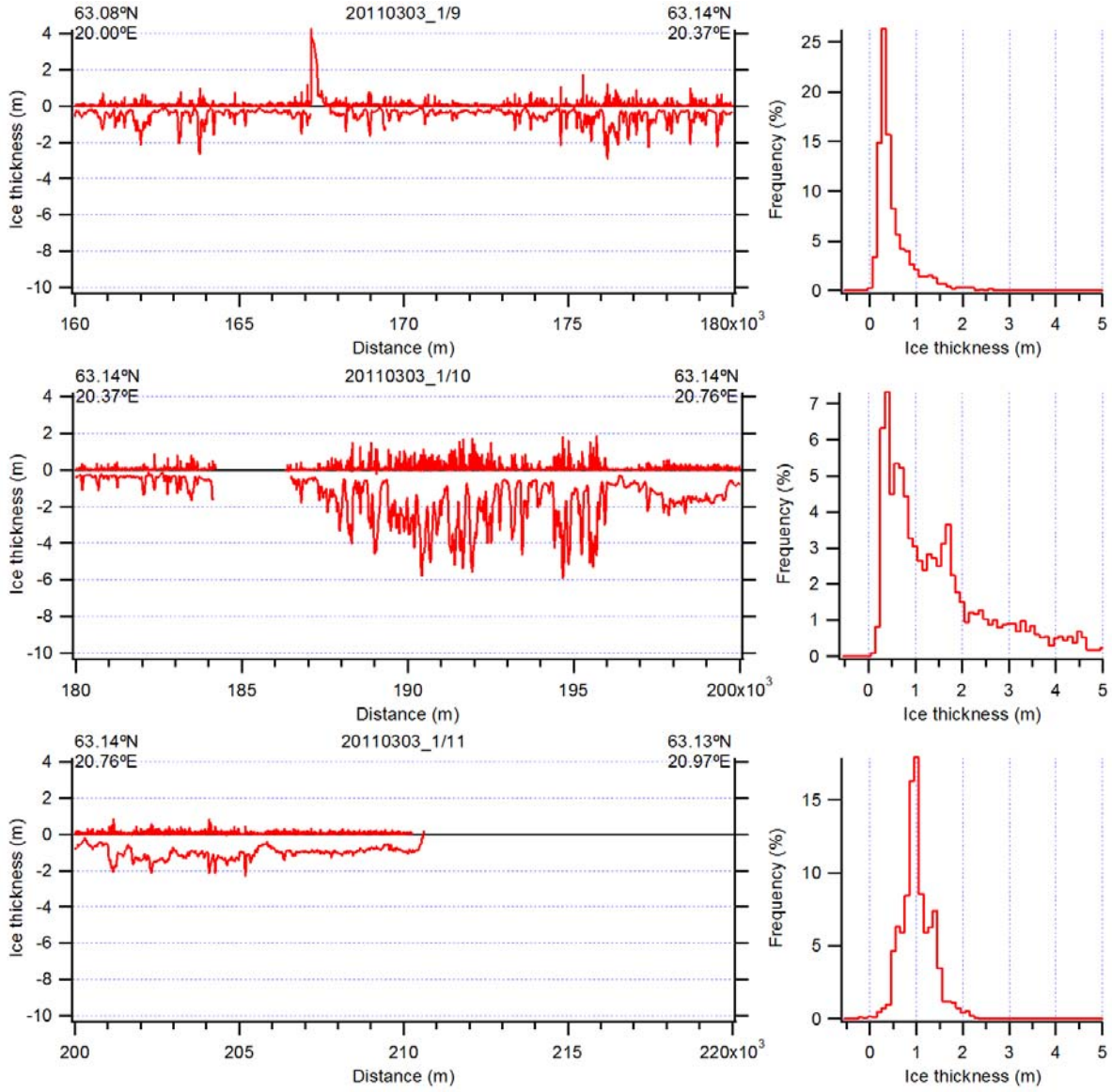
March 3, 2011, morning flight to Quarken and Vaasa

Segment No.	GPS time start (decimal hour)	GPS time end (decimal hour)	Mean thickness (m)	Standard deviation (m)	Modal thickness (m)
1	7.94969	8.10108	0.878215	0.538384	0.65
2	8.10108	8.50089	0.842745	0.540016	0.75
3	8.50089	8.64033	0.801694	0.478942	0.55
4	8.64033	9.17589	0.958471	0.662839	0.35
5	9.17589	9.32564	1.17302	1.10489	0.35
6	9.32564	9.50678	1.70396	1.5128	0.35
7	9.50678	9.73778	0.990693	0.873622	0.25
8	9.73778	9.91342	0.508956	0.382907	0.35
9	9.91342	10.0194	0.516246	0.401484	0.25
10	10.0194	10.1263	1.53589	1.20678	0.35
11	10.1263	10.1832	1.01268	0.337512	0.95



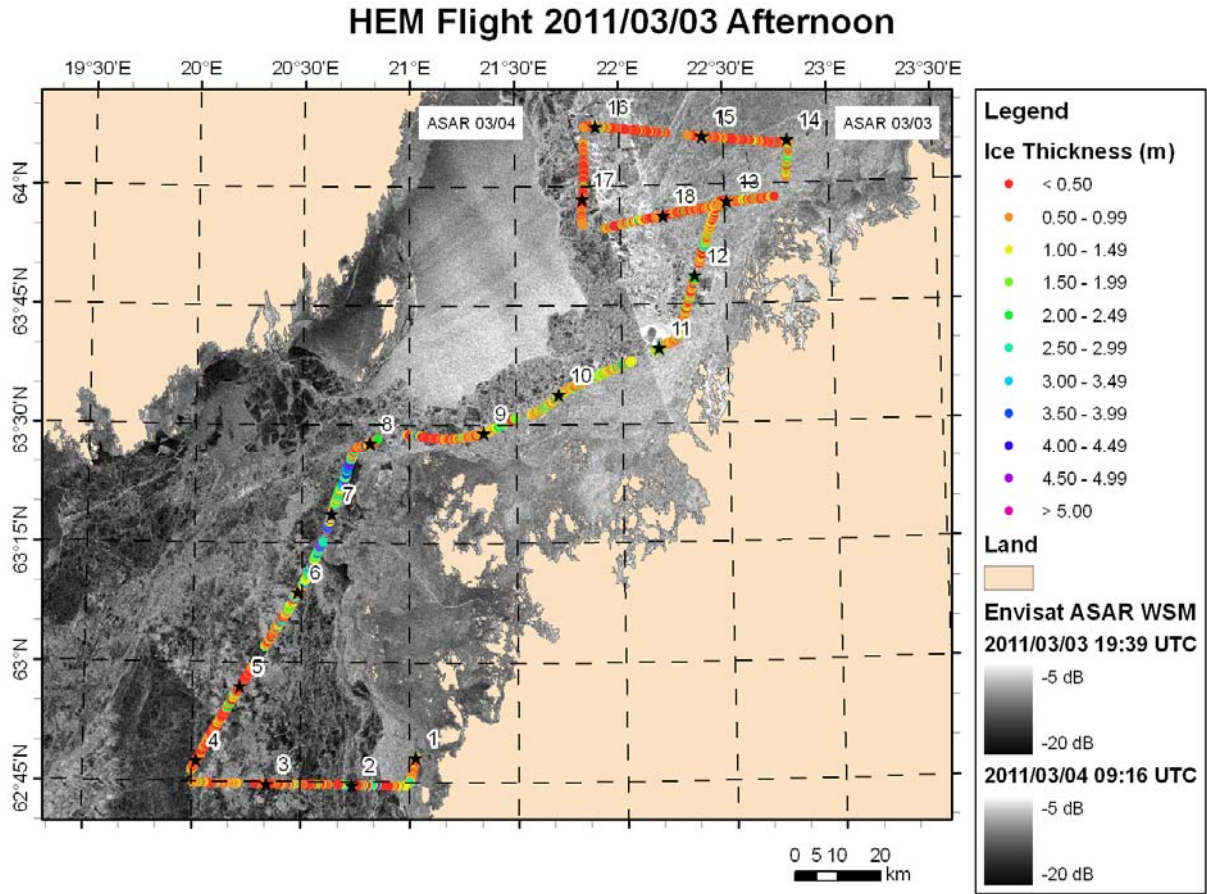


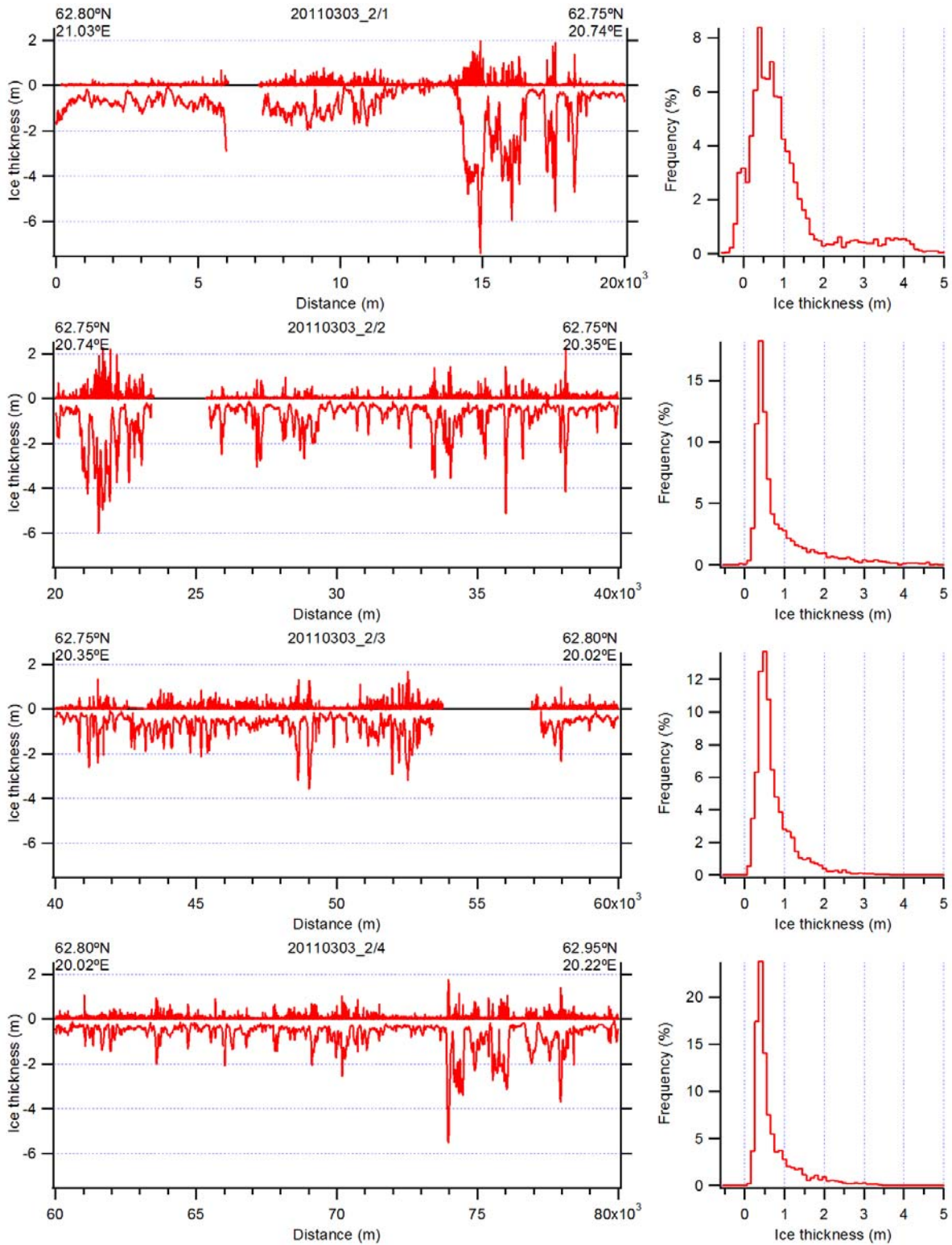


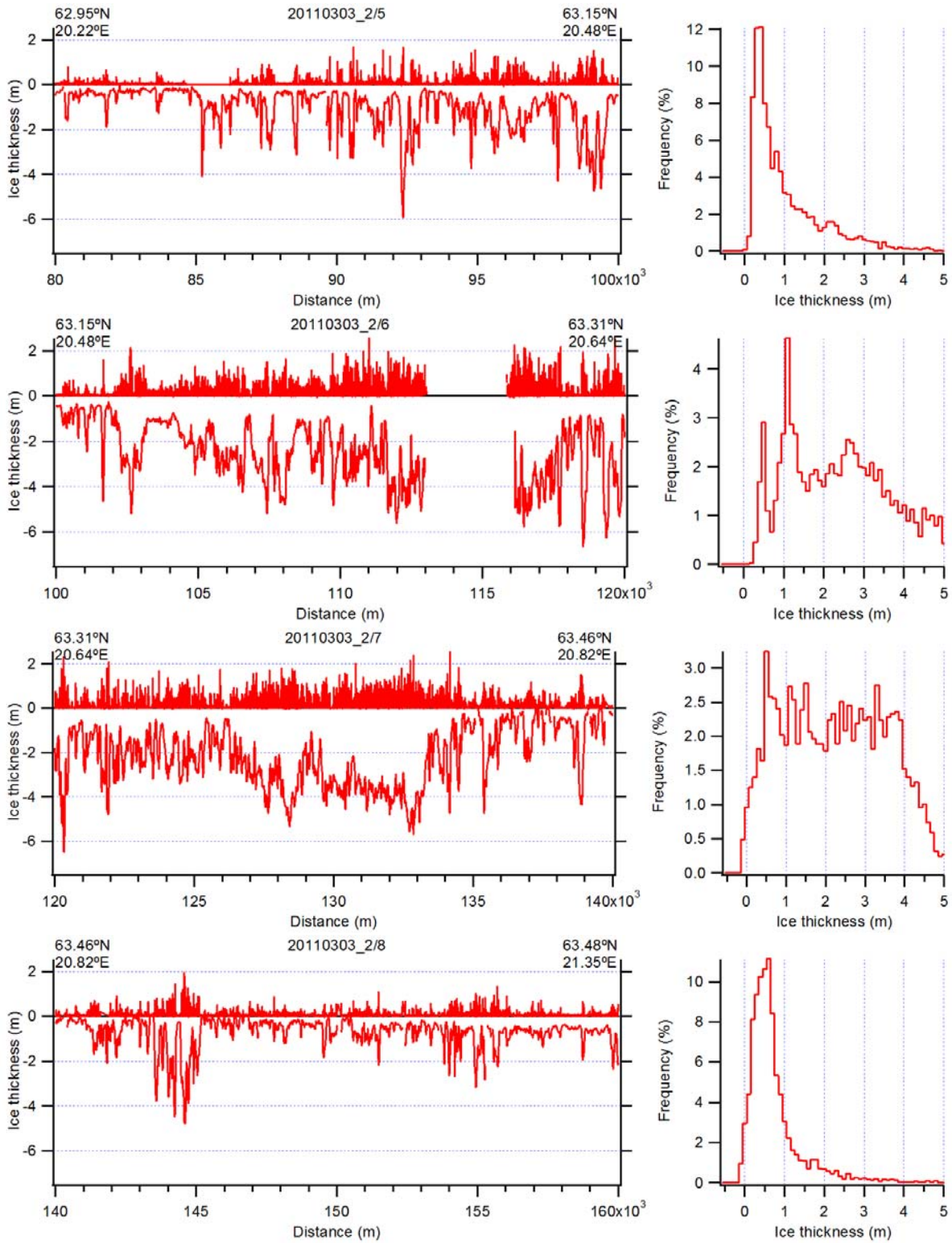


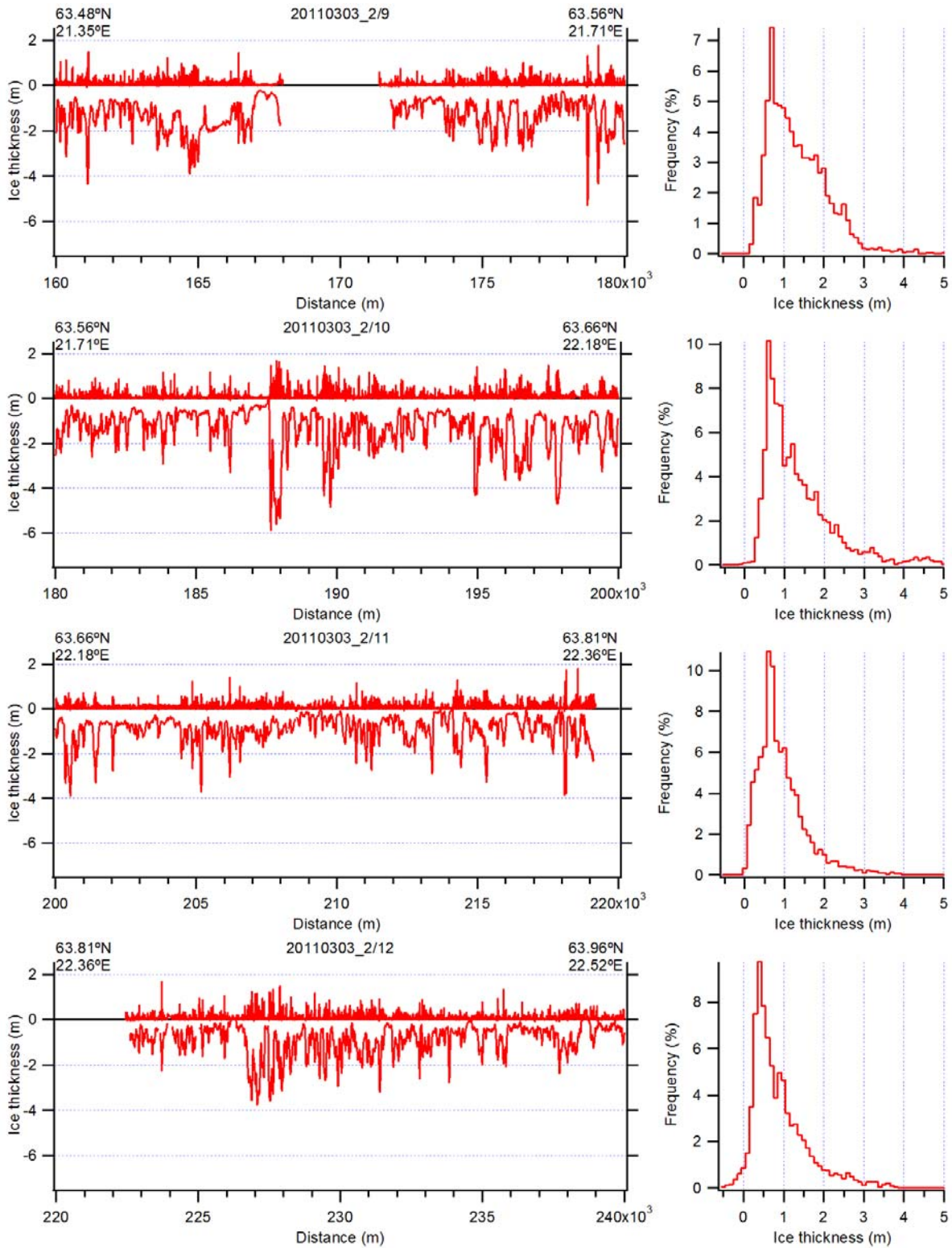
March 3, 2011, afternoon flight from Vaasa to Quarken and around ship

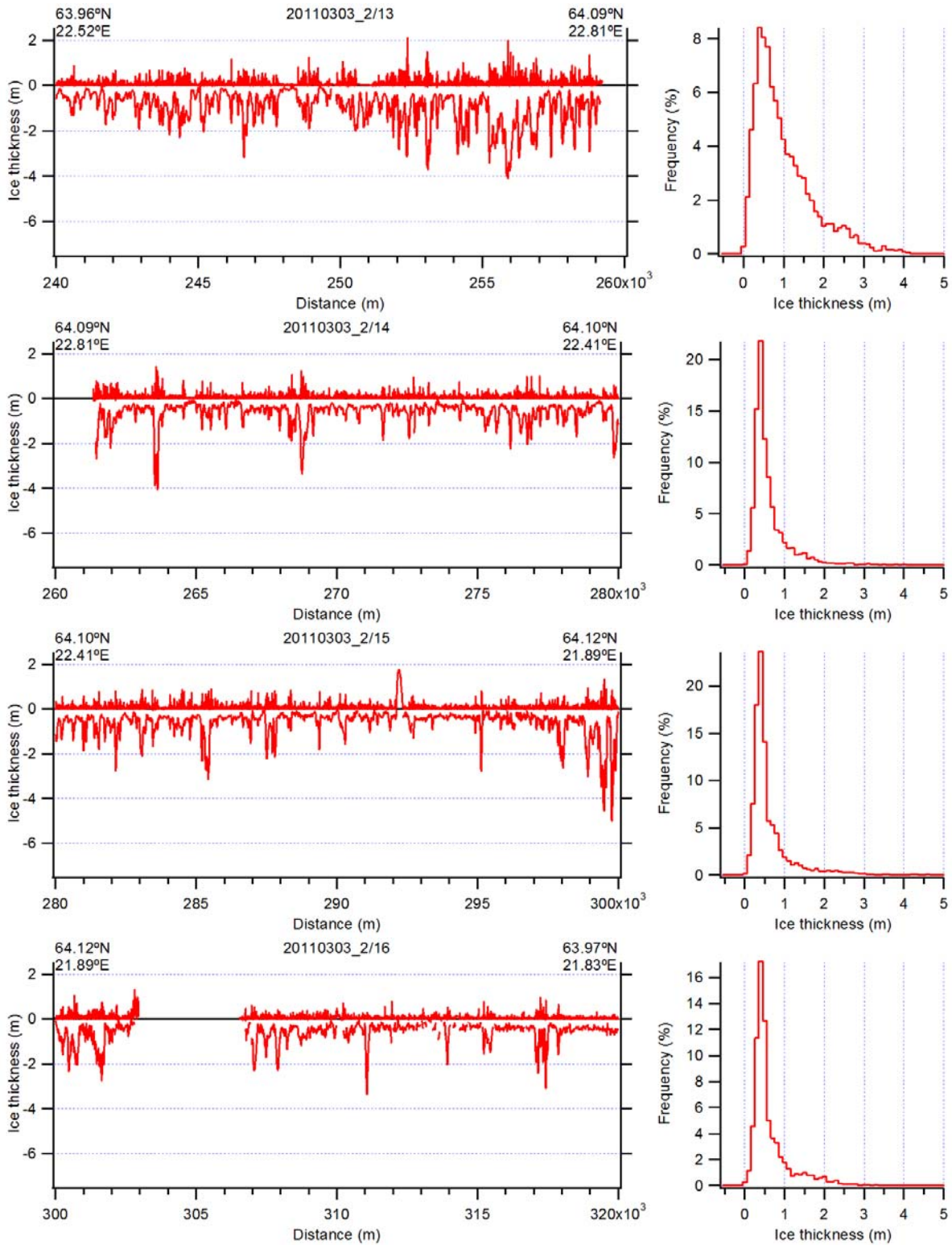
Segment No.	GPS time start (decimal hour)	GPS time end (decimal hour)	Mean thickness (m)	Standard deviation (m)	Modal thickness (m)
1	12.3331	12.4832	1.00715	1.06175	0.35
2	12.4832	12.6249	0.907134	0.866751	0.35
3	12.6249	12.7913	0.732366	0.491528	0.45
4	12.7913	12.9046	0.714105	0.611984	0.35
5	12.9046	13.0514	1.0324	0.917889	0.35
6	13.0514	13.1696	2.45523	1.33867	1.05
7	13.1696	13.2847	2.27896	1.3361	0.45
8	13.2847	13.4327	0.735604	0.684279	0.55
9	13.4327	13.5472	1.3358	0.718396	0.65
10	13.5472	13.6947	1.35625	0.912918	0.55
11	13.6947	13.82	0.924798	0.606295	0.55
12	13.82	13.9443	0.891894	0.683677	0.35
13	13.9443	14.102	1.01696	0.743778	0.35
14	14.102	14.2497	0.619878	0.485469	0.35
15	14.2497	14.426	0.635636	0.585778	0.35
16	14.426	14.5467	0.632583	0.481653	0.35
17	14.5467	14.69	0.69804	0.619429	0.35
18	14.69	14.7657	0.598028	0.359694	0.35

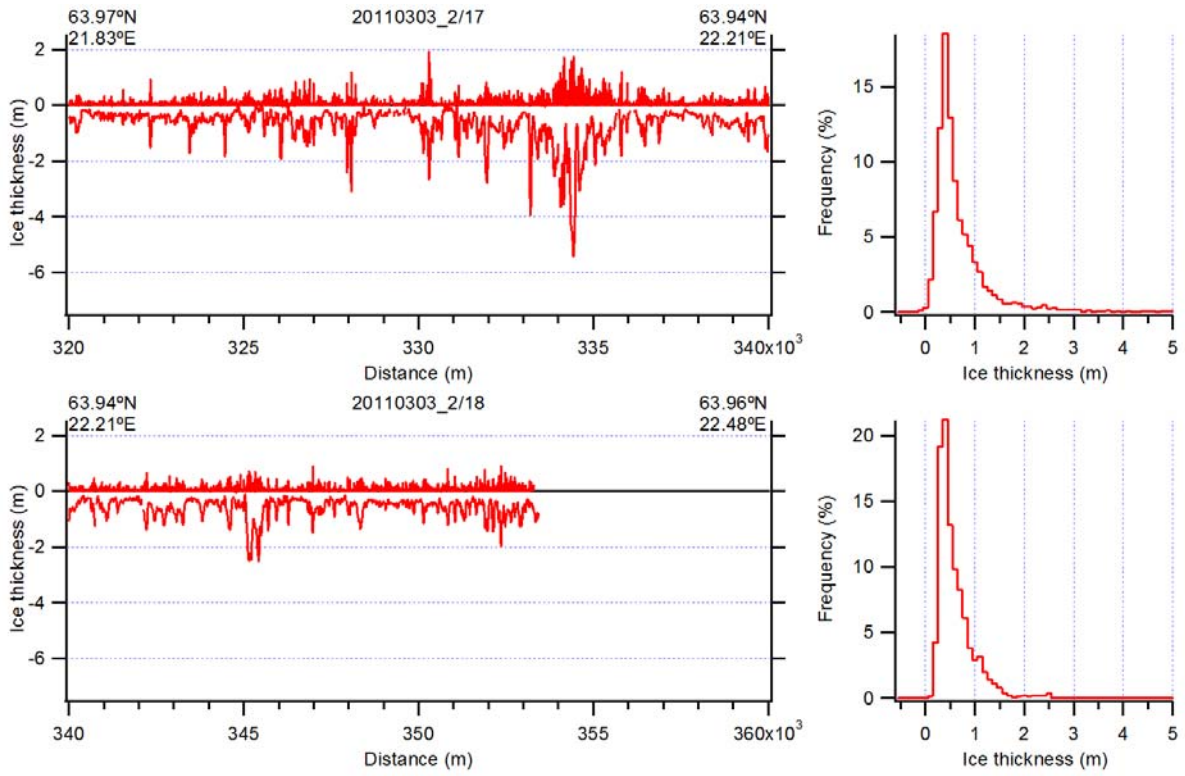






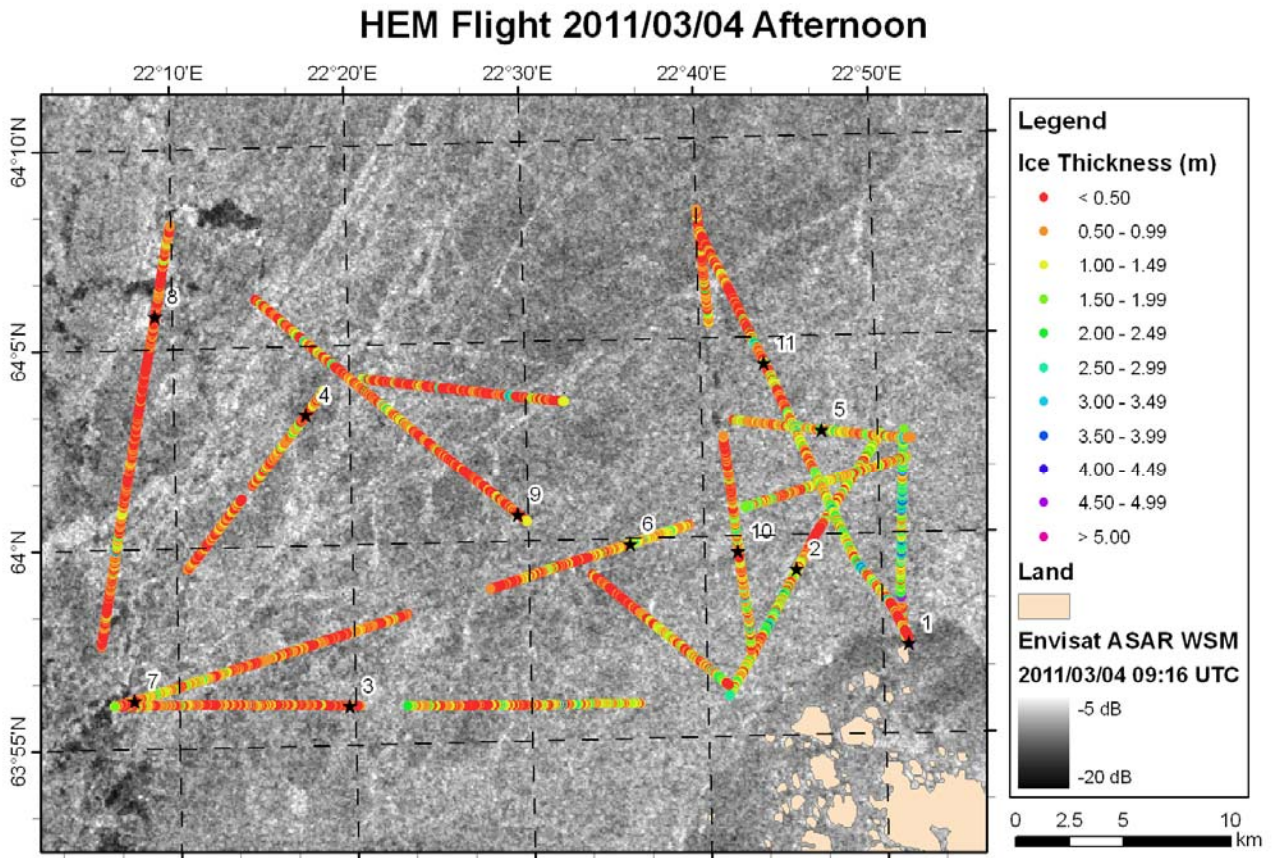


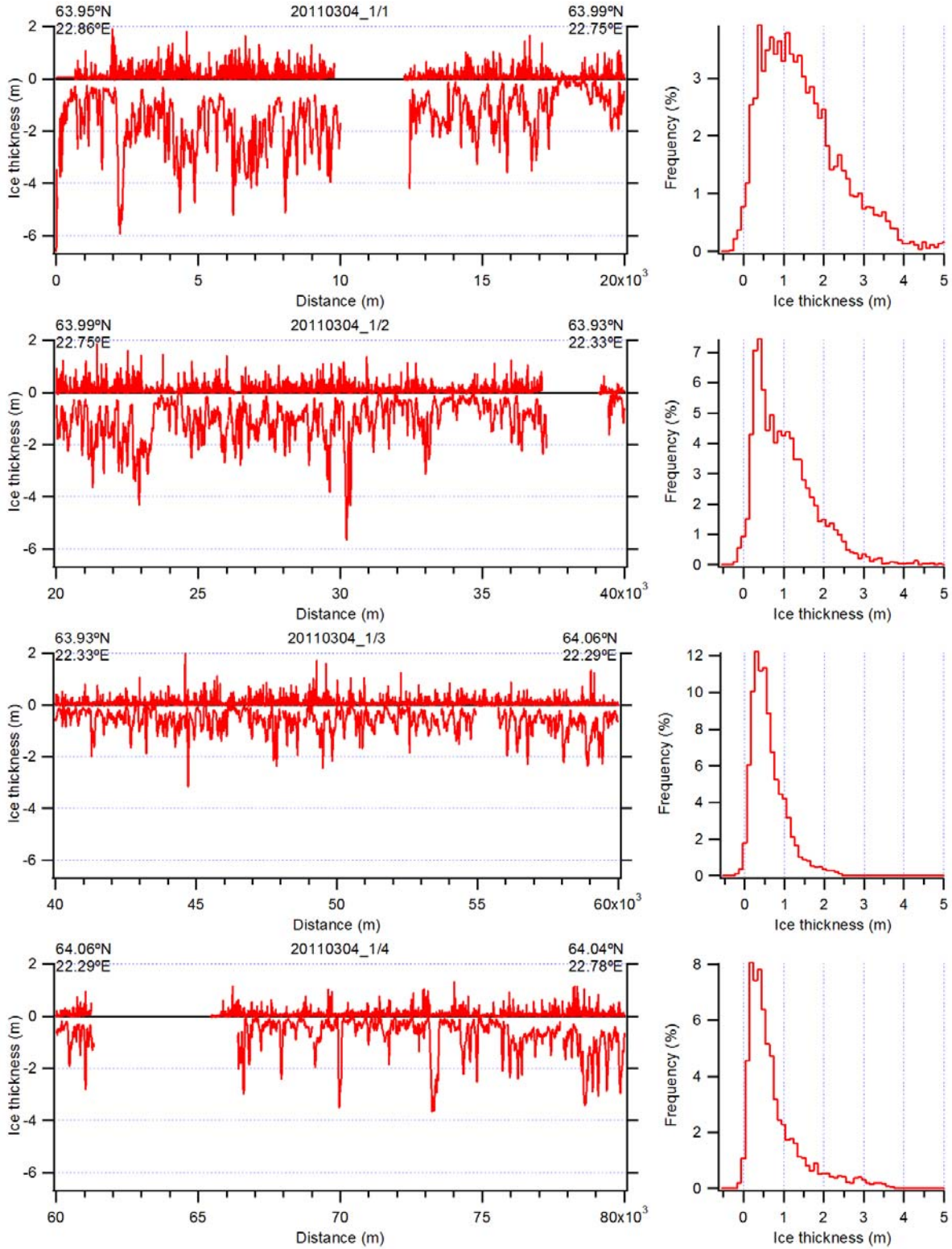


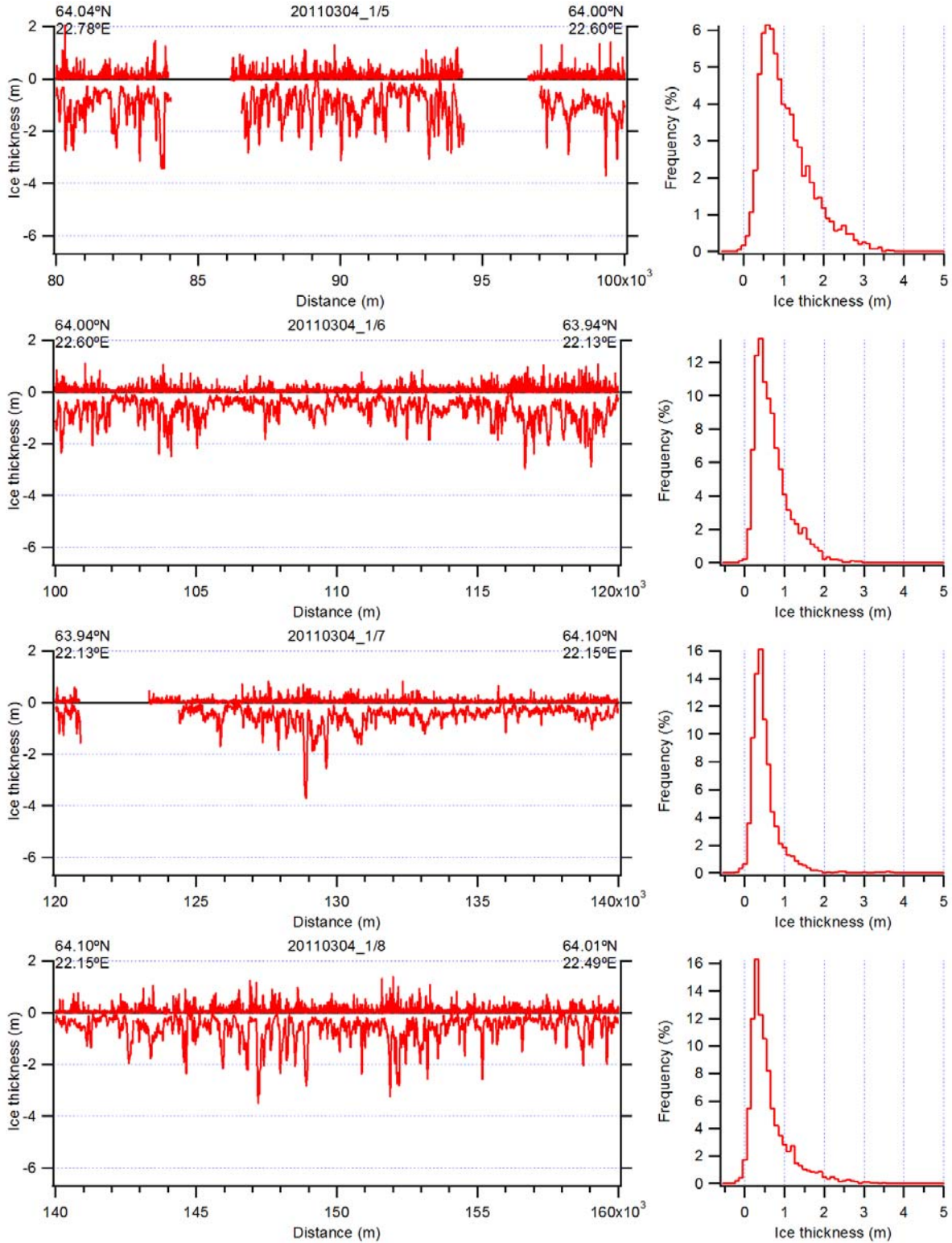


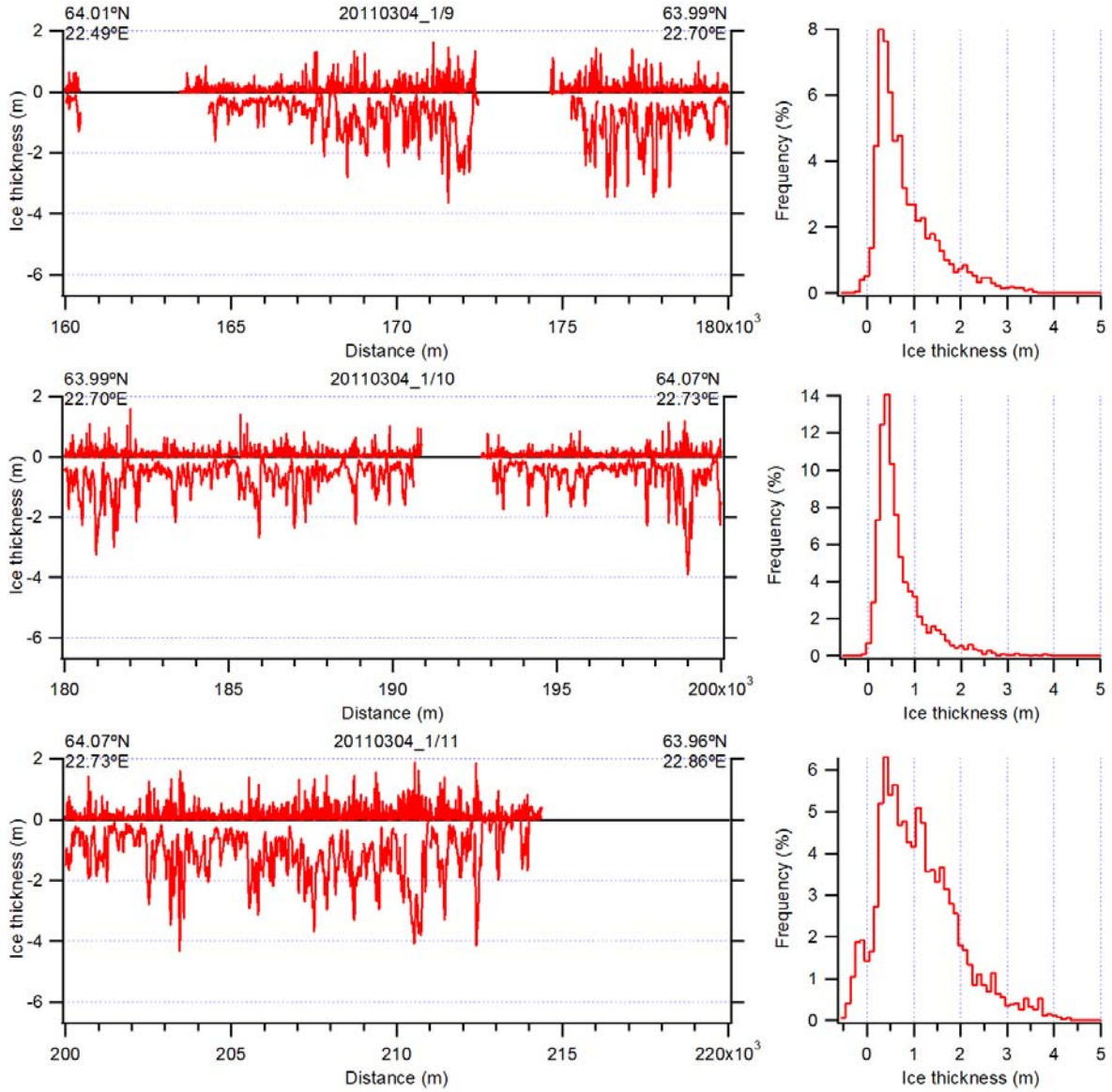
March 4, 2011, flight from Kokkola over buoy array

Segment No.	GPS time start (decimal hour)	GPS time end (decimal hour)	Mean thickness (m)	Standard deviation (m)	Modal thickness (m)
1	12.7245	12.8705	1.47959	1.02265	0.35
2	12.8705	13.0575	1.04786	0.763554	0.35
3	13.0575	13.2354	0.597935	0.429205	0.25
4	13.2354	13.3912	0.75604	0.687742	0.15
5	13.3912	13.535	1.06643	0.62554	0.55
6	13.535	13.7127	0.698682	0.449378	0.35
7	13.7127	13.8366	0.519371	0.396146	0.35
8	13.8366	13.9998	0.618507	0.522901	0.25
9	13.9998	14.1191	0.854957	0.668137	0.25
10	14.1191	14.2853	0.675388	0.539755	0.35
11	14.2853	14.3826	1.1138	0.842337	0.35





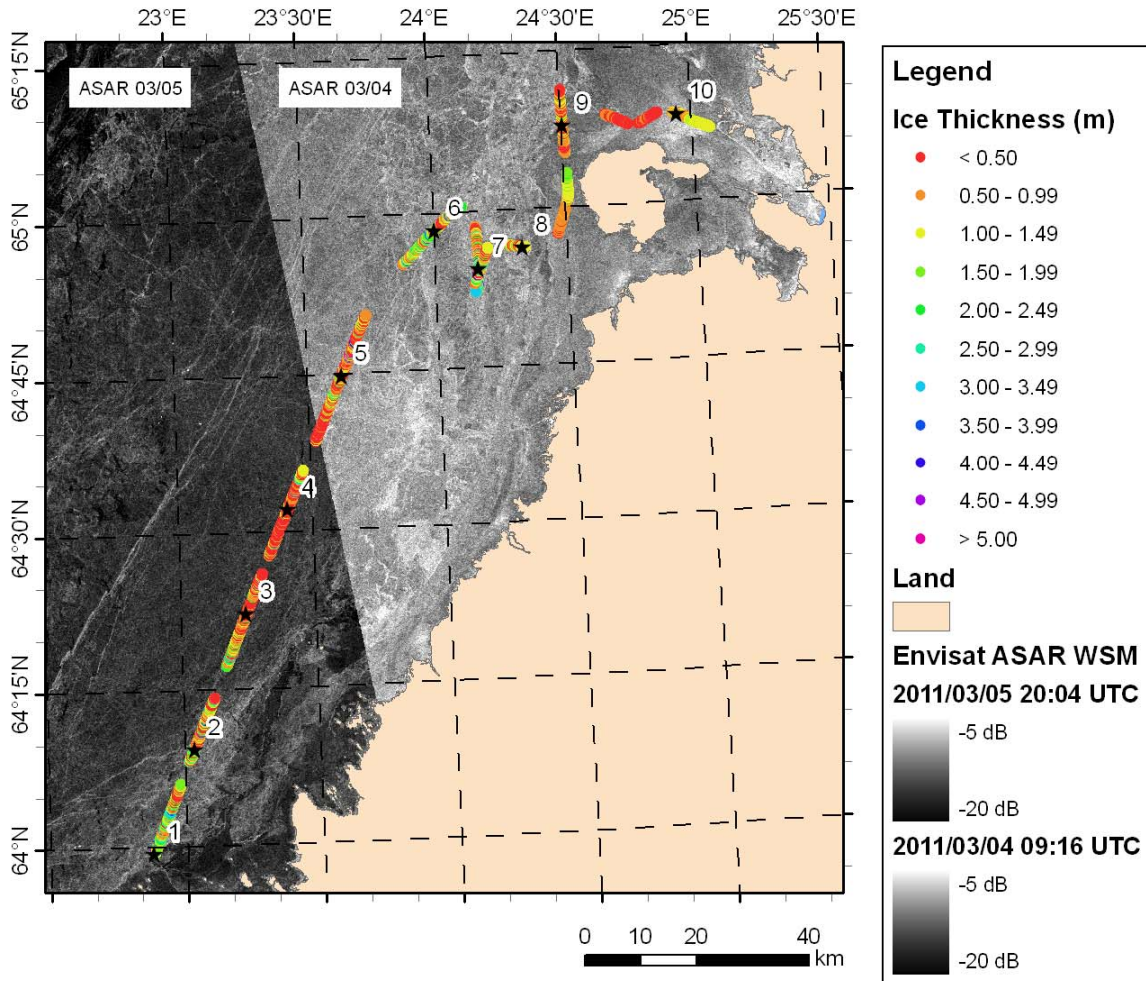


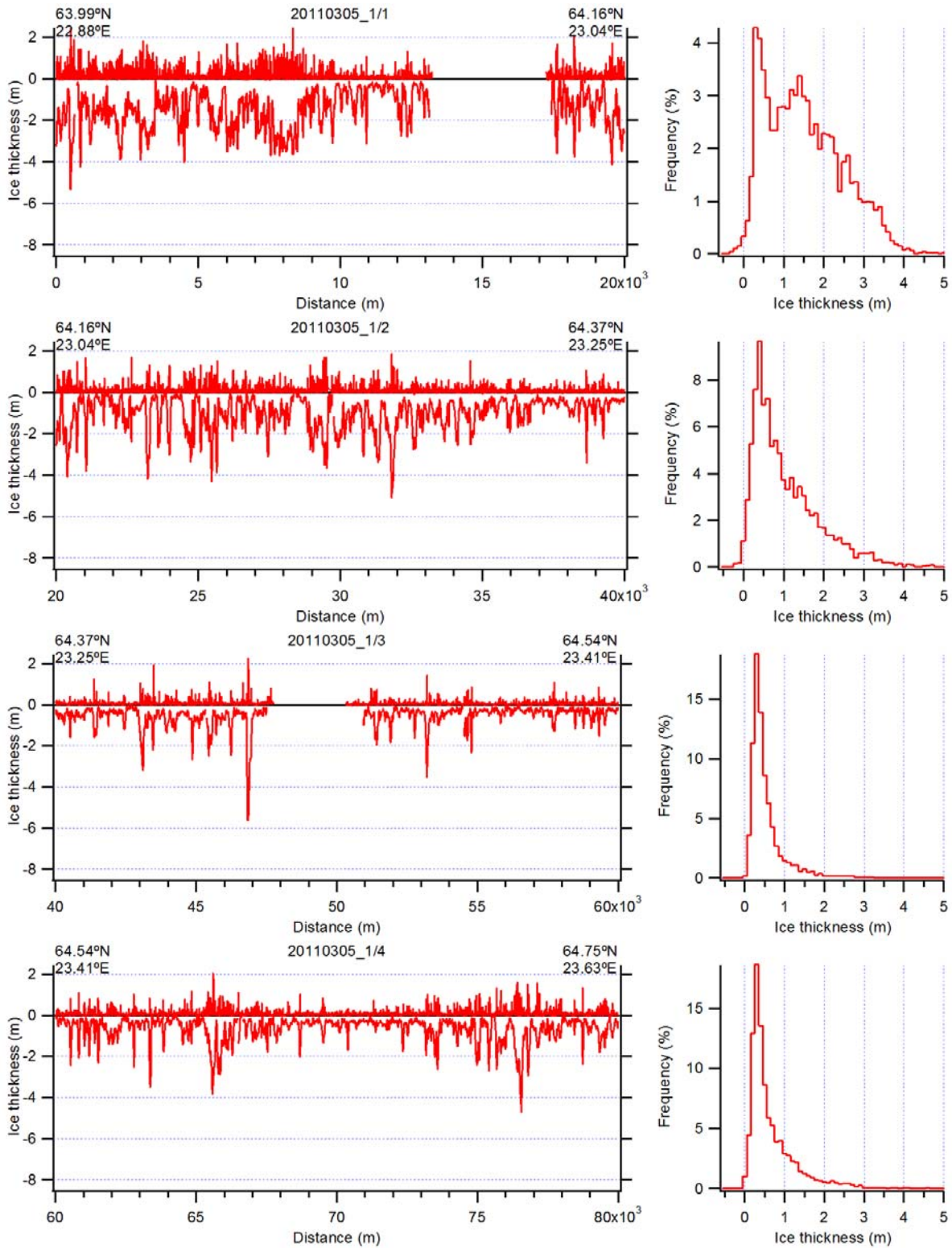


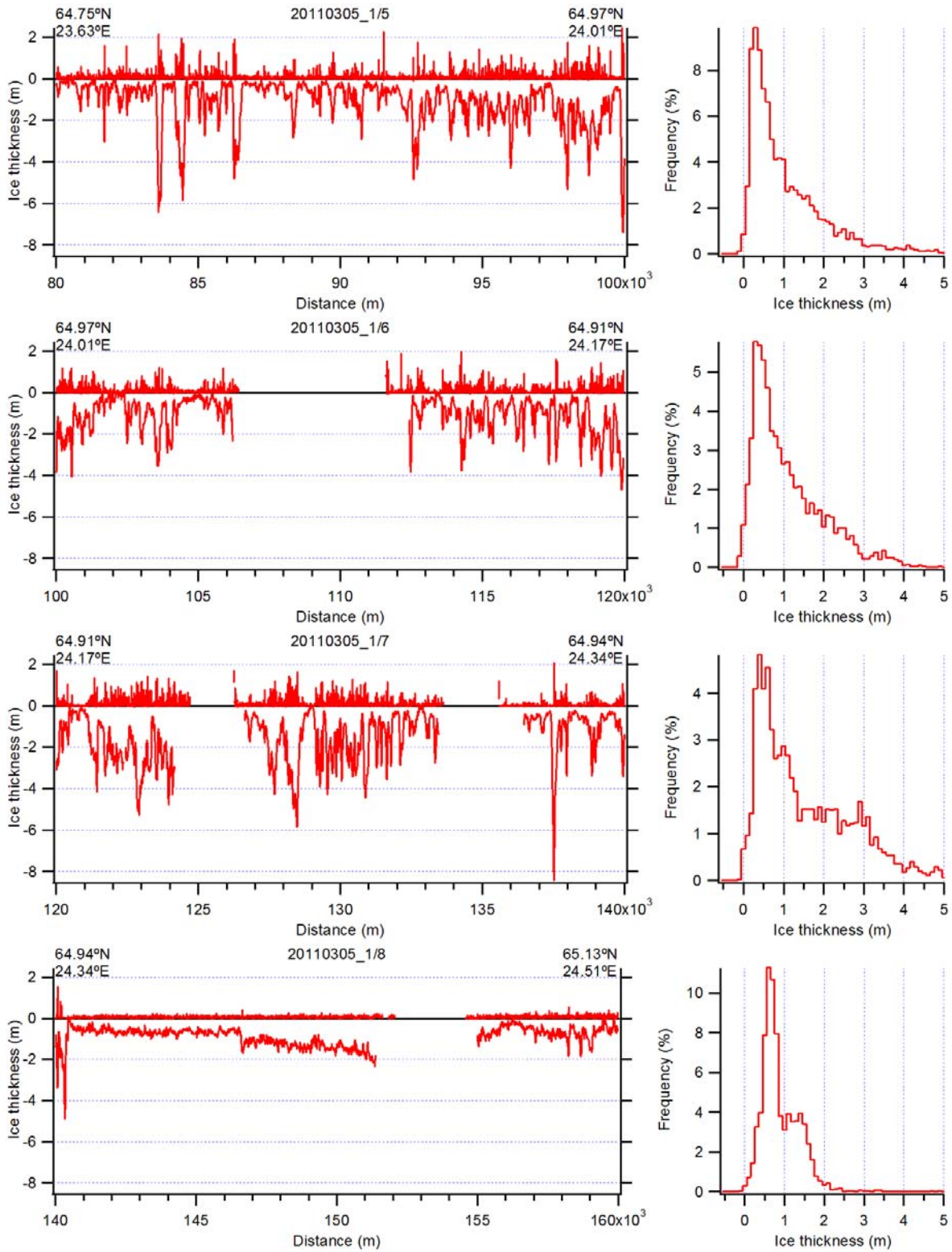
March 5, 2011, morning flight from Kokkola to Hailuoto and Oulu

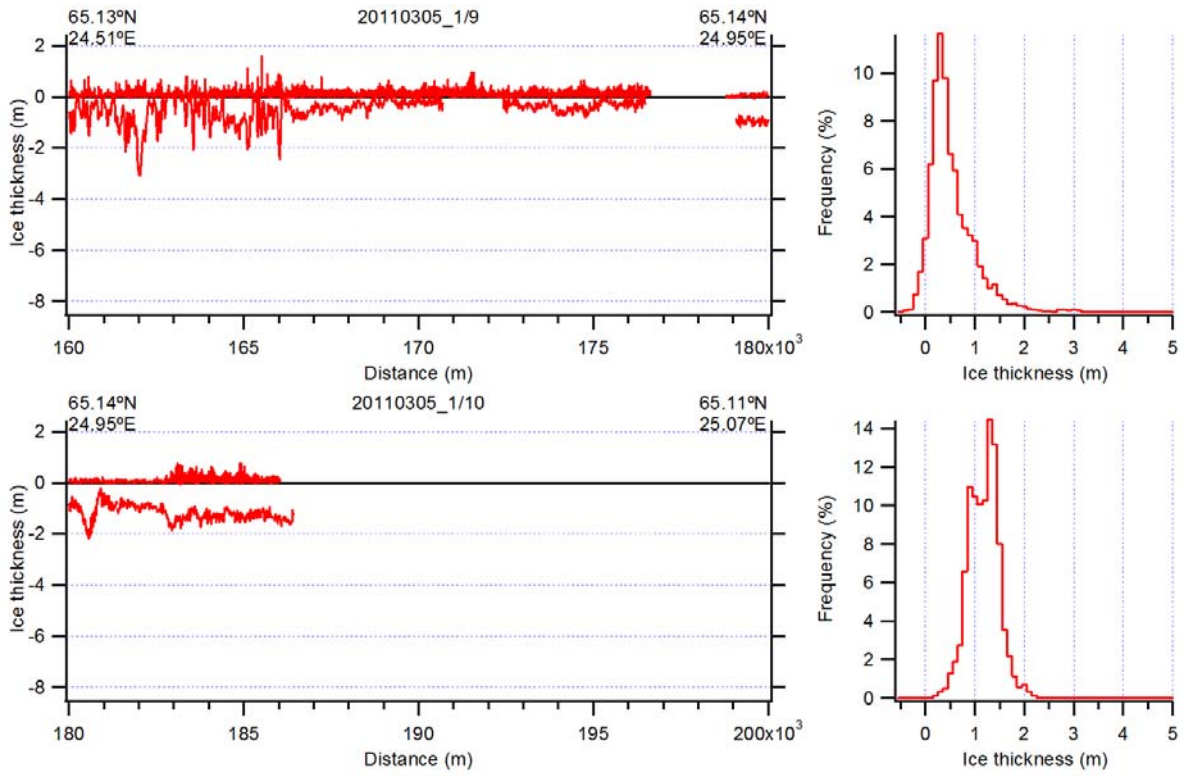
Segment No.	GPS time start (decimal hour)	GPS time end (decimal hour)	Mean thickness (m)	Standard deviation (m)	Modal thickness (m)
1	7.26917	7.40528	1.51329	0.941227	0.25
2	7.40528	7.57778	1.05925	0.825551	0.35
3	7.57778	7.70889	0.557953	0.541401	0.25
4	7.70889	7.87667	0.668171	0.60609	0.25
5	7.87667	8.07278	1.08491	1.00488	0.25
6	8.07278	8.18472	1.13843	0.96982	0.25
7	8.18472	8.31056	1.57343	1.21305	0.35
8	8.31056	8.51139	0.893944	0.486411	0.55
9	8.51139	8.72583	0.526387	0.458014	0.25
10	8.72583	8.76556	1.17705	0.305616	1.25

HEM Flight 2011/03/05 Morning





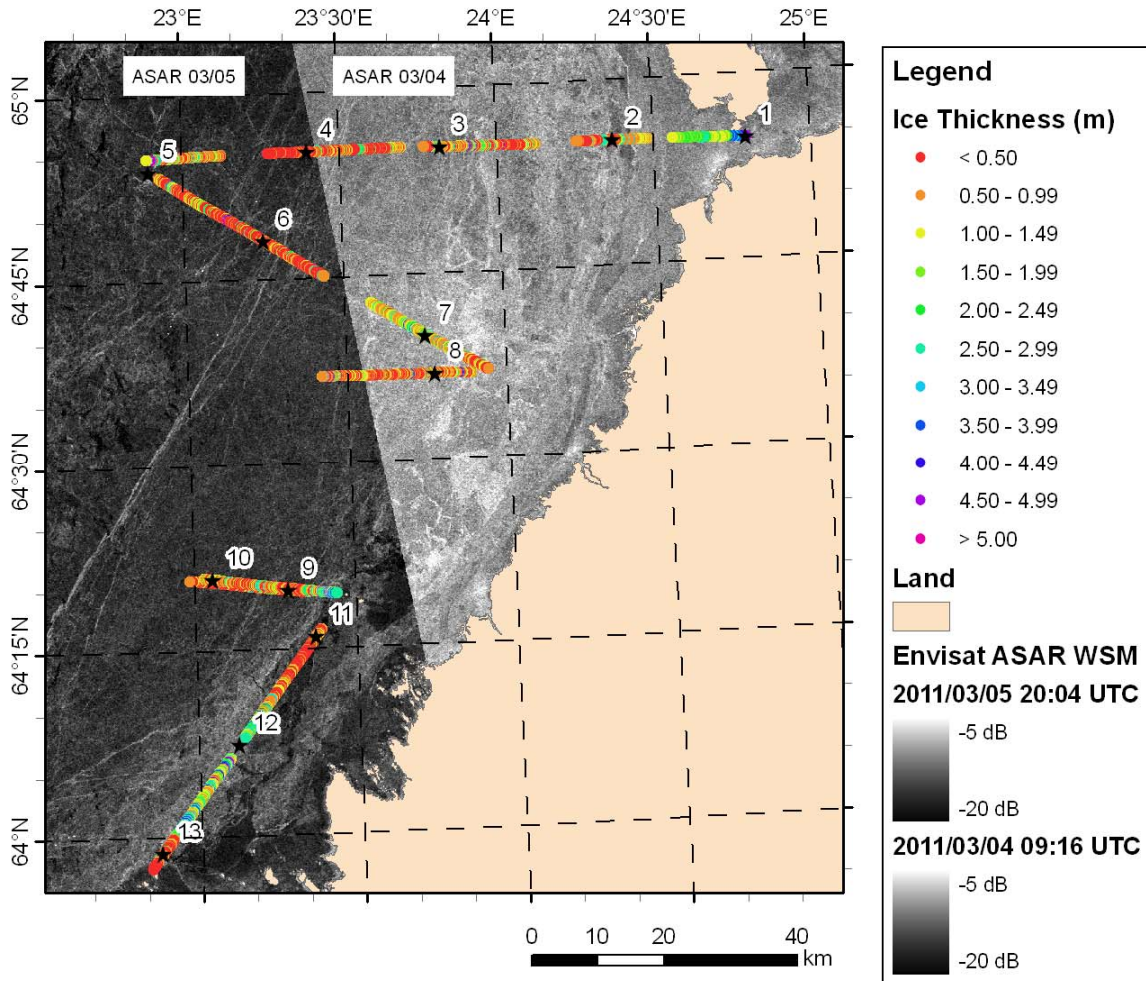


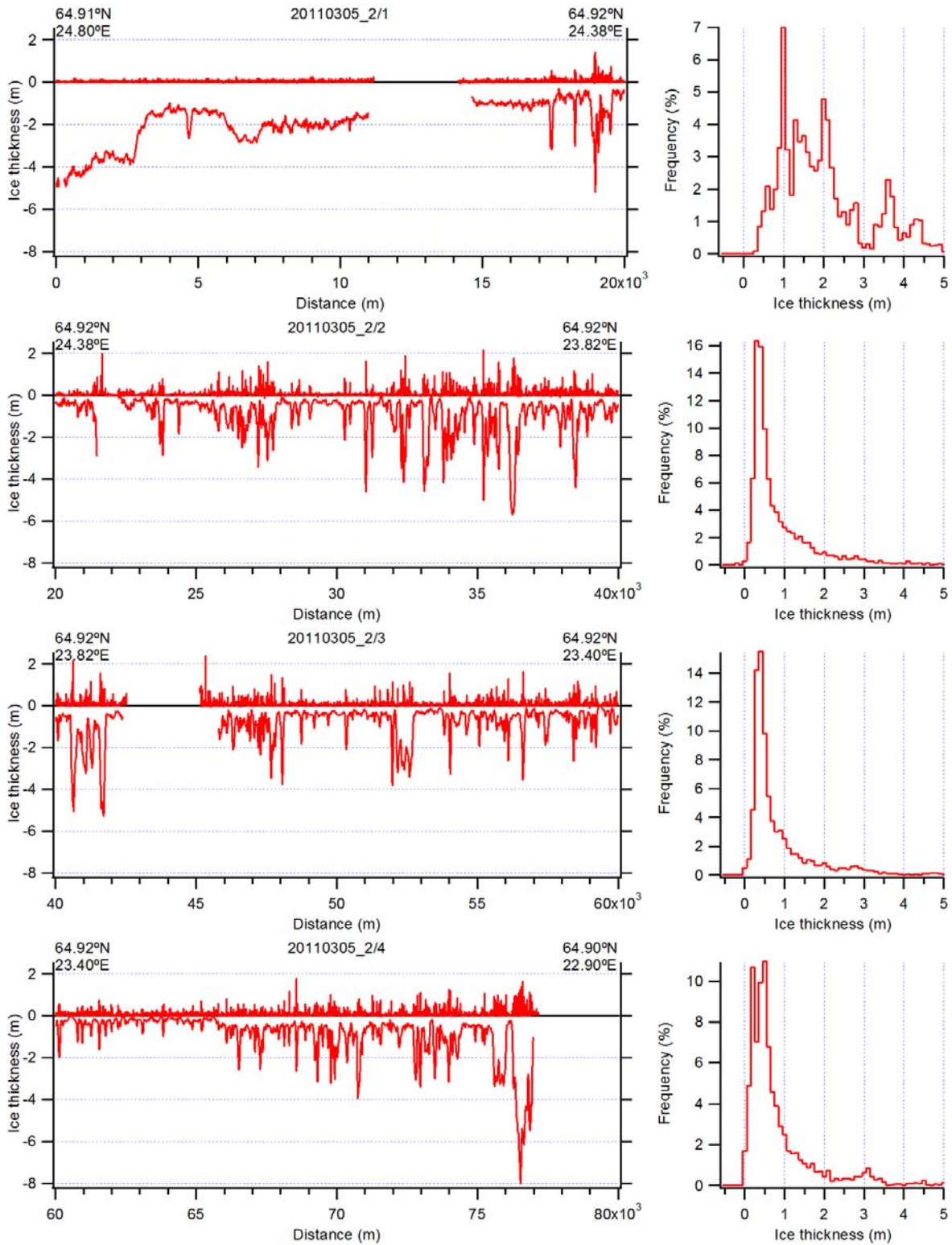


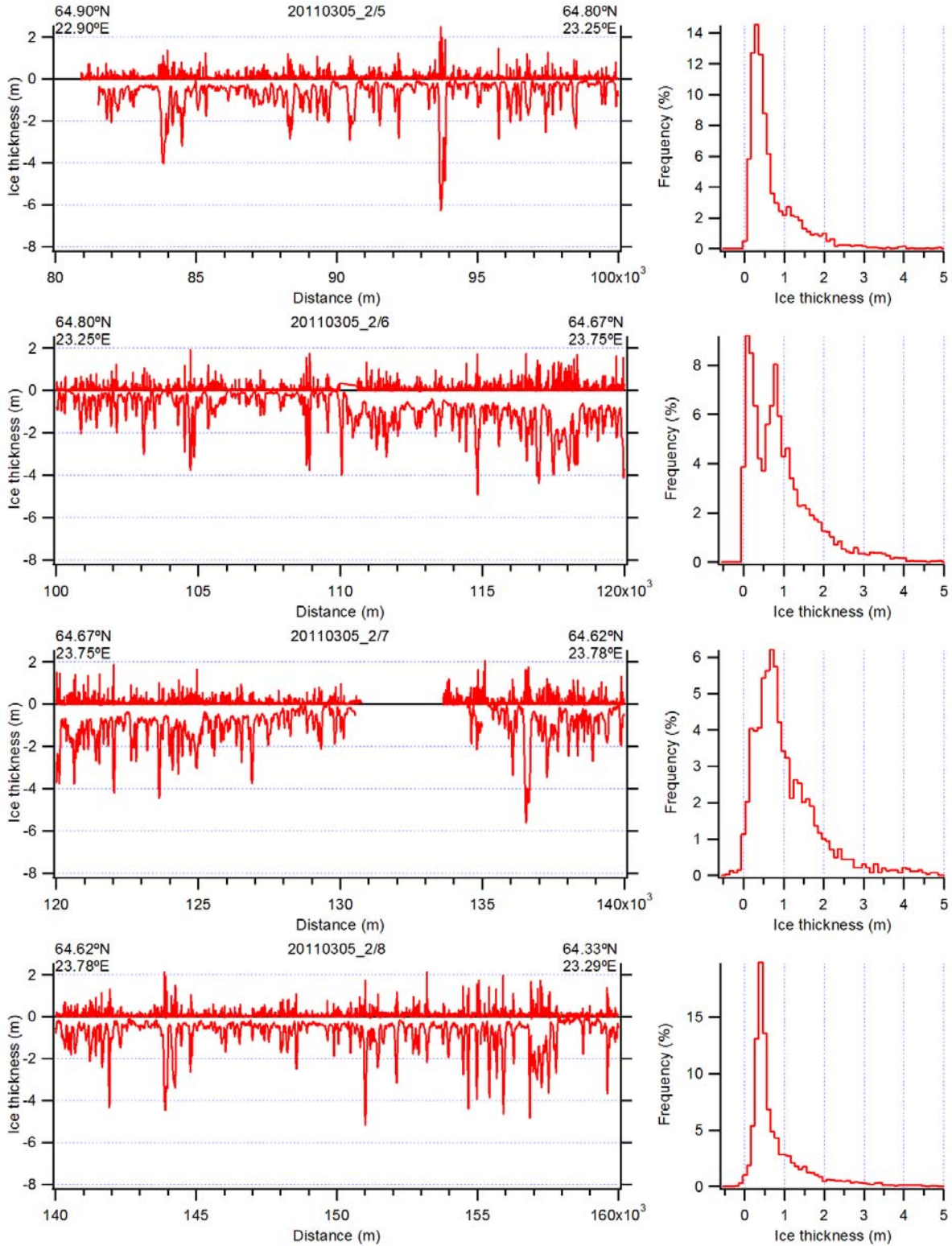
March 5, 2011, afternoon flight from Oulu to Kokkola, with some E-W transects

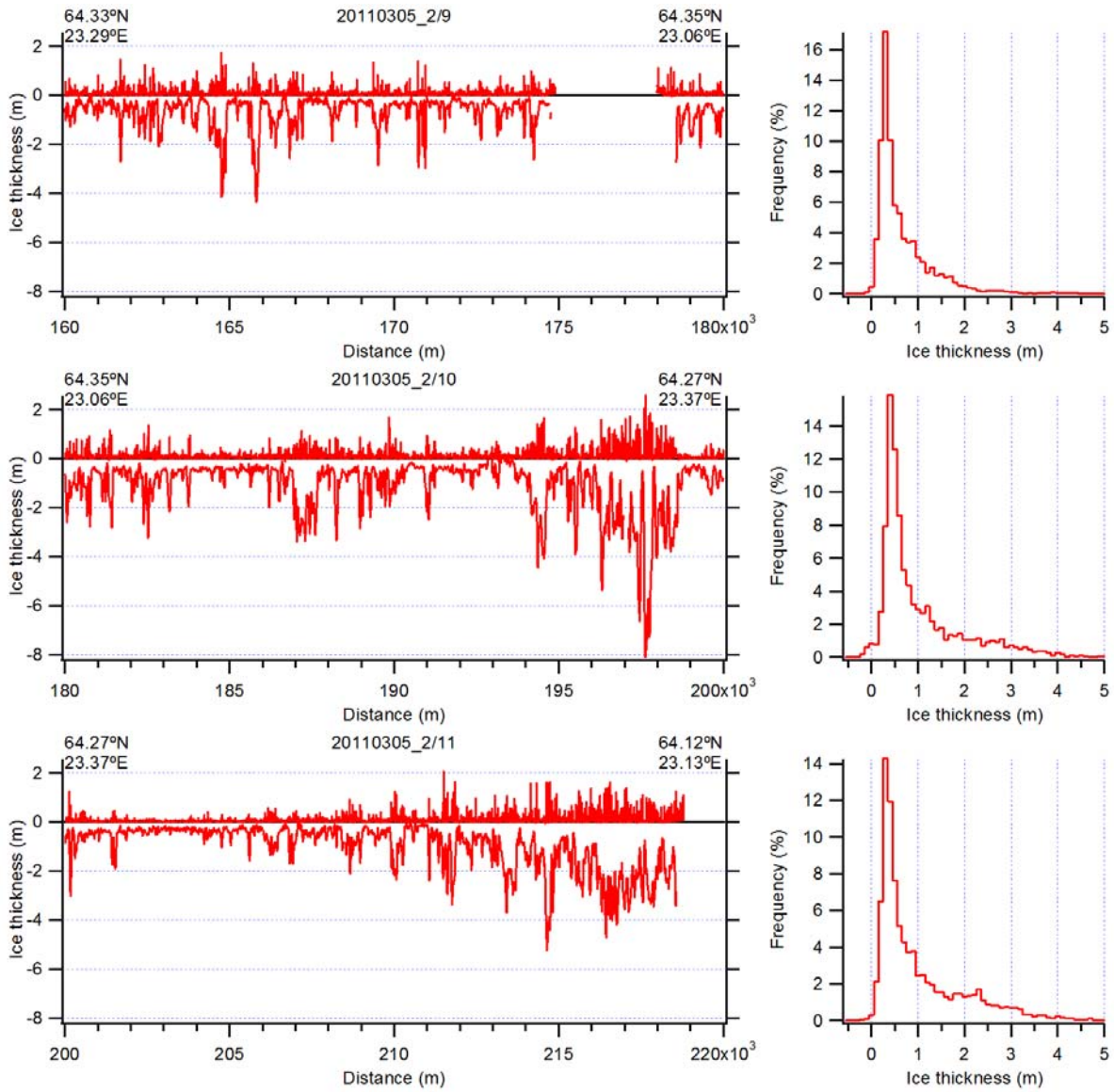
Segment No.	GPS time start (decimal hour)	GPS time end (decimal hour)	Mean thickness (m)	Standard deviation (m)	Modal thickness (m)
1	10.7903	10.9275	1.97397	1.06981	0.95
2	10.9275	11.1033	0.87866	0.880414	0.25
3	11.1033	11.2339	0.836501	0.829208	0.35
4	11.2339	11.4128	0.91015	1.10106	0.45
5	11.4128	11.5242	0.716061	0.749449	0.25
6	11.5242	11.68	0.937126	0.803869	0.05
7	11.68	11.8078	1.05202	0.840382	0.65
8	11.8078	12.3853	0.799631	0.752263	0.35
9	12.3853	12.5175	0.674726	0.62234	0.25
10	12.5175	12.6786	1.10435	1.11683	0.35
11	12.6786	12.8022	1.01062	0.921965	0.25
12	12.8022	12.9253	1.97646	1.20618	0.35
13	12.9253	12.9428	0.738846	0.884462	0.05

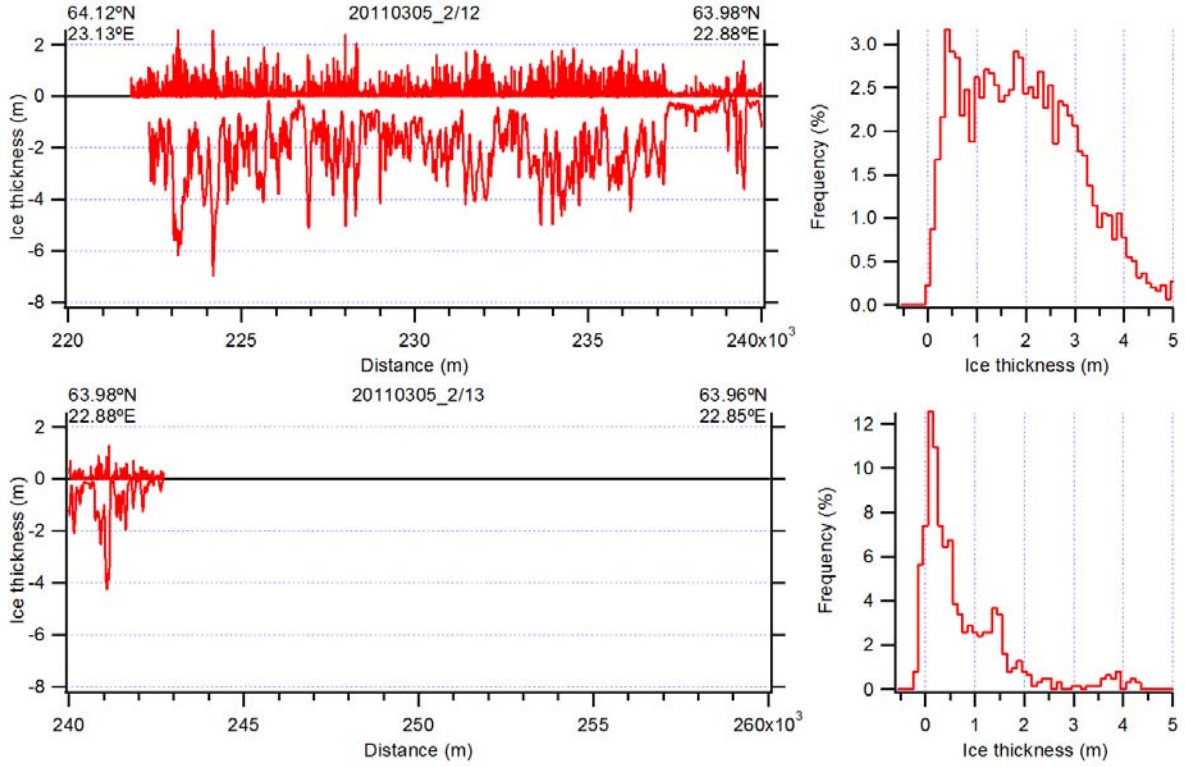
HEM Flight 2011/03/05 Afternoon





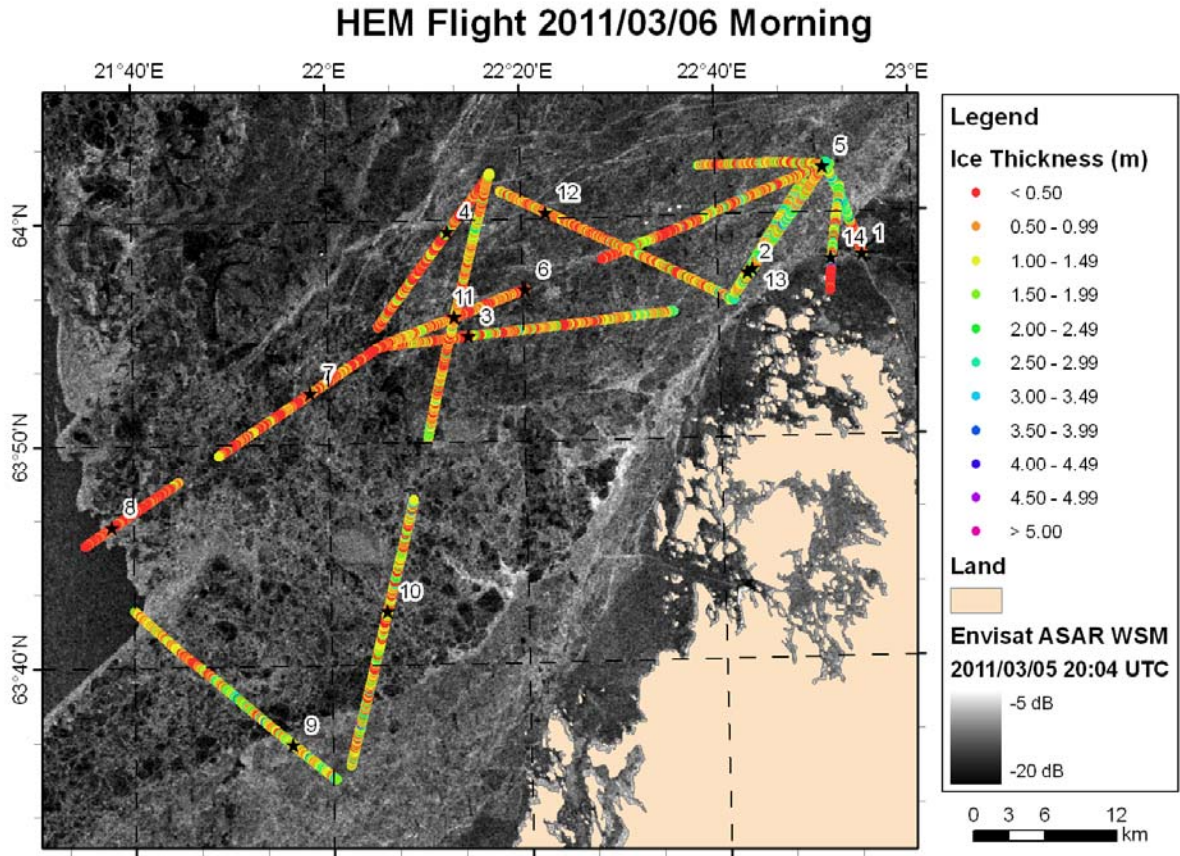


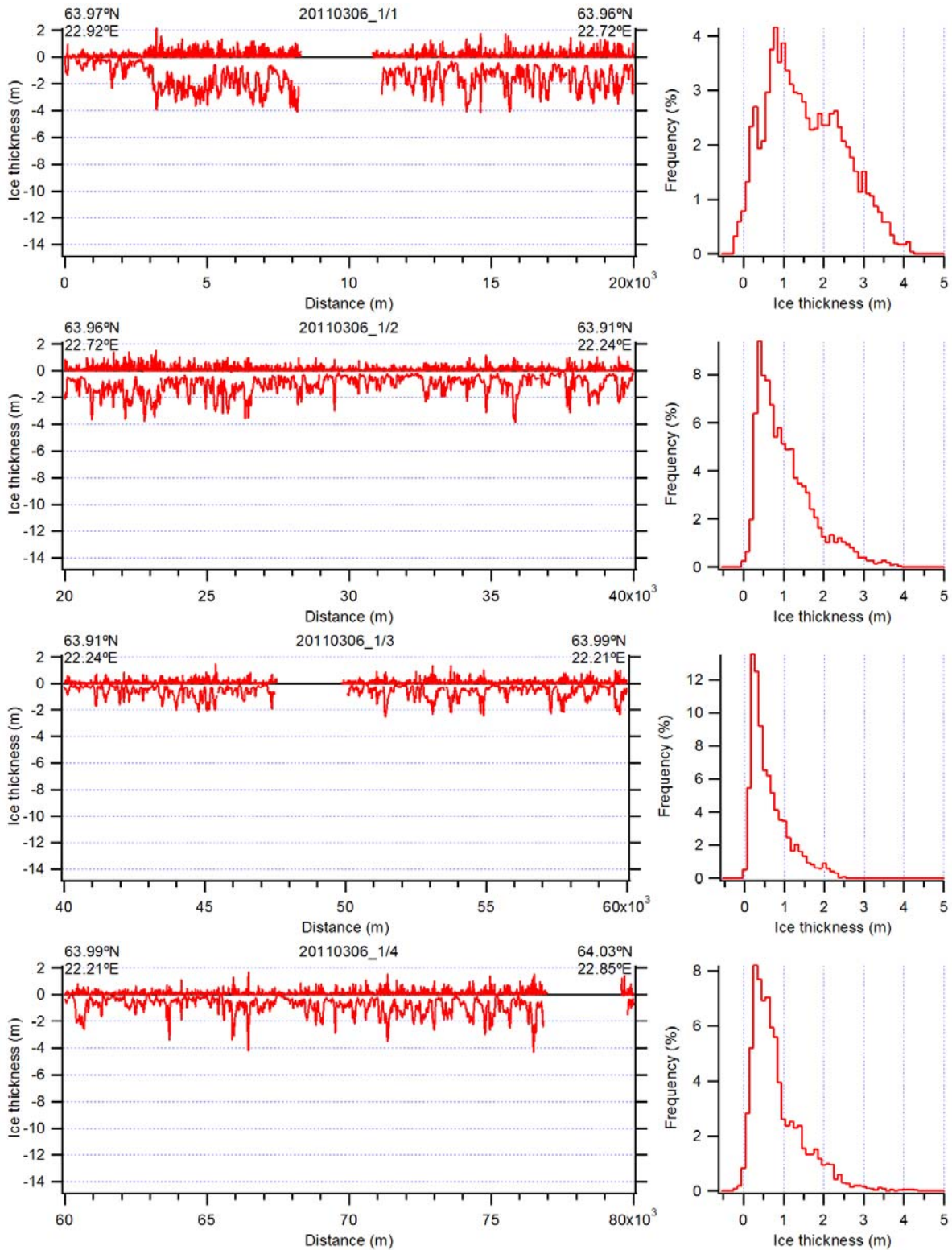


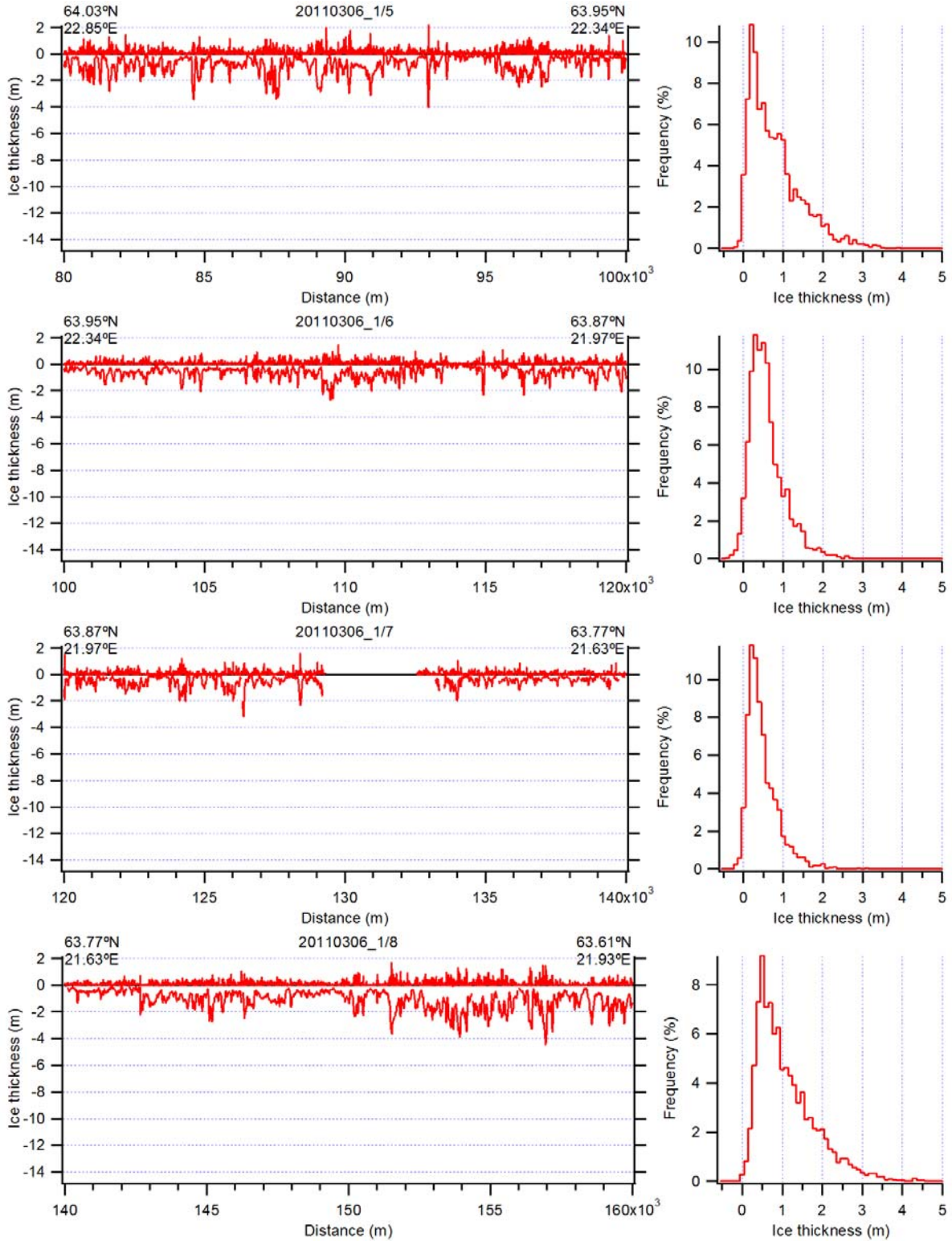


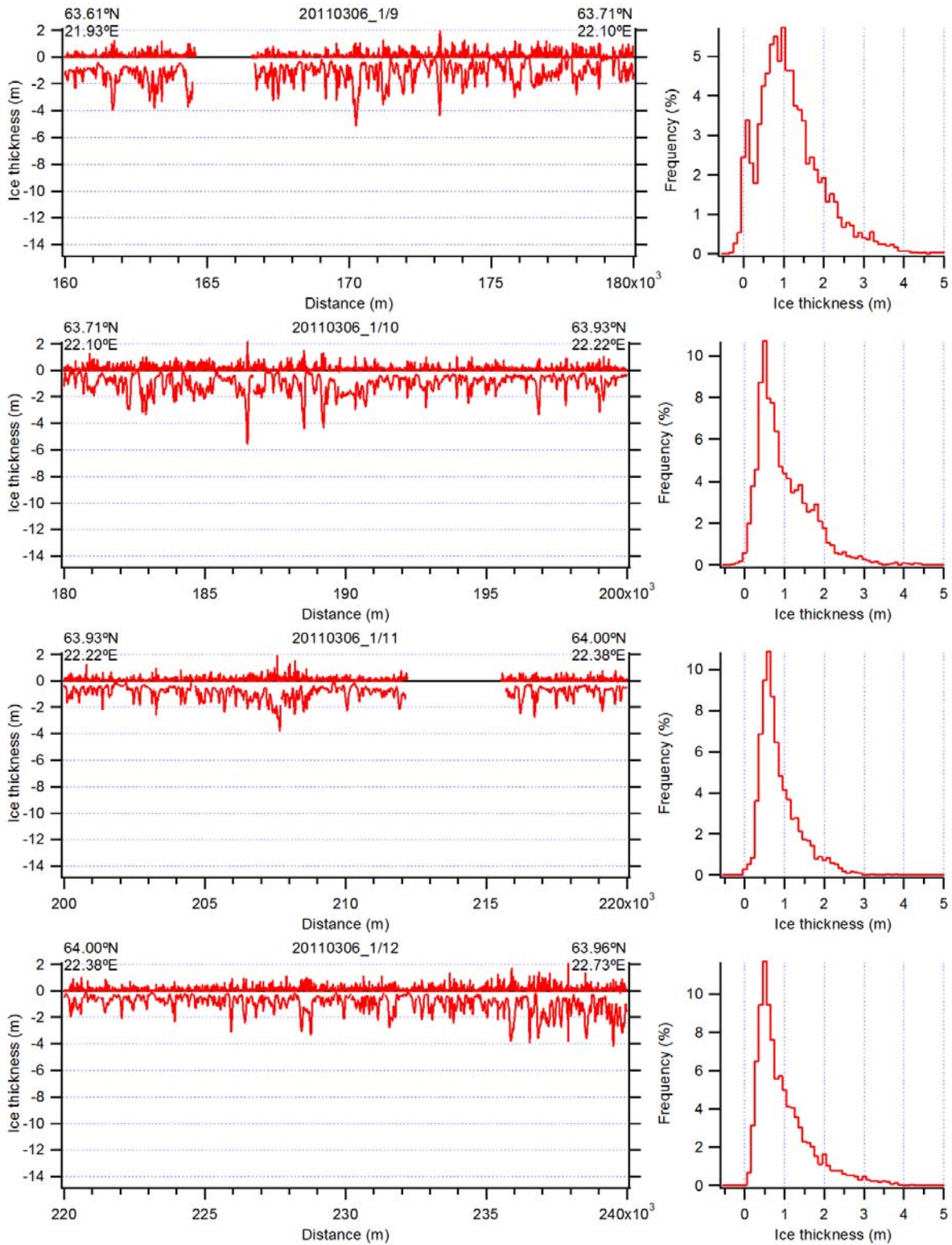
March 6, 2011, morning flight over buoy array

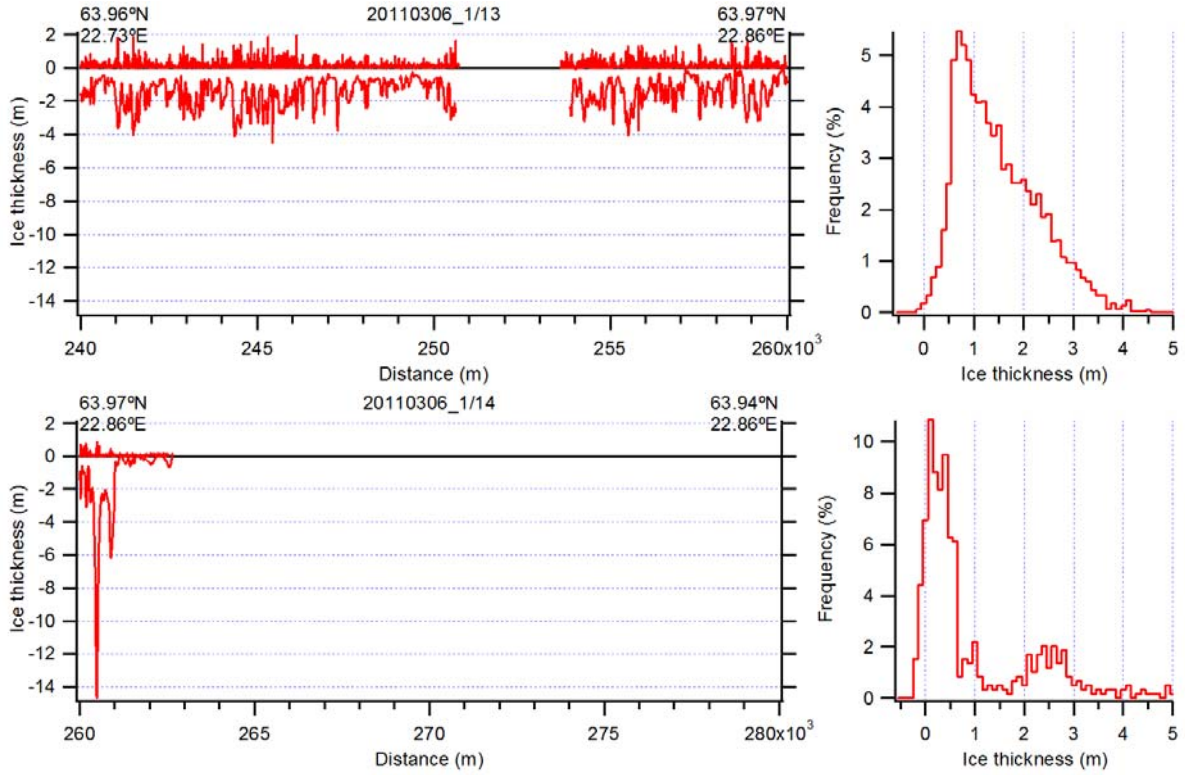
Segment No.	GPS time start (decimal hour)	GPS time end (decimal hour)	Mean thickness (m)	Standard deviation (m)	Modal thickness (m)
1	8.33025	8.46272	1.54787	0.940781	0.75
2	8.46272	8.62703	1.07361	0.704872	0.35
3	8.62703	8.75439	0.626819	0.487408	0.15
4	8.75439	8.9855	0.846579	0.645448	0.25
5	8.9855	9.15333	0.796076	0.660215	0.15
6	9.15333	9.27422	0.588078	0.443361	0.25
7	9.27422	9.39328	0.478223	0.401462	0.15
8	9.39328	9.55758	1.10094	0.71547	0.45
9	9.55758	9.69514	1.17591	0.811721	0.95
10	9.69514	9.87131	1.00189	0.712423	0.45
11	9.87131	10.0107	0.88014	0.512956	0.55
12	10.0107	10.1737	0.980628	0.685717	0.45
13	10.1737	10.3003	1.48674	0.81294	0.65
14	10.3003	10.3169	1.42797	2.35815	0.05







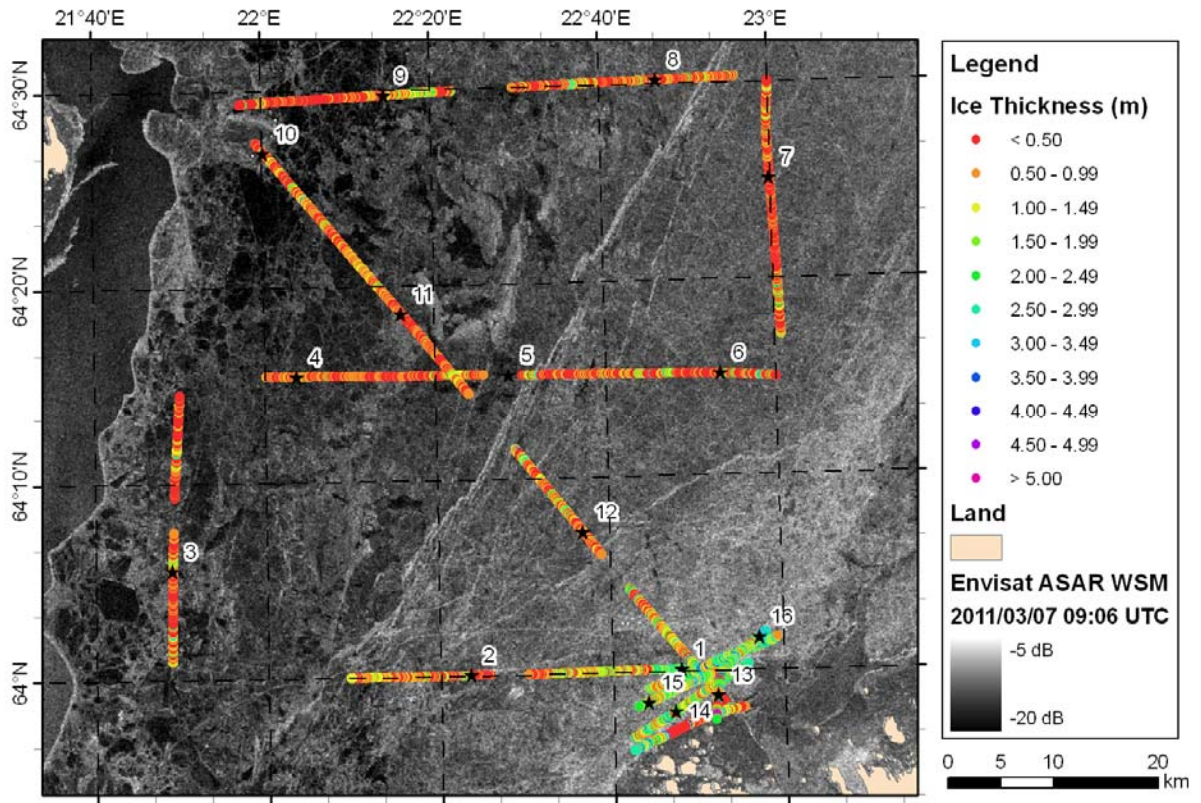


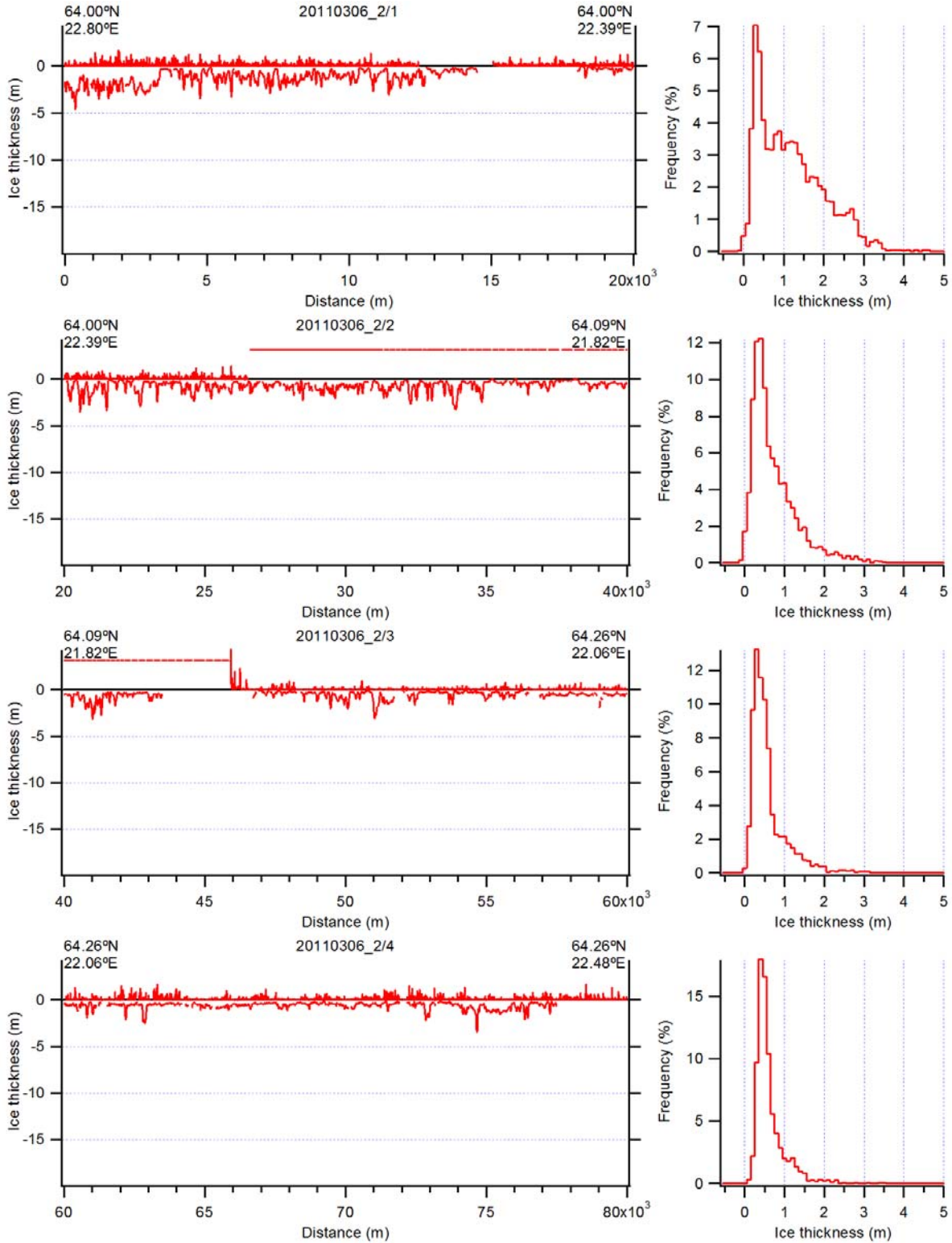


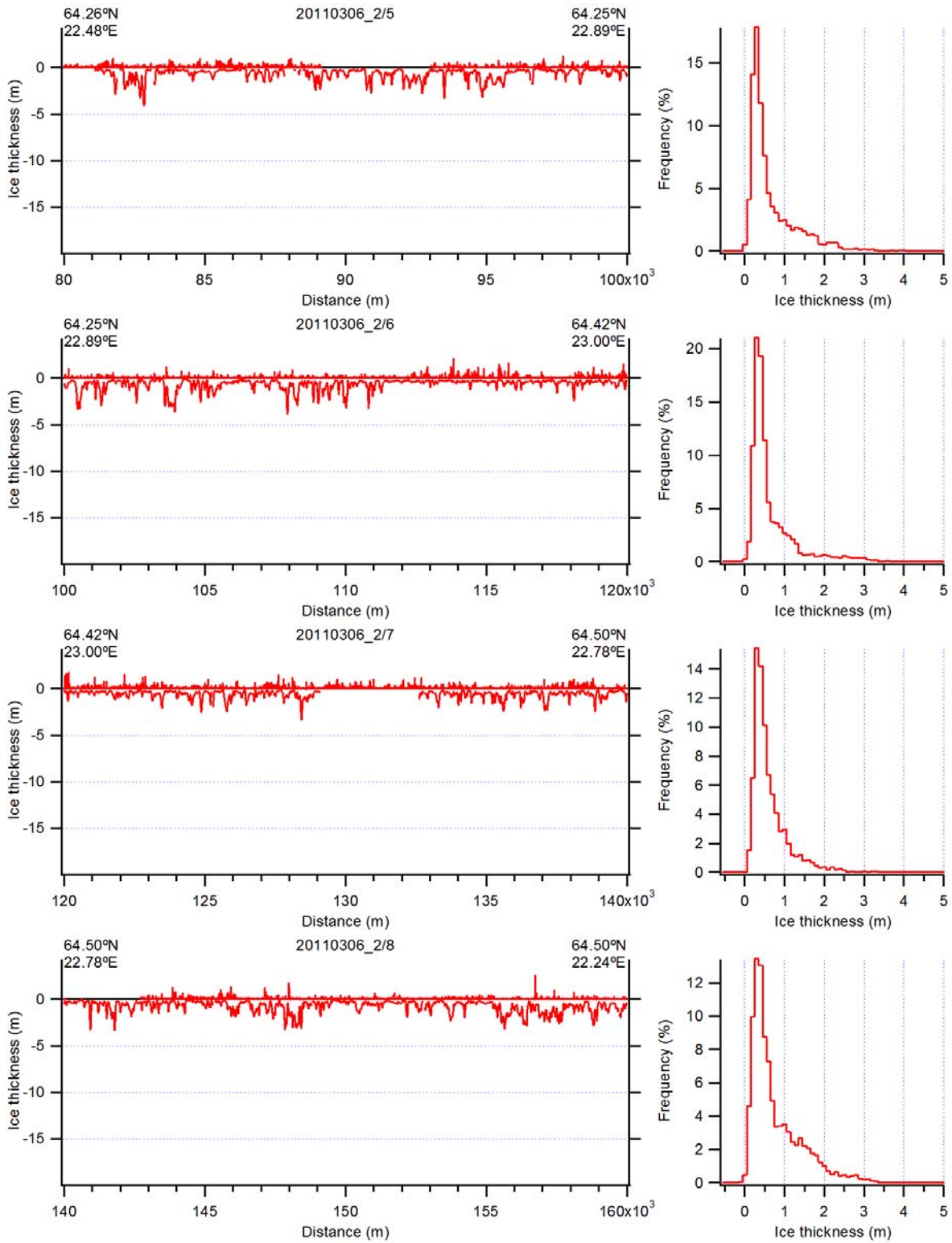
March 6, 2011, afternoon flight over southern Bay of Bothnia and coastal shear zones

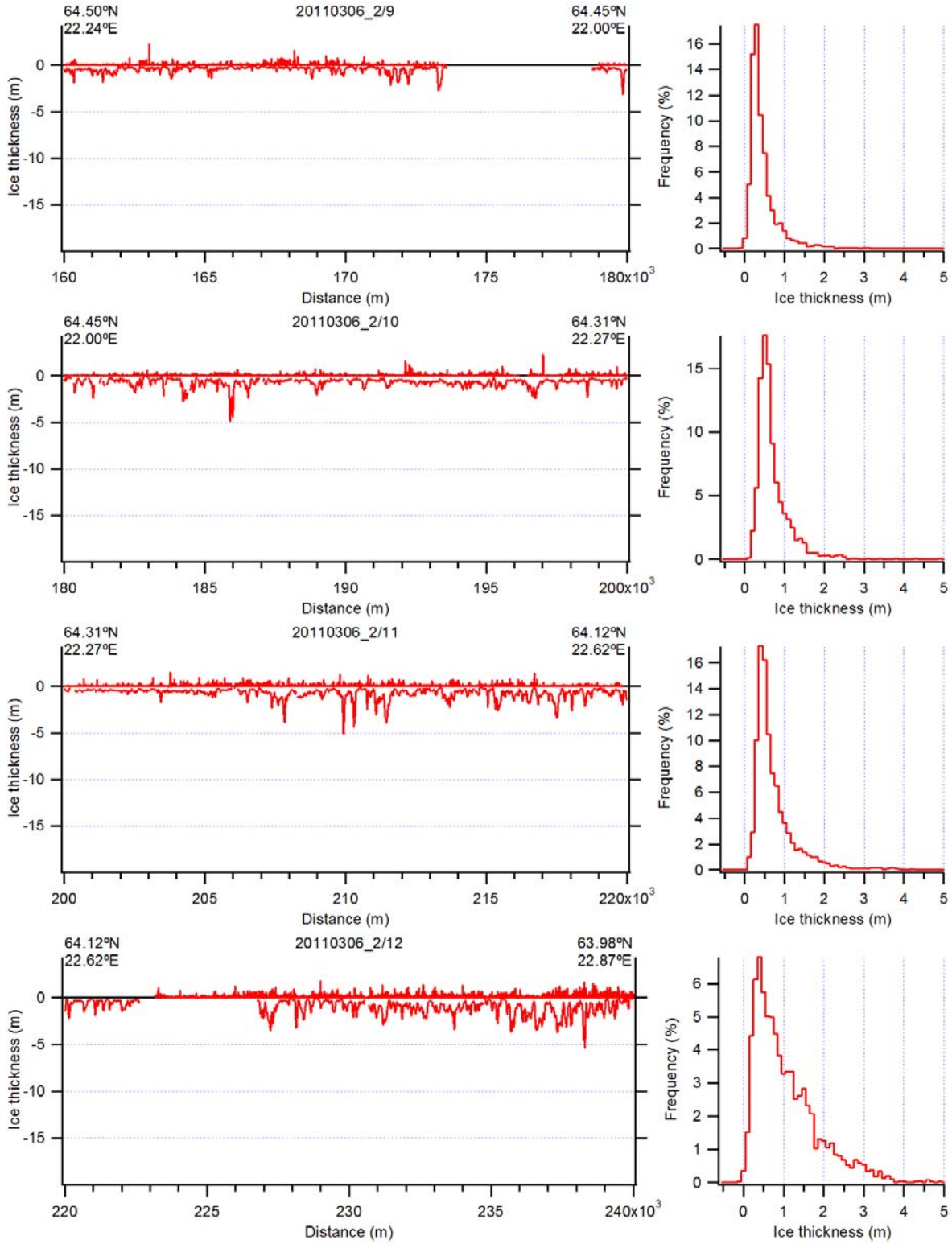
Segment No.	GPS time start (decimal hour)	GPS time end (decimal hour)	Mean thickness (m)	Standard deviation (m)	Modal thickness (m)
1	12.0689	12.1985	1.18674	0.807399	0.25
2	12.1985	12.4547	0.728698	0.577909	0.35
3	12.4547	12.6515	0.587908	0.459568	0.25
4	12.6515	12.778	0.622216	0.37603	0.35
5	12.778	12.8965	0.660589	0.598078	0.25
6	12.8965	13.0634	0.654955	0.595099	0.25
7	13.0634	13.2002	0.614676	0.435136	0.25
8	13.2002	13.3647	0.770585	0.628806	0.25
9	13.3647	13.4869	0.45445	0.373995	0.25
10	13.4869	13.5972	0.722787	0.468648	0.45
11	13.5972	13.7435	0.753186	0.580957	0.35
12	13.7435	13.8556	1.0627	0.789467	0.35
13	13.8556	14.0313	1.22687	1.18247	0.05
14	14.0313	14.1629	1.79459	0.846129	2.05
15	14.1629	14.2849	2.07216	0.965243	2.35
16	14.2849	14.3397	2.02928	1.83054	1.65

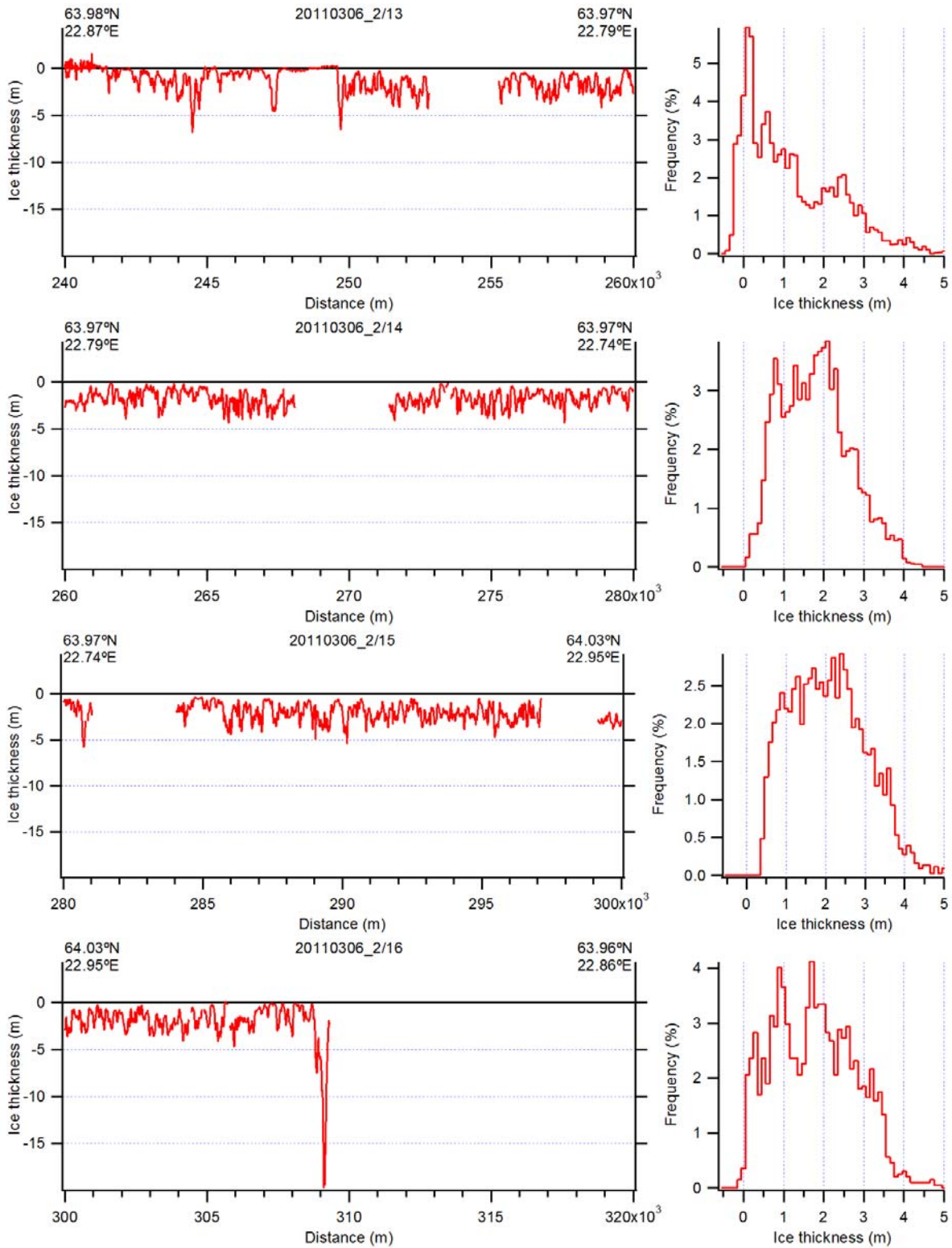
HEM Flight 2011/03/06 Afternoon







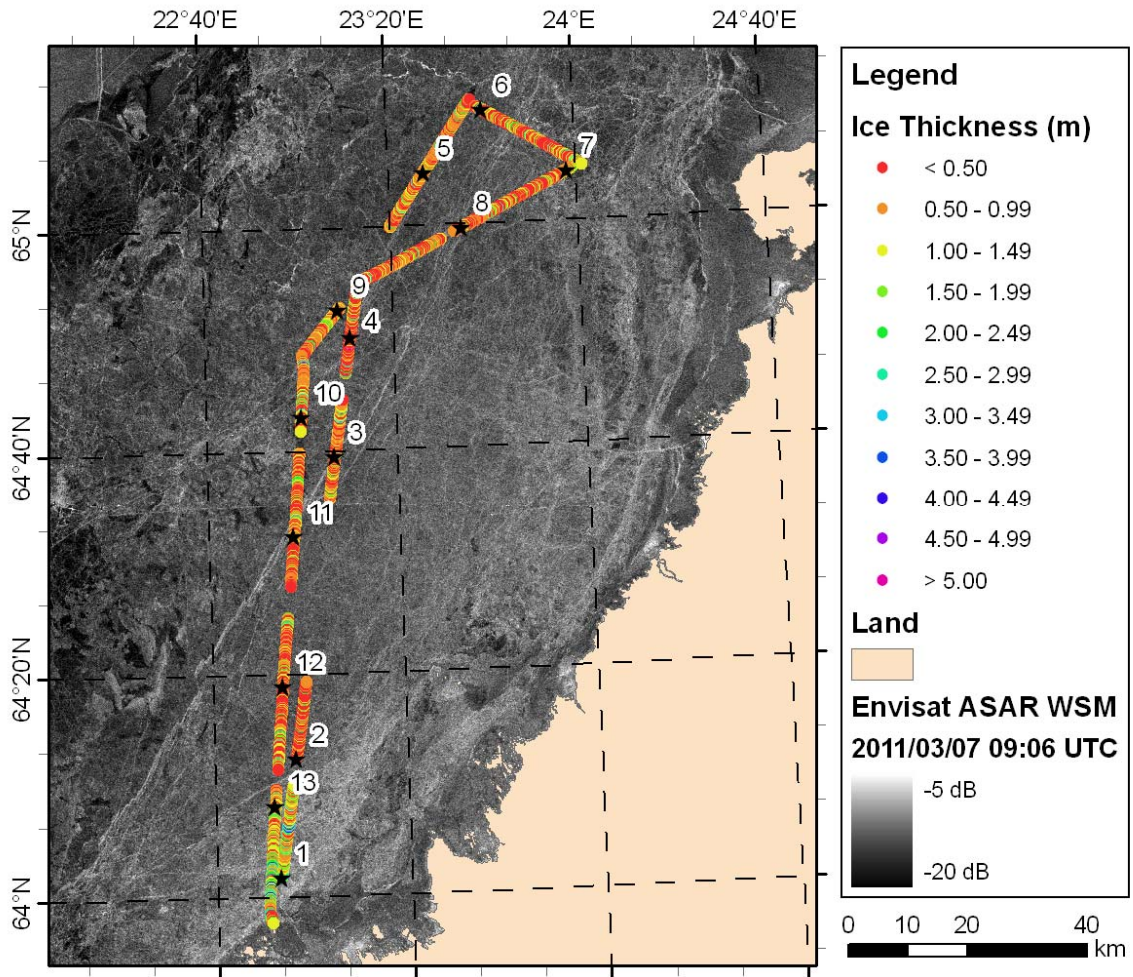


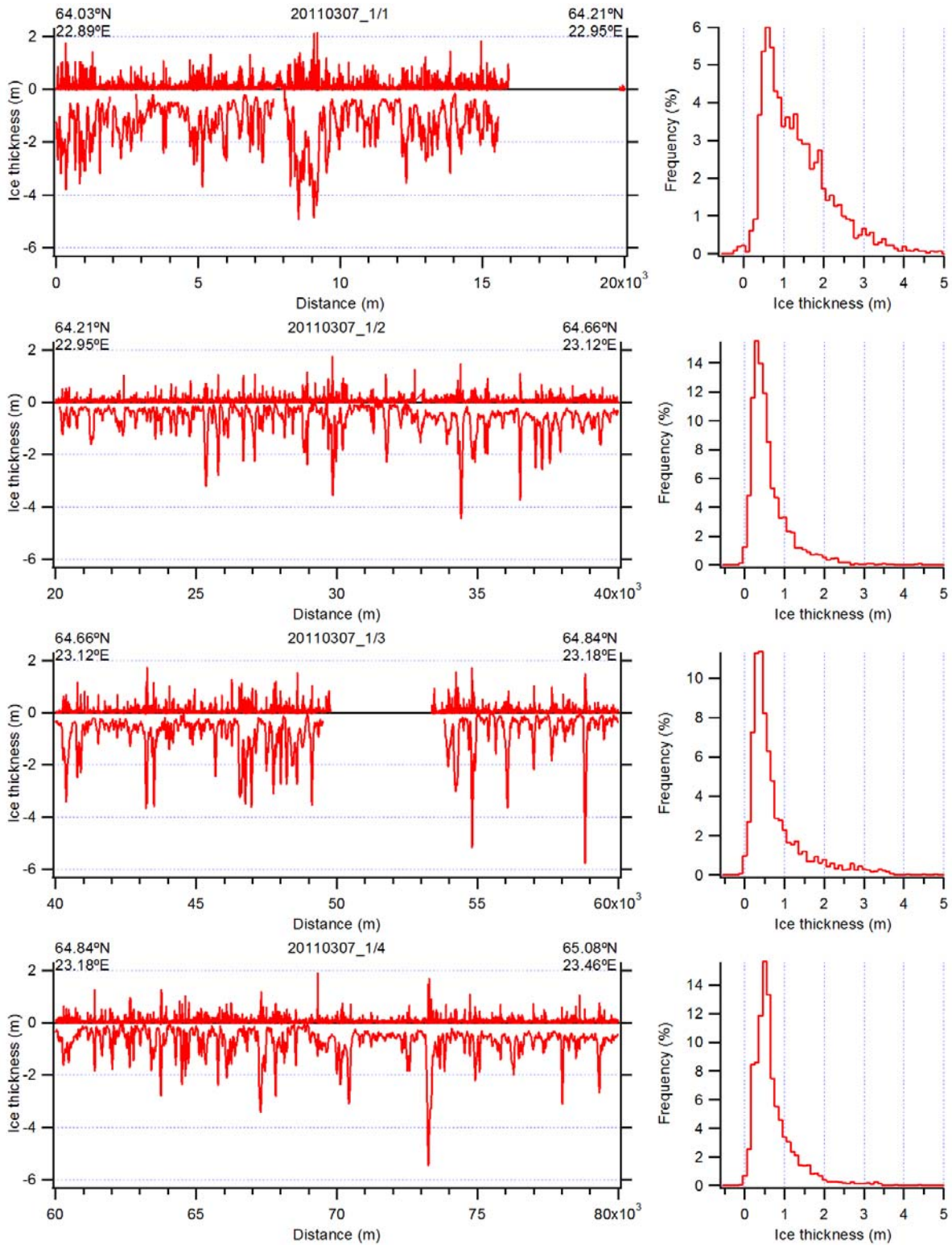


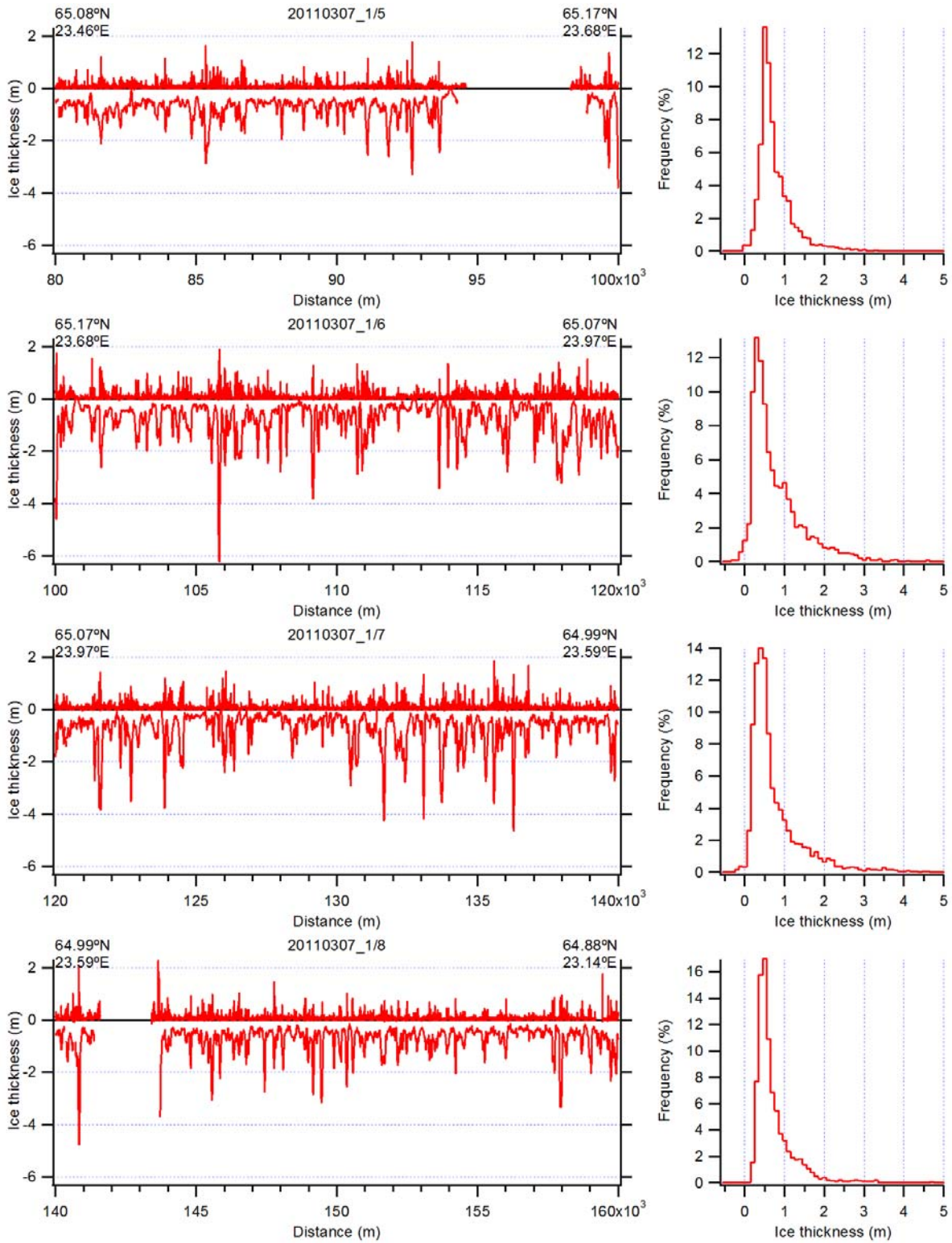
March 7, 2011, morning flight over central Bay of Bothnia

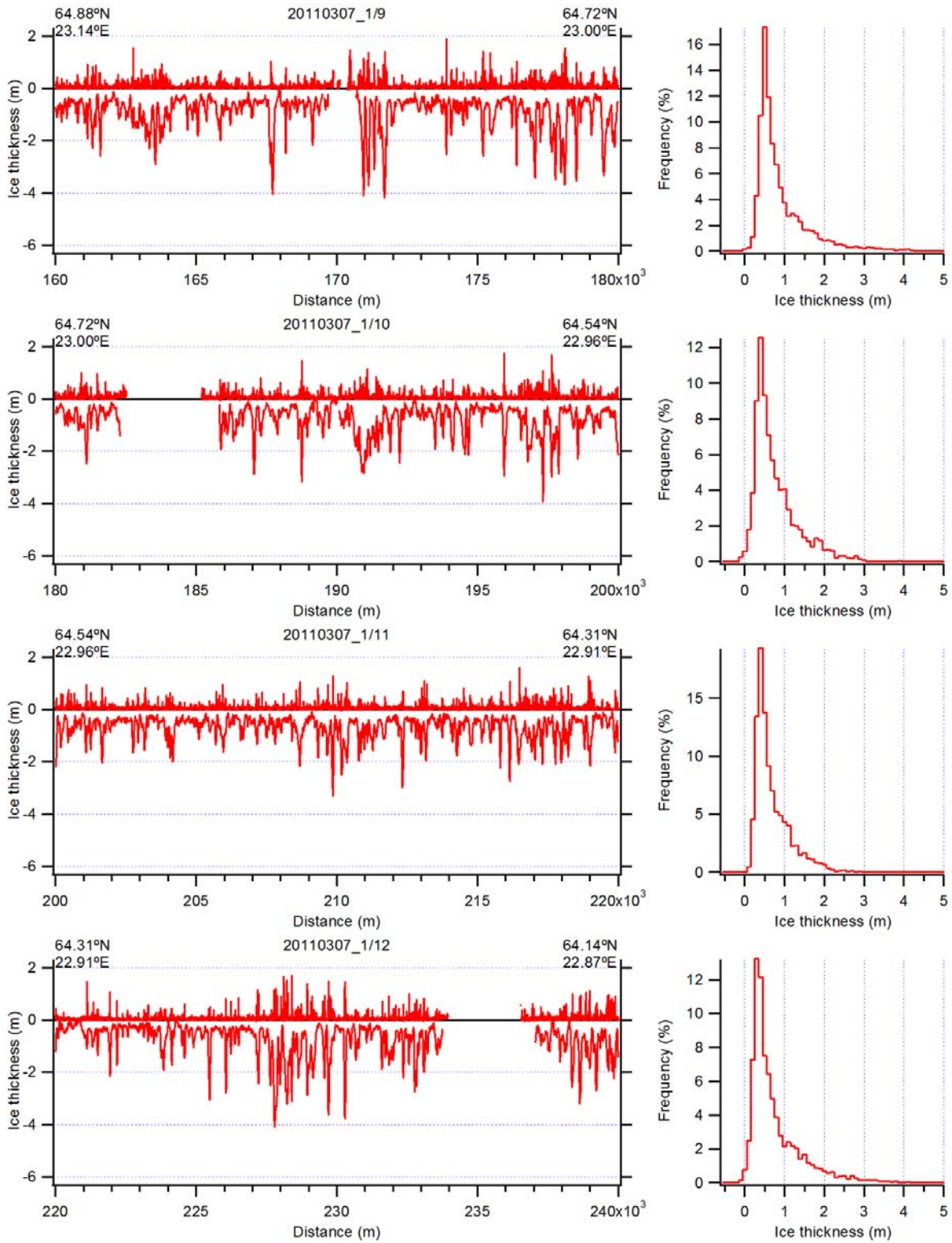
Segment No.	GPS time start (decimal hour)	GPS time end (decimal hour)	Mean thickness (m)	Standard deviation (m)	Modal thickness (m)
1	7.17511	7.28856	1.34112	0.834975	0.55
2	7.28856	7.56911	0.630183	0.544878	0.25
3	7.56911	7.68636	0.787656	0.765866	0.35
4	7.68636	7.92986	0.721712	0.577949	0.45
5	7.92986	8.05031	0.759116	0.438292	0.45
6	8.05031	8.20539	0.803024	0.703275	0.25
7	8.20539	8.35731	0.754058	0.668631	0.35
8	8.35731	8.54964	0.726709	0.50171	0.45
9	8.54964	8.69033	0.909156	0.655873	0.45
10	8.69033	8.82306	0.776276	0.560871	0.35
11	8.82306	8.99264	0.692795	0.445525	0.35
12	8.99264	9.1295	0.753833	0.64807	0.25
13	9.1295	9.26303	1.34703	0.903804	0.85

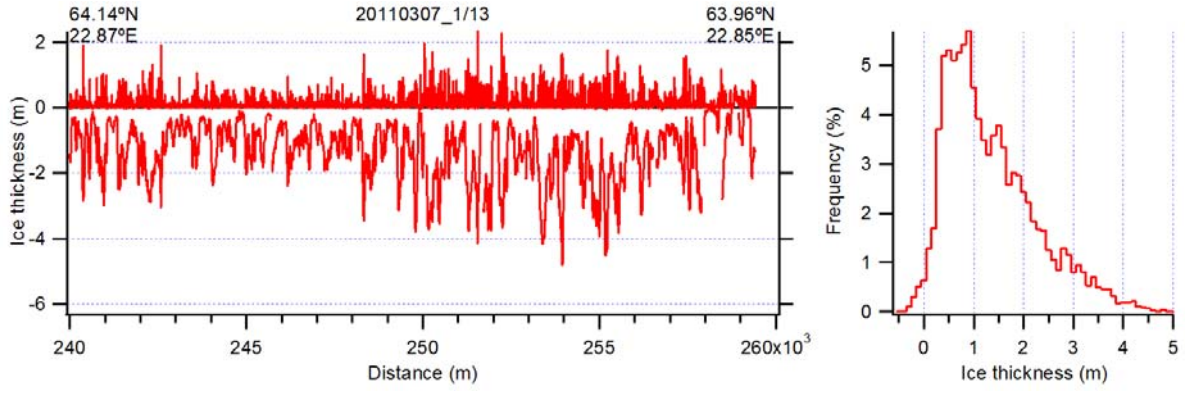
HEM Flight 2011/03/07 Morning





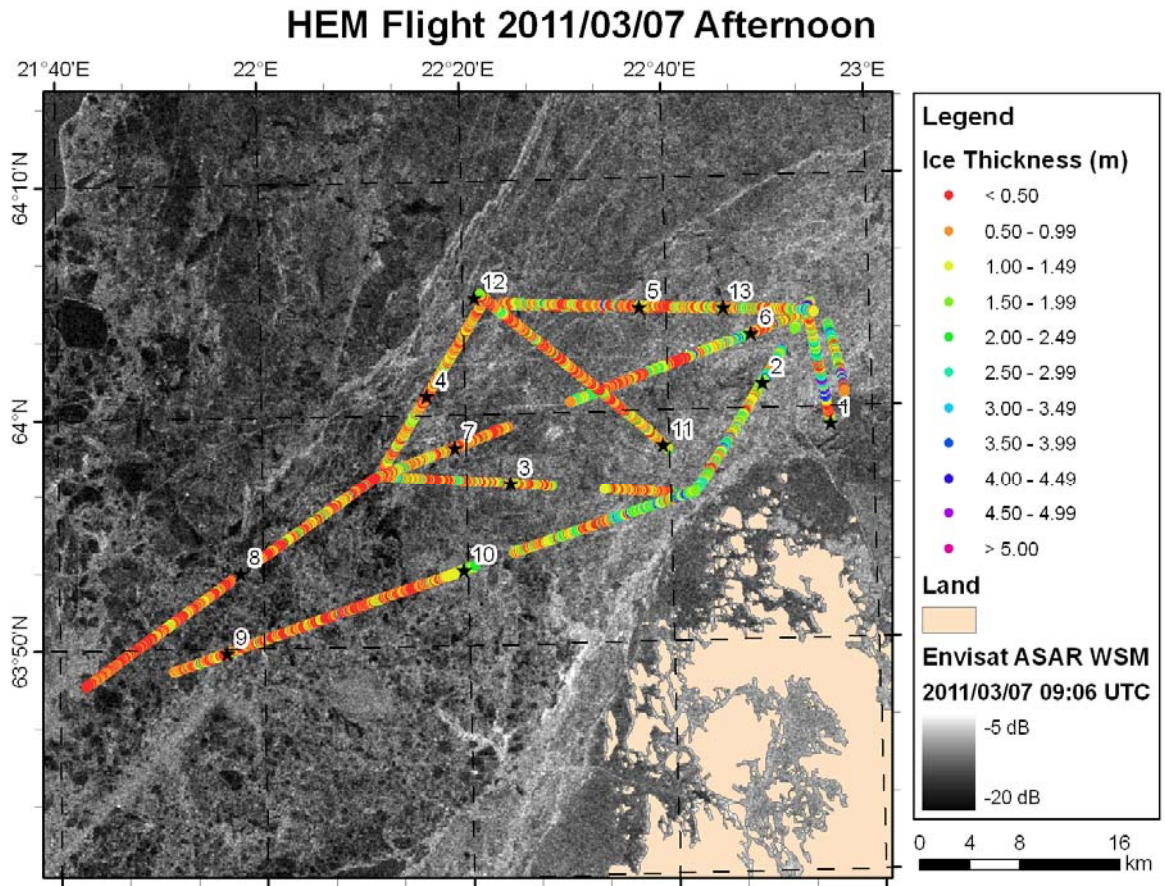


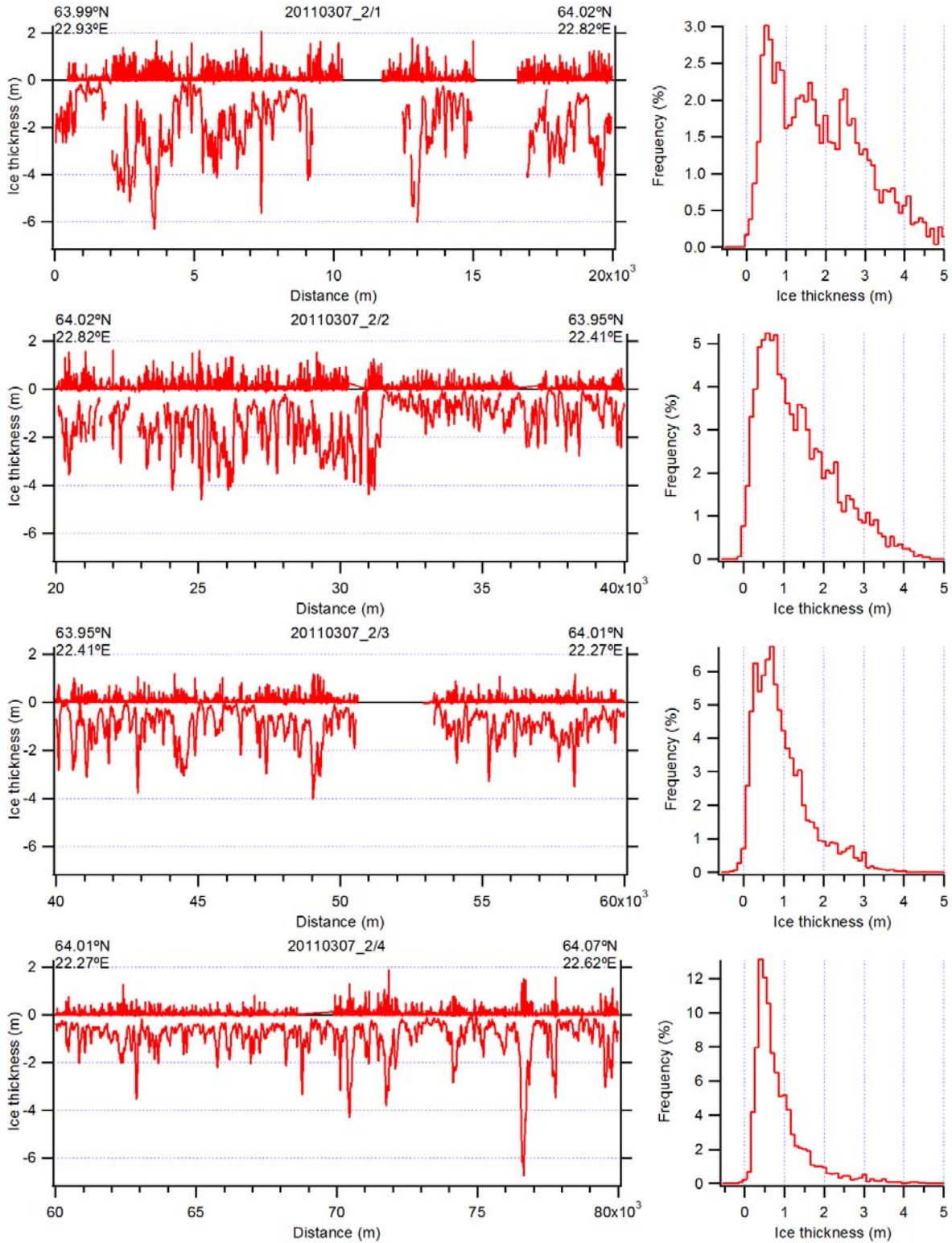


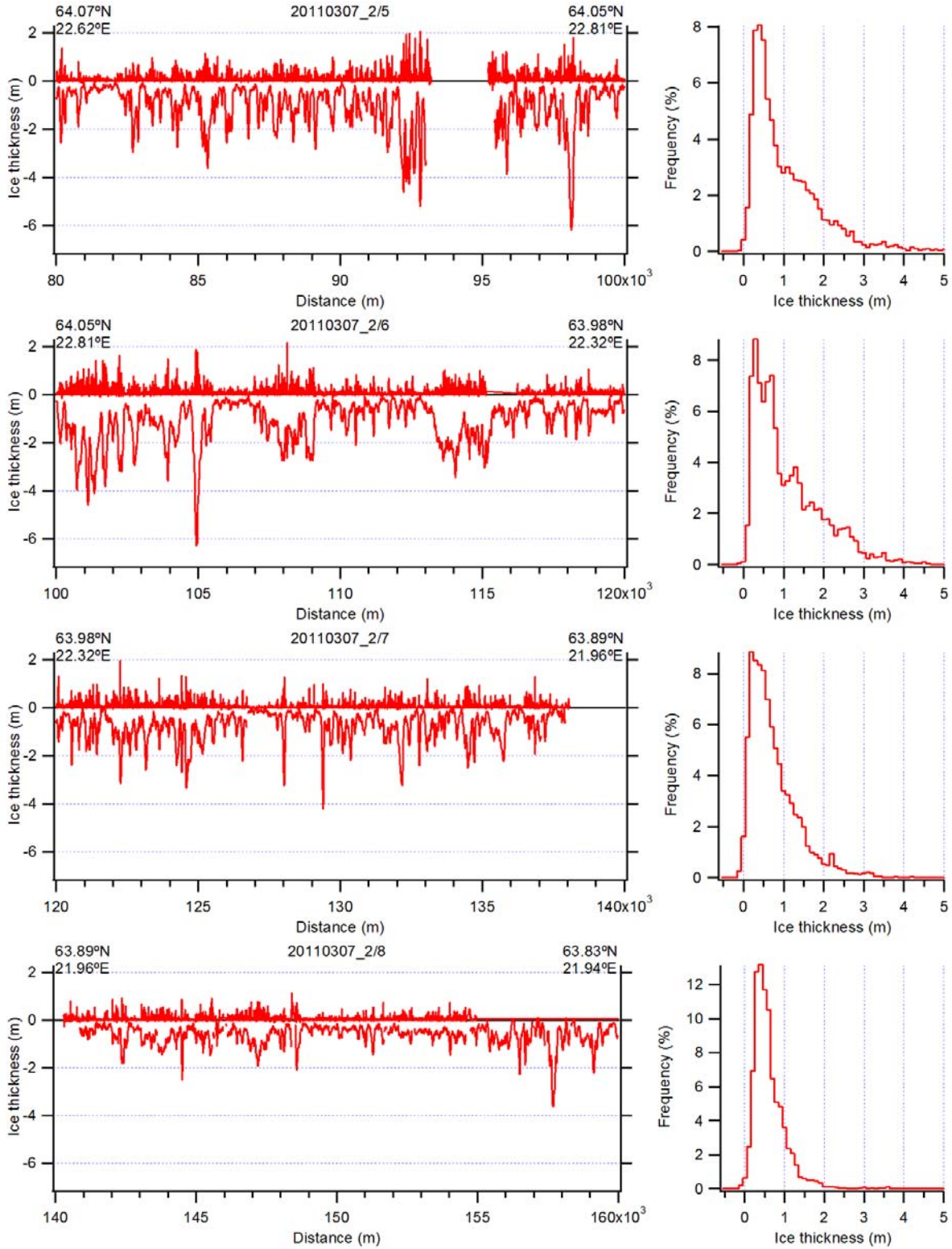


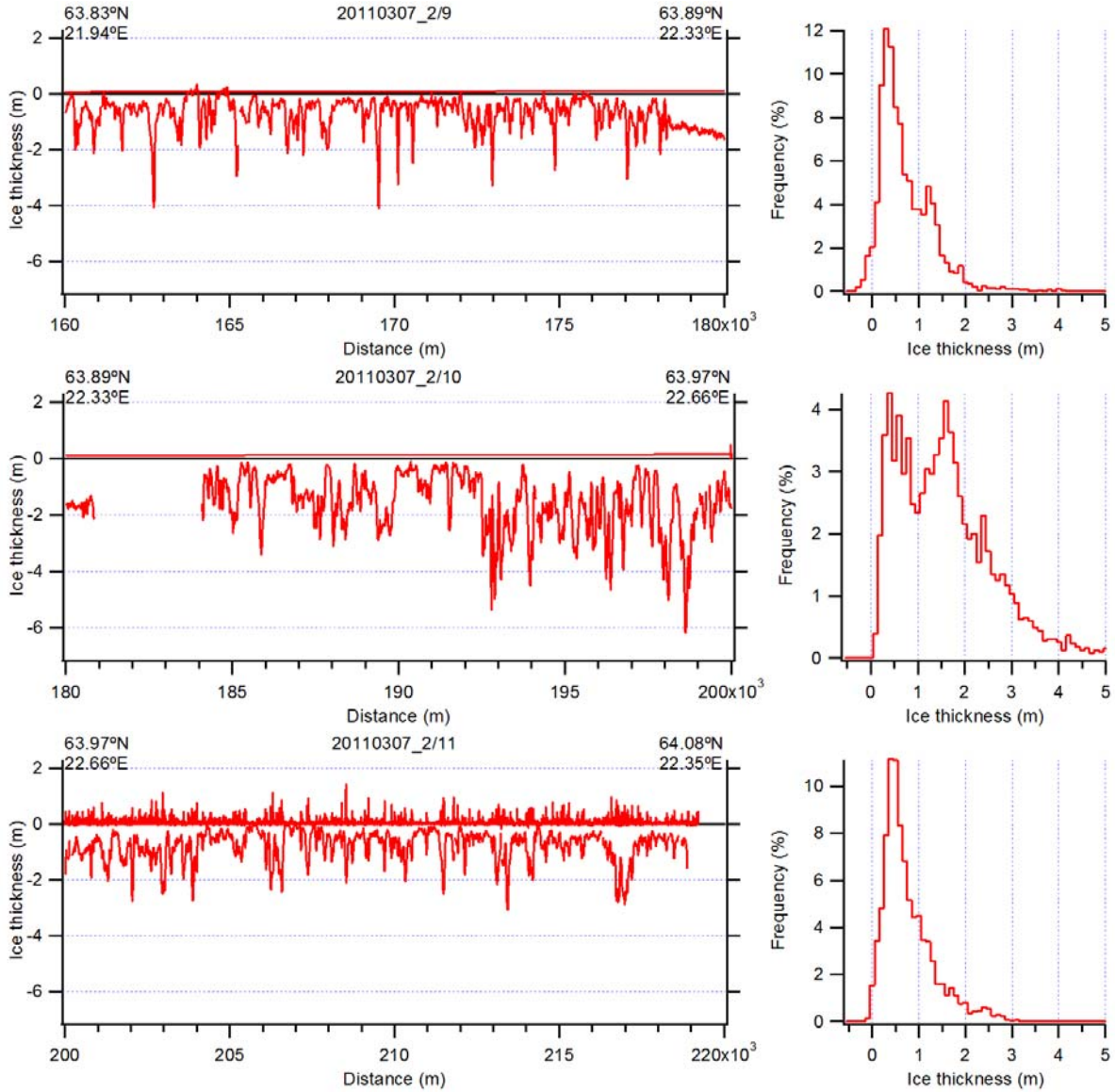
March 7, 2011, afternoon flight over buoy array

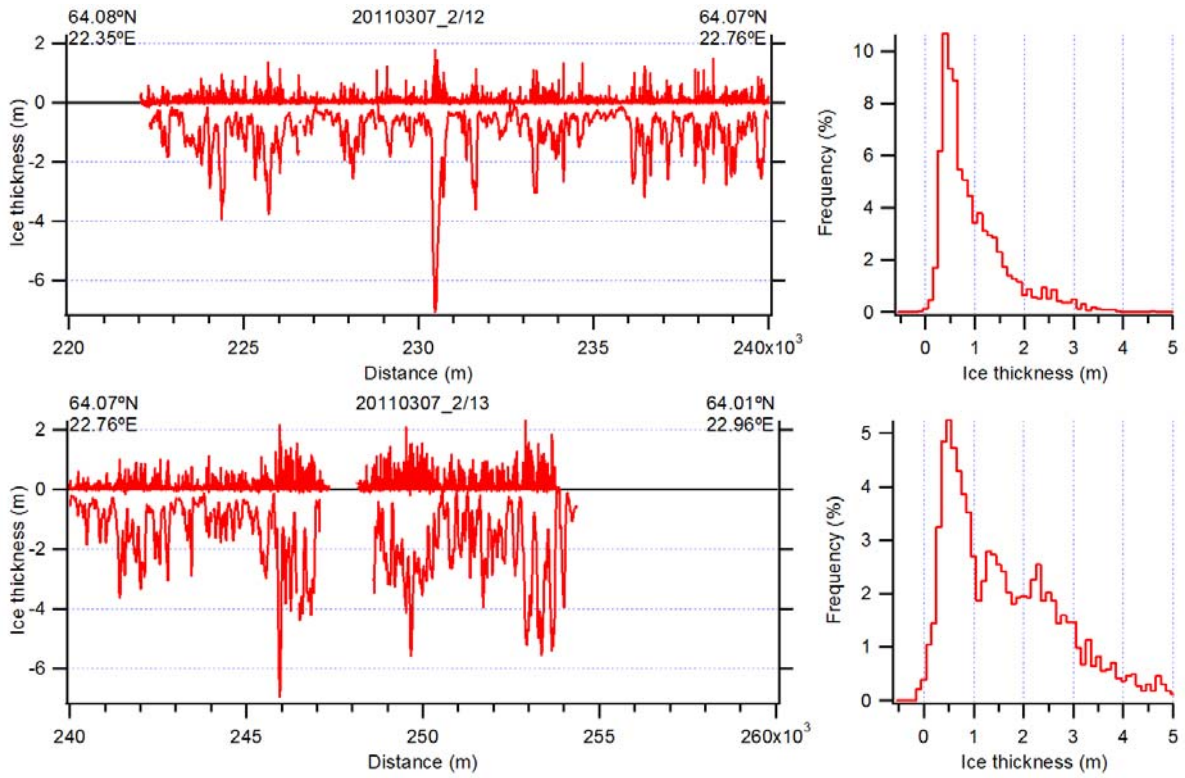
Segment No.	GPS time start (decimal hour)	GPS time end (decimal hour)	Mean thickness (m)	Standard deviation (m)	Modal thickness (m)
1	11.6206	11.7549	1.92664	1.23931	0.45
2	11.7549	11.9634	1.35738	0.933025	0.55
3	11.9634	12.0949	0.963042	0.69929	0.65
4	12.0949	12.2778	0.904907	0.779198	0.35
5	12.2778	12.4083	1.0816	0.930007	0.35
6	12.4083	12.5866	1.12396	0.895962	0.25
7	12.5866	12.7392	0.754121	0.603222	0.15
8	12.7392	12.9273	0.611447	0.412237	0.35
9	12.9273	13.039	0.707041	0.571078	0.25
10	13.039	13.1799	1.57918	1.0146	0.35
11	13.1799	13.3122	0.764926	0.544028	0.35
12	13.3122	13.4292	1.00843	0.830904	0.35
13	13.4292	13.5214	1.68647	1.23233	0.45











File formats

All thickness and surface roughness (ridging) data obtained during the SafeWin 2011 flights have been provided as ASCII tables in two different files. Columns in each file represent the following variables:

1. *allfinal.dat files:

These two files include the complete ice thickness data obtained during each flight. Data have been obtained with a sampling frequency of 10 Hz. They contain the following 10 columns:

Year
Month
Day
GPS time (seconds of day)
Fid number (measurement index)
Latitude (Degrees)
Longitude (Degrees)
Distance along flight track (m)
Ice thickness (m)
Bird height (m)

2. *.fb files:

These files include the processed laser data, with the helicopter height variation removed following Hibler (1972), i.e. data represent surface roughness. For technical reasons, there is one file each for measurements obtained between successive ascents of the EM Bird. Data were acquired with a sampling frequency of 100 Hz. The Fid number can be used to synchronize the laser and EM data. The *.fb files contain the following 6 columns:

Fid number (measurement index)
Latitude (Degrees)
Longitude (Degrees)
GPS time (decimal hours)
Distance along flight track (m)
Surface height (m).

References

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- Haas, C. (2006). Airborne electromagnetic sea ice thickness sounding in shallow, brackish water environments of the Caspian and Baltic Seas, Proceedings of OMAE2006 25th International Conference on Offshore Mechanics and Arctic Engineering, June 4-9, 2006, Hamburg, Germany, 6pp.
- Haas, C., Lobach, J., Hendricks, S., Rabenstein, L., Pfaffling, A. (2009). Helicopter-borne measurements of sea ice thickness, using a small and lightweight, digital EM system, Journal of Applied Geophysics, 67(3), 234-241., doi:10.1016/j.jappgeo.2008.05.005.
- Hibler W.D.III (1972). Removal of Aircraft Altitude Variation from Laser Profiles of the Arctic ice pack, J.Geophys. Res. Vol. 77, No. 36, 7190-7195.