

MAGNETIC DECLINATION CHART OF CANADA 1990

CARTE DE LA DÉCLINAISON MAGNÉTIQUE AU CANADA POUR 1990

Descriptive Notes
by
L.R. Newitt and G.V. Haines

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INTRODUCTION
The first magnetic observation in Canada was probably made by Jean Alphonse in 1542 or 1543. He reported a magnetic declination of 33°W in the St Lawrence River (Dawson and Newitt, 1980). During the following centuries, thousands of observations of declination were made on land and at sea by many explorers and navigators, among them such notable names as Samuel de Champlain, James Cook, John Franklin and James Ross. Much of this work was done for scientific purposes, but it was also done for scientific reasons. A knowledge of magnetic declination at different points on the Earth's surface was necessary for navigating accurately by means of a magnetic compass, which was an essential navigational instrument during that era. Even today, a simple magnetic compass has its place in the navigation of small boats, because of its simplicity and cost. Consequently each year the Geological Survey of Canada receives hundreds of requests for values of magnetic declination from various government mapping agencies, for researches and individuals. In fact, all Canadian topographical, aeronautical and hydrographic charts now include magnetic declination as an aid to navigation. These values are supplied by the Geological Survey.

In the late nineteenth century, various agencies of the Canadian Government such as the Dominion Observatory, the Hydrographic Service and the Geological Survey began to conduct magnetic surveys of the country. The Dominion Observatory began to conduct magnetic surveys of the country in the manner (Dawson and Newitt, 1980). However, it was not until the Dominion Observatory initiated high-level (3 m above sea level) vertical airborne magnetic surveys in 1953 that detailed magnetic surveys of the entire country could be carried out. These surveys carried out between 1953 and 1976 by the Dominion Observatory and its successors, the Earth Physics Branch, covered the country twice (Haines, 1983). These data form the basis of recent charts and models of magnetic declination and the other elements of the geomagnetic field.

Magnetic declination is not a constant quantity. In fact, all elements of the magnetic field are slowly changing in a random and somewhat unpredictable fashion (Newitt and Haines, 1986). The annual change of declination is referred to as variation. For this reason, magnetic declination is never perfectly constant; it is not possible to predict exactly where each revision, the secular variation of the magnetic field will be. For this reason, magnetic declination charts of Canada have been produced periodically since 1922 (Dawson and Newitt, 1980). These charts were produced by hand-contouring the observed data, up to the epoch of the chart in some manner. Since 1970, the procedure has been to first produce a theoretical model of the magnetic field and then to produce a chart based on the model.

A major innovative regional modelling technique was the development of spherical harmonic models of the magnetic field (Haines, 1985a). The first time, a regional model, which recognises the fact that changes in the field are not random near the Earth's surface. Constraining them to zero results in a tractable and greatly simplified mathematical model. The method of spherical cap harmonic analysis and to the production of the 1985 and 1987 versions of the Canadian Geomagnetic Reference Field (Haines and Newitt, 1986; Newitt and Haines, 1989).

Mathematical models have replaced charts as primary sources of information on the variation of the magnetic field. The annual change of declination of previous values of the magnetic field elements at any point and time. However, a chart presents an overall picture of the magnetic field pattern not obtainable from a model, and presents precision for many uses.

The magnetic reference field for 1990 is derived from the Canadian Geometric Reference Field for 1990 (CGRF 1990). The CGRF is a spherical cap harmonic model which approximates values of magnetic declination, and all other elements of the magnetic field, anywhere in Canada and the surrounding region. The model was derived from a large number of magnetic observations gathered between 1965 and 1976 by the Earth Physics Branch and from vector satellite (MAGSAT) observations gathered in late 1979 and early 1980 by the U.S. National Atmospheric and Space Administration. The data were averaged in cells 127 km square, whereas the satellite data were usually derived from a much smaller distribution over the chart area. A total of 4350 airborne and 5622 satellite component observations were obtained in the area analyzed.

At the epoch of 1990, the spherical cap harmonic model of the magnetic field is derived from first differences of 33 magnetic observatories and 151 repeat stations in Canada, the United States, Greenland and Iceland. A spherical cap model was then produced from equally weighted airborne and satellite data after applying a correction for the effect of the International Geodetic Reference System (IGRS 1980) (Newitt, 1986). The declination is obtained by summing values of the IGRF and the spherical cap harmonic model. The annual change of the value of declination at 1991 minus the value at 1990.

The chart shows the magnetic field for 1990 to approximate values at sea level of declination and its annual change on a grid equivalent to approximately 125 km square by means of an inverse Lambert projection routine and by computer contouring the resulting gridded values. Contouring programs fit in the vicinity of single values to the North Magnetic Pole, so that the contours in this region

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LAMBERT CONFORMAL CONICAL PROJECTION, STANDARD PARALLELS 49° ET 77°
PROJECTION CONIQUE CONFORME DE LAMBERT. PARALLÈLES D'ÉCHELLE CONSERVÉES 49° ET 77°

KILOMÈTRES 100 0 100 200 300 400 500 600 700 800 900 1000 KILOMÈTRES

Scale 1:10,000,000 Échelle

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NOTE TO USERS
The red contours on this chart indicate the angle, in degrees, between true north and magnetic north in Canada and in adjacent areas. The courses in blue depict the expected rate of change, in minutes per year (annual change).

This chart shows the part of the magnetic field that originates in the core of the Earth and extends to the surface. The value of the field at a particular location is observed at a particular location may differ from the value for two major reasons. All observations are influenced by both regular and irregular fluctuations of the Earth's magnetic field over the course of a day. During large magnetic disturbances, fluctuations may exceed six degrees in auroral and polar-cap regions, which cover large portions of central and southern Canada. These fluctuations are proportional to horizontal field strength and may be extremely large in the vicinity of the North Magnetic Pole. Moreover, magnetic minerals in the Earth's crust produce magnetic anomalies which may be too localized to depict on a chart of this scale. These anomalies can be particularly large in the Arctic and Subarctic regions.

The chart also shows the best estimate of the annual change at epoch 1990. By applying a correction based on the annual change, the user can compute a declination value for a future year. For example, the declination at Montreal for 1992.3, 2.3 years after the chart epoch, can be estimated in the following manner: $15^{\circ}40'W + 2.3 \times (0.8'W) = 15^{\circ}42'W$. In general, while the declination does not change direction, the expected rate of change does. For example, if the declination at epoch 1990 is $20^{\circ}18'E + 2.3 \times (0.9'W) = 20^{\circ}17'E + 2.3 \times (-0.9'E) = 19^{\circ}57'E$. However, the annual change itself does not remain constant but changes with time in a manner which cannot be predicted easily. Therefore, care must be exercised when applying annual change corrections over more than 3 or 4 years from the epoch of the chart. Even greater care must be taken when using declination values and annual change values given in an epochal chart, as the variation of the field is not necessarily constant over time. A great deal of care must be taken when using annual change values given on one of these maps, as they may lead to substantial errors.

Further information concerning the magnetic field in Canada can be obtained by contacting the Geophysics Division, Geological Survey of Canada, 1 Observatory Crescent, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, K1A 0Y3.

NOTE AUX USAGERS
Les courbes sur la carte indiquent l'angle, en degrés, entre le nord géographique et le nord magnétique au Canada et dans les régions contiguës. Les courbes en bleu indiquent le taux de variation annuelle.

Cette carte montre la partie du champ magnétique terrestre qui prend naissance dans le cœur de la Terre et qui se propage à la surface. La valeur du champ à une localisation donnée peut différer de celle à une autre localisation pour deux raisons principales. Premièrement, toutes les observations sont influencées par les fluctuations régulières et imprévues de l'ensemble du champ magnétique terrestre au cours d'une journée. Dans les régions centrales et méridionales du Canada, ces fluctuations peuvent dépasser 6 degrés. Deuxièmement, les minéraux magnétiques dans la croûte terrestre peuvent produire des anomalies magnétiques qui peuvent être trop localisées pour être représentées sur un plan de cette échelle. Ces anomalies peuvent être très importantes dans les régions arctiques et subarctiques.

La carte montre aussi la meilleure estimation de la variation annuelle à l'époque 1990. En appliquant une correction basée sur la variation annuelle, l'utilisateur peut calculer une valeur de déclinaison pour une année ultérieure. Par exemple, la déclinaison à Montréal pour 1992.3, 2.3 ans après la date de la carte, peut être estimée de la manière suivante: $15^{\circ}40'W + 2.3 \times (0.8'W) = 15^{\circ}42'W$. Cependant, la variation annuelle ne devrait normalement pas varier de plus de 30' de celle qui est donnée sur la carte. Cependant, ces différences sont inversément proportionnelles à la force du champ magnétique. Deuxièmement, les anomalies magnétiques présentes dans la croûte terrestre produisent des fluctuations qui peuvent être trop localisées pour être représentées sur un plan de cette échelle. Ces anomalies peuvent être particulièrement importantes dans les régions arctiques et subarctiques.

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