

TERRESTRIAL ECOSYSTEMS OF THE POLAR REGIONS UNDER INFLUENCE OF CLIMATE CHANGES

Summary

Rapid climate changes observed during the last decades, which are especially visible in the polar regions, both directly and indirectly influence terrestrial ecosystems. Glacier retreat causes emerging of new areas that are later colonized in the process of primary succession. Species composition of tundra communities is changing and expansion of alien

species is being observed. Due to long-term research programs, it is possible to detect and follow trends and rate of the ongoing changes. The article presents results of original research carried out by Polish teams in the Arctic and in the Antarctic, which document the main directions of recent changes in tundra vegetation.