Subject: Re: non-integer binsize
Posted by JD Smith on Thu, 05 May 2005 16:44:47 GMT
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On Wed, 04 May 2005 17:28:04 -0700, patrick.gatlin wrote:

> This may be a very elementary question, but I was wondering if the
> histogram function can accept a binsize < 1?
>
> I am using the hist_2d function to determine the density field of some
> lat/lon locations in a dataset. These values range 4 deg lat and 4 deg
> lon. In order to determine the # of points per square km, I have setup
> the hist_2d function as follows:
>
> IDL> result=hist_2d(lon,lat,max1=lonmax,min1=lonmin,max2=latmax,$
> min2=latmin,bin1=1/111.,bin2=1/111.)
>
> where the size of bin1 and bin2 are the approximate conversions from km
> to degrees (1km=.09 deg).
> Since hist_2d needs two bins, then is the result equal the number of
> points within a box that is 1/111. long on all sides? Thus am assuming
> result will give me the # of points per square kilometer. Is this a
> correct assumption based upon the way hist_2d works?

If you peek inside HIST_2D (or HIST_ND for that matter), you'll see that the way non-integer bin-sizes work is by first converting the data to some suitable integer representation over the range of interest, typically where the binsize is normalized to 1, and then taking the histogram. This is also quite likely how HISTOGRAM itself works internally. You might also like to read up on the rounding issues you can have when working with floating point histograms:

http://www.dfanning.com/math_tips/razoredge.html

JD