
Subject: NCDF_ATTPUT _FillValue problem for string arrays?
Posted by [Paul Van Delst\[1\]](#) on Mon, 06 Jul 2009 19:14:34 GMT
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Hello,

I've encountered a strange problem with some netCDF output using IDL.

I define a character string array variable in my output netCDF file like so:

```
VarId = NCDF_VARDEF( fid, 'Absorber_Units_Name', [32,n_Absorbers_DimId], /CHAR)
```

where the "32" is the maximum string length.

Now if I try to set a fill value attribute for that variable, like so

```
NCDF_ATTPUT, fid, VarId, '_FillValue', ''  
or  
NCDF_ATTPUT, fid, VarId, '_FillValue', 0B
```

when I run the code I get the following error when I take the file out of define mode:

```
% NCDF_CONTROL: Attempt to take the file out of define mode (ENDEF) failed.  
(NC_ERROR=-45)
```

If I simply comment out the call to NCDF_ATTPUT for these character variables, there's no problem.

I do this sort of thing (i.e. _FillValue of " " for character string variables) all the time using the Fortran90 API to netCDF so I assume an empty space is a valid fill value.

Has anyone else encountered this behaviour in IDL? I.e. is this a known bug in the IDL netCDF interface, or do I need to do something special with character fill values?

Thanks for any info.

cheers,

paulv
