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Subject: Re: How to check if a file is indeed a NetCDF file?  
Posted by [Liam Gumley](#) on Mon, 19 Apr 1999 07:00:00 GMT  
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Paul van Delst wrote:

> In trying to read NetCDF data files in IDL, I've discovered that the  
> NCDF\_OPEN crashes on me if the file I ask it to open is not a nCDF file.  
> It crashes somewhat gracefully in that it tells me that NCDF\_OPEN  
> couldn't open the file and the error # is 19. Does anyone out there know  
> how to use the IDL NCDF library to determine whether or not a file is in  
> NetCDF format? The fact that the most obvious solution (i.e. NCDF\_OPEN  
> \*returns\* an error # rather than falling in a heap) doesn't work like I  
> would expect doesn't make me too hopeful.

How about this (styled along the lines of HDF\_ISHDF)?

```
FUNCTION NCDF_ISNCDF, FILENAME
```

```
;- Set return values
```

```
false = 0B  
true = 1B
```

```
;- Establish error handler
```

```
catch, error_status  
if error_status ne 0 then begin  
    catch, /cancel  
    return, false  
endif
```

```
;- Try opening the file
```

```
cdfid = ncdf_open( filename )
```

```
;- If we get this far, open must have worked
```

```
ncdf_close, cdfid  
catch, /cancel  
return, true
```

```
END
```

Then it's just a matter of:

```
if not ncdf_isncdf( filename ) then begin  
    help, filename  
    message, 'FILENAME is not in NetCDF format'
```

```
endif  
cdfid = ncdf_open( filename )
```

Cheers,  
Liam.

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Liam E. Gumley  
Space Science and Engineering Center, UW-Madison  
<http://cimss.ssec.wisc.edu/~gumley>

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Subject: Re: How to check if a file is indeed a NetCDF file?

Posted by [R.Bauer](#) on Mon, 19 Apr 1999 07:00:00 GMT

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> \*returns\* an error # rather than falling in a heap) doesn't work like I  
> would expect doesn't make me too hopeful.  
>  
> Any info appreciated.  
>  
> paulv  
>  
> --  
> Paul van Delst  
> Space Science and Engineering Center | Ph/Fax: (608) 265-5357, 262-5974  
> University of Wisconsin-Madison | Email: [paul.vandelst@ssec.wisc.edu](mailto:paul.vandelst@ssec.wisc.edu)  
> 1225 W. Dayton St., Madison WI 53706 | Web: <http://airs2.ssec.wisc.edu/~paulv>

read the first 3 Bytes  
You will found 'CDF' if it's a netCDF File.

R.Bauer

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