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# Wind speed dependent size-resolved parameterization for the organic enrichment of sea spray

**B. Gantt and N. Meskhidze**

Department of Marine, Earth, and Atmospheric Sciences, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC, USA

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Correspondence to: N. Meskhidze (nmeskhidze@ncsu.edu)

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## Abstract

For oceans to become a significant source of primary organic aerosol, sea spray must be highly enriched with organics relative to the bulk seawater. We propose that organic enrichment at the air-sea interface, chemical composition of seawater, and the aerosol size are three main parameters controlling the organic fraction of sea spray aerosol (OC<sub>ss</sub>). To test this hypothesis, we developed a new marine primary organic aerosol emission function based on a conceptual relationship between the organic enrichment at the air-sea interface and surface wind speed. The resulting parameterization is explored using aerosol chemical composition and surface wind speed from Atlantic and Pacific coastal stations, and satellite-derived ocean concentrations of chlorophyll-*a*, dissolved organic carbon, and particulate organic carbon. Of all the parameters examined, a multi-variable logistic regression revealed that the combination of 10 m wind speed and surface chlorophyll-*a* concentration ([Chl-*a*]) are the most consistent predictors of OC<sub>ss</sub>. This relationship, combined with the published aerosol size dependence of OC<sub>ss</sub>, resulted in a new parameterization for the organic carbon fraction of sea spray. Global marine primary organic emission is investigated here by applying this newly-developed relationship to existing sea spray emission functions, satellite-derived [Chl-*a*], and modeled 10 m winds. Analysis of model simulations show that global annual submicron marine organic emission associated with sea spray is estimated to be from 2.1 to 5.3 Tg C yr<sup>-1</sup>. This study provides additional evidence that marine primary organic aerosols are a globally significant source of organics in the atmosphere.

## 1 Introduction

Indirect radiative forcing of anthropogenic aerosols is the major source of uncertainty in climate projections today (IPCC, 2007). A large fraction of this uncertainty may be related to the number concentration and size distribution of marine aerosol that are prescribed or diagnosed in global climate models (GCMs) (Hoose et al., 2009), and the uncertainties associated with forcings and feedbacks involving marine clouds and

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precipitation (Bony and Dufresne, 2005; Clement et al., 2009). Marine aerosols are particularly important as they contribute considerably to the global aerosol load and are emitted from a large area of the Earth's surface underlying an atmosphere with low aerosol concentration. The lower bounds (typically from 10 to 40 cm<sup>-3</sup>) of background aerosol concentration often prescribed in GCMs can vary the simulated aerosol indirect effect by over 80%, from -1.8 W m<sup>-2</sup> to -0.2 W m<sup>-2</sup> (Hoose et al., 2009).

Although sea-salt typically dominates total marine aerosol mass burden and emission rates, organic aerosols of marine origin can contribute a considerable fraction of the submicron aerosol mass concentration near biologically productive waters (O'Dowd et al., 2004). Cloud condensation nuclei (CCN) over the remote oceans typically range from a few tens per cm<sup>3</sup> over biologically inactive regions (seasons) to a few hundred per cm<sup>3</sup> under biologically active conditions (Andreae, 2007). Since cloud properties are most sensitive to the addition of particles when the background concentration is low (Platnick and Twomey, 1994), ambient measurements, remote sensing, and modeling studies indicate that ocean biology could influence marine cloud microphysical properties (Shaw et al., 1983; Charlson et al., 1987; Middlebrook et al., 1998; O'Dowd et al., 2004; Meskhidze and Nenes, 2006; 2010; Bigg and Leck, 2008; Sorooshian et al., 2009, 2010; Thomas et al., 2010).

Organic aerosols in the marine boundary layer are proposed to have different sources that can be broadly classified as primary, produced from the mechanical process of bubble bursting, and secondary (SOA), derived from precursor biogenic volatile organic compounds (BVOCs) emitted by phytoplankton and macroalgae or by photolysis of chromophoric dissolved organic matter (CDOM) in the water column (Zhou and Mopper, 1997; O'Dowd and de Leeuw, 2007; Sellegri et al., 2008). In addition, SOA can also be derived from the chemical transformation of primary or secondary components present in the condensed phase. Such complex transformations could take place at the particle surface or in the aqueous phase, and may also involve a further step through the gas phase in which semivolatile aerosol components can be oxidized to form new condensable products (Rinaldi et al., 2010). Due to the potentially

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important contribution of marine organic aerosol to the CCN budget over the remote ocean, improvement of the fundamental process-level understanding of marine primary and secondary aerosol production mechanisms is needed to develop more reliable parameterizations that can be confidently applied in GCMs. These new parameterizations must capture the total mass of marine organic aerosol emission as well as their cloud nucleating properties (i.e., number concentration and size dependent chemical composition of submicron sea spray). Here, we examine the factors that affect the emission of marine primary organic aerosols.

Laboratory and ambient measurements have revealed that the organic fraction of submicron sea spray aerosols can be enriched (relative to the underlying seawater) by as much as 2 to 3 orders of magnitude (Blanchard, 1964; Gershey, 1983a; Hoffman and Duce, 1974, 1976; Oppo et al., 1999; Keene et al., 2007; Facchini et al., 2008; Russell et al., 2010). The organic enrichment of sea spray is thought to be controlled by the accumulation of insoluble organic matter at the air-sea interface (Hoffman and Duce, 1976; Gershey et al., 1983b). This natural enrichment of the ocean surface layer by organics has been shown to be a function of both meteorological factors, such as surface wind speed, and oceanic parameters including the concentration of dissolved organic carbon ([DOC]), particulate organic carbon ([POC]), chlorophyll-*a* ([Chl-*a*]), and type of organic carbon (OC) in the air-sea interface and underlying water (Hoffman and Duce, 1976; Gershey, 1983a,b; O'Dowd et al., 2004, 2008; Russell et al., 2010).

The air-sea interface can roughly be thought of as being in three regimes where 1) very high organic enrichment leads to visible biogenic surface slicks thicker than 50 μm, 2) moderate organic enrichment leads to a non-slick microlayer ~50 μm thick, and 3) no enrichment is present. Figure 1 shows the conceptual relationship between the organic enrichment of the air-sea interface (given as an OC/Na ratio based on values summarized by Russell et al., 2010) and surface wind speed based on a review of previous works. This figure shows that for given chemical composition of seawater, the highest enrichments are expected during calm winds. An increase in wind speed above 3–4 m s<sup>-1</sup> will cause a rapid decrease in the enrichment (the Langmuir

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circulations starts breaking up the slicks), and its effective removal for wind speeds in exceed  $8 \text{ m s}^{-1}$  (when the wave breaking thoroughly mixes the microlayer with the underlying water). Although there is significant spread in observational data, most of the studies agree that slicks in the open ocean are only observed for surface wind speed  $< 5 \text{ m s}^{-1}$  (Romano, 1996). When winds increase from  $2$  to  $5 \text{ m s}^{-1}$ , there is an increase in the formation of gaps and a decrease in the satellite-derived areal extent of ocean slicks (Marmorino et al., 2008). This increase of gaps and subsequent decrease in slick coverage is consistent with the Dysthe (2006) model describing the tearing of a surface film in a region of positive surface straining from Langmuir circulations (Langmuir, 1938; Leibovich, 1983). Many studies also report a decrease in microlayer (non-slick organic layer of moderate enrichment) concentration relative to the underlying seawater for surface wind speeds in excess of  $\sim 4 \text{ m s}^{-1}$  (Obernosterer et al., 2008), except for Wurl et al. (2010) who report constant microlayer surfactant enrichment for winds up to  $5.5 \text{ m s}^{-1}$ , with enrichment persisting for winds up to  $10 \text{ m s}^{-1}$ . When surface winds exceed  $8 \text{ m s}^{-1}$ , the initiation of wave breaking is expected to cause the destruction of the microlayer by mixing it into the underlying seawater (Carlson, 1983). Extrapolation of the linear decrease in microlayer thickness with wind speed observed by Liu and Dickhut (1998) predicts a microlayer thickness of  $0 \mu\text{m}$  at a wind speed of  $\sim 8.5 \text{ m s}^{-1}$ , consistent with this picture. Overall, review of published studies indicates that surface wind speed can play a crucial role in determining the physical and chemical characteristics of the air-sea interface and thus the organic enrichment of sea spray.

In addition to the potential impact from wind speed, the organic enrichment of sea spray has been shown to be affected by the chemical composition of seawater. Past studies have consistently found that the marine aerosol OC concentration is higher over regions of high biological activity (O'Dowd et al., 2004; Sciare et al., 2009; Miyazaki et al., 2010a). The results of multiple ambient and laboratory studies indicated that the upwind concentrations of [Chl-*a*], [POC], and [DOC] (related to marine biological activity) can be used as a proxy for the organic enrichment of sea spray (Gershey, 1983a,b; Hoffman and Duce, 1976; O'Dowd et al., 2004, 2008; Russell et al., 2010).

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Several attempts to quantify and characterize size-dependent chemical composition of sea spray aerosols have recently been carried out. These measurements consistently have shown that the organic mass fraction of submicron sea spray increases with decreasing particle size (Oppo et al., 1999; Keene et al., 2007; Facchini et al., 2008), with a small and relatively constant organic fraction for supermicron particles with aerodynamic diameter  $< 10 \mu\text{m}$  (Oppo et al., 1999; Keene et al., 2007; Facchini et al., 2008). Keene et al. (2007) reported that the water soluble organic carbon of artificially generated aerosols within a chamber was highly enriched in all aerosol size fractions, with greatest enrichments in size fraction with geometric mean diameter of  $0.13 \mu\text{m}$ . In this smallest size fraction sampled, organic carbon comprised up to 80% of aerosol mass and dominated the mass of most individual particles (Keene et al., 2007). Facchini et al. (2008) similarly reported a high contribution of organic matter in submicron sea spray particles (up to  $77 \pm 5\%$  in the  $0.125\text{--}0.25 \mu\text{m}$  size range). However, their analysis discriminated between water soluble and insoluble organic carbon (WSOC and WIOC, respectively), finding a dominant contribution (up to  $94 \pm 4\%$ ) from the water insoluble fraction.

Despite the likely impact of both meteorological factors and chemical composition of seawater on sea spray chemistry, most of the recent parameterizations of marine primary organic aerosol emissions use only [Chl-*a*] as a proxy for deriving the organic mass fraction of sea spray aerosols (O'Dowd et al., 2008) or for determining the total magnitude of the emissions (Spracklen et al., 2008). In this paper, we develop a new parameterization for organic fraction of sea spray aerosol based on the conceptual picture of Fig. 1, and constrain it using ambient data from two different oceanic regions.

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## 2.3 Ocean chemistry

The oceanic parameters derived from satellite data include 8-day average Level 3 surface [Chl-*a*] from the Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer (MODIS) aboard the Terra satellite and [POC] from the Sea Wide Field of View (SeaWiFS) for the years 2000–2007. [Chl-*a*] is determined using the OC3M algorithm (Carder et al., 1999), and [POC] was calculated from normalized water-leaving radiances at 443, 490, and 555 nm using the method of Stramska et al. (2009). In order to estimate the ocean [DOC] distribution, a sea surface temperature (SST)-based approach (Siegel et al., 2002) and a colored dissolved organic matter (CDOM)-based approach (Mannino et al., 2008) were combined to generate the estimates of surface layer [DOC] for the years 2000–2007. The 8-day average SST data was obtained from MODIS, and the 8-day average normalized water leaving radiance data at 490 and 555 nm (required for the CDOM-based approach) were retrieved from SeaWiFS. As each method is designed to estimate the [DOC] in different parts of the ocean, the SST-based approach was used for the open ocean and the CDOM-based approach was used for coastal waters (Siegel et al., 2002; Mannino et al., 2008). All of the satellite-derived data was regridded to  $1^{\circ} \times 1^{\circ}$  spatial resolution. The reported global root mean squared error of the [Chl-*a*], [POC], and [DOC] were  $\sim 0.1 \text{ mg m}^{-3}$ ,  $20 \text{ mg m}^{-3}$ , and  $2.6\text{--}8.6 \mu\text{mol L}^{-1}$ , respectively (Carder et al., 2004; Stramska et al., 2009; Mannino et al., 2008; Siegel et al., 2002). For each aerosol measurement, a non-weighted upwind average of the temporally-collocated [Chl-*a*], [DOC] and [POC] was calculated using 24-h back-trajectories based on the observed wind speed and direction (grouped into  $45^{\circ}$  vectors).

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## 3 Results and discussion

### 3.1 Factors affecting organics in sea spray

#### 3.1.1 Wind speed

A plot of organic carbon fraction against surface wind speed in Fig. 2a shows that for both the Mace Head and Point Reyes measurement stations, the  $\text{OC}_{\text{ss}}$  decreases with increasing 10 m wind speed in a manner consistent with our conceptual picture given on Fig. 1. For wind speeds above  $10 \text{ m s}^{-1}$ , sea spray aerosols are largely composed of sea-salt with very little contribution from organics. As wind speeds decrease to  $5 \text{ m s}^{-1}$ , a strong increase in the organic fraction of sea spray was observed. This trend can be explained by the presence of a surface microlayer described by our conceptual wind speed-organic enrichment relationship. No data exists for surface winds of less than  $4 \text{ m s}^{-1}$  due to longer averaging time at the two stations (Mace Head data was typically averaged over 50–100 h and Point Reyes over 24 h), but based on conceptual picture of Fig. 1 we predict that  $\text{OC}_{\text{ss}}$  plateaus at a high value. Using the MATLAB curve fitting tool and the proposed conceptual relationship, we have developed a logistic function that is a good fit ( $R^2=0.34\text{--}0.49$ ) for the existing ambient measurements and requires no artificial cutoff. The general relationship between sea spray organic enrichment and wind speed shown on Fig. 2a suggests that winds (through their effect on air-sea interface) may play a considerable role in the enrichment of sea spray aerosol.

#### 3.1.2 Ocean chemistry

Analysis of ambient marine aerosol chemical composition suggests that there is a maximum enrichment of sea spray aerosols by organics that, although usually occurring at low wind speed, can be vastly different for different measurement locations. Figure 2b–d show that each ocean chemistry parameter examined ([POC], [DOC], and [Chl-*a*]) had a positive relationship with  $\text{OC}_{\text{ss}}$ . Linear trendlines were used for both [POC] and

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[DOC] but a logistic curve was preferred for [Chl-*a*] due to a slightly better  $R^2$  value. It is worth noting that the relationship between  $OC_{ss}$  and [POC] was stronger than [DOC] for Mace Head, consistent with the hypothesis of Russell et al. (2010) that [POC] influences organic enrichment of Northern Atlantic sea spray aerosols. Overall, out of the three oceanic parameters examined, the strongest and most consistent relationship was found between  $OC_{ss}$  and [Chl-*a*] (Fig. 2b). Therefore, in our new parameterization of the organic carbon fraction of sea spray, [Chl-*a*] was chosen as a proxy for the ocean chemistry. Using the MATLAB surface fitting tool and a general multi-variable logistic equation, the combined relationships of  $OC_{ss}$  vs.  $U_{10}$  and  $OC_{ss}$  vs. [Chl-*a*] were found to be very similar for both stations. The corresponding coefficients in each equation were averaged to yield:

$$OC_{ss}(Chl-a, U_{10}) = \frac{OC_{ss}^{max}}{1 + \exp(-4.25[Chl-a] + 0.24U_{10})} \quad (1)$$

where [Chl-*a*] is in units of  $mg\ m^{-3}$  and  $U_{10}$  is in units of  $ms^{-1}$ . The magnitude-determining numerator of the equation,  $OC_{ss}^{max}$ , is the maximum  $OC_{ss}$  observed at the two sites during the entire measurement period (0.18 for Point Reyes and 0.69 for Mace Head). When Eq. (1) is compared to measurement data (see Fig. S1 in the Supplement), the  $R^2$  value, normalized mean bias and normalized mean error are 0.61, 28.5% and 42.7% for Mace Head and 0.58, -19.8% and 35.7% for Point Reyes, respectively.

The differences between the relationship in Eq. (1) and those of previous parameterizations are greatest at high and low wind speeds. For a given [Chl-*a*], our equivalent submicron  $OC_{ss}$  will be lower than that of O'Dowd et al. (2008) and Viganti et al. (2010) for strong winds and higher for low wind conditions.

### 3.1.3 Aerosol size

The different aerosol sizes ( $<1.5\ \mu m$  from Mace Head and  $<2.5\ \mu m$  at Point Reyes) measured at each site were likely to contribute to the differences in  $OC_{ss}^{max}$ . Since

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neither the Mace Head nor Point Reyes datasets we used had size-resolved aerosol composition, to better constrain  $OC_{ss}$  as a function of aerosol size we used published measurements of the size-resolved organic mass fraction of aerosols generated from bubble-bursting of seawater over the biologically-active Northern Atlantic (Facchini et al., 2008). Figure 3 shows the  $OC_{ss}$  measurements from Facchini et al. (2008) fitted by the following equation:

$$OC_{ss}(D_p) = \frac{OC_{ss}^{max}(D_p)}{1 + 0.05\exp(6.64D_p)} + OC_{ss}^{min}(D_p) \quad (2)$$

where  $D_p$  is the ambient ( $RH=80\pm 8\%$ ) aerosol aerodynamic diameter in micrometers, and  $OC_{ss}^{max}(D_p)$  and  $OC_{ss}^{min}(D_p)$  are size-dependent maximum and minimum organic carbon fraction of sea spray with values of 0.77 and 0.02, respectively. Implicit in Eq. (2) is a conversion of OM to OC according to the OM/OC ratios (1.4 for WIOC and 1.8 for WSOC) used in Facchini et al. (2008). Size-resolved measurements from Keene et al. (2007) also give similar results for the organic fraction of sea spray, but the reported OC as only water soluble is potentially incompatible with the data from Mace Head.

### 3.1.4 Combination of wind speed, [Chl-*a*], and aerosol size

To create an  $OC_{ss}$  equation as a function of [Chl-*a*],  $U_{10}$ , and sea spray size, we have combined Eqs. (1) and (2) in a way that retains the size dependence of  $OC_{ss}$  from Eq. (2) but scales with [Chl-*a*] and  $U_{10}$  as described in Eq. (1). Specifically, the values from Eq. (2) were scaled with the  $OC_{ss}$  from Eq. (1) after setting to 1 reflecting the highest potential enrichment in the organic fraction (Bigg and Leck, 2008). This allows the size dependence from biologically-active Northern Atlantic (Facchini et al., 2008) region to be globally applicable to areas with vastly different winds and [Chl-*a*]. The



#### 4 Caveats and uncertainty

One of the main caveats in our study arises from the use of observed or estimated WIOC at a few coastal sites as a proxy for global marine primary organic aerosols. To derive chemical composition of the organic fraction of sea spray, we have used values reported by Facchini et al. (2008) which reported a high contribution (up to  $77\pm 5\%$ ) of organic matter in small diameter sea spray particles. Although this large organic contribution was also observed by Keene et al. (2007), such high fractions of organics have not been found in all locations (Modini et al., 2010). Additionally, the WIOC/OC ratio used for the Point Reyes data is also uncertain as not all sites have observed this ratio (Miyazaki et al., 2010). At Mace Head, long term measurements have revealed that this ratio is not consistently observed (Rinaldi et al., 2010). Coastal sites also suffer from the influence of the surf zone and continental aerosols. Even though sea spray aerosol production by surf-zone wave breaking were shown to be 1–2 orders of magnitude higher than that of the open ocean (de Leeuw et al., 2000; Vignati et al., 2001), previous studies have suggested that aerosol chemical composition and flux parameterizations derived from coastal measurements can provide a suitable proxy for open ocean conditions and therefore can be successfully used for global emissions assessments (Clarke, 2006; Rinaldi et al., 2009). Continental sources can also potentially contribute to  $OC_{ss}$  measurements at marine sites (Turekian et al., 2003), though it is expected such sources to be minor in this study due to the very long (thousands of kilometers) upwind fetch of open ocean at both sites. These inconsistencies and uncertainties highlight the difficulty in confidently applying our organic sea spray parameterization (derived using limited spatiotemporal measurements) to the global scale.

Moreover, when we compared our conceptual model to measurement data from Mace Head and Point Reyes, we assumed all measured or estimated WIOC had a primary origin. Such an assumption may lead to additional uncertainty of marine primary organic aerosol emissions as a significant part of the measured aerosols may

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have had a secondary origin. The best known SOA component of marine aerosol derived from ocean-emitted BVOCs is methanesulfonic acid (MSA) from dimethyl sulfide (Saltzman et al., 1983), but other SOA precursor gases such as biogenic isoprene and monoterpenes emitted from phytoplankton have been postulated to affect marine organic aerosol concentration (Meskhidze and Nenes, 2006; Gantt et al., 2009; Luo and Yu, 2010). In addition to BVOCs, SOA can be derived from the chemical transformation of primary components present in the condensed phase. For example, oxidation of primary marine biomass (algal/bacterial unsaturated fatty acid residues) was shown to lead to the formation of WSOC which has typically been considered to have secondary sources (Ceburnis et al., 2008; Claeys et al., 2009). Such uncertainty regarding the origin of marine-source primary and secondary organic aerosols and inadequate understanding of marine organic aerosol formation processes makes it difficult to estimate marine primary organic aerosol emission.

#### 5 Conclusions

A conceptual relationship between wind speed and sea spray organic carbon fraction ( $OC_{ss}$ ) has been developed and used to calculate marine primary organic aerosol emissions in different parts of the global oceans. Our analysis predicts the highest enrichments of marine aerosol with organics during calm winds, when large amounts of organic material accumulate at the sea-surface often forming visible slicks. An increase in wind speed (above  $3\text{--}4\text{ m s}^{-1}$ ) will initiate Langmuir circulations causing a breakup of the slicks a rapid decrease in  $OC_{ss}$ . Wave breaking (caused by wind speeds in excess of  $8\text{ m s}^{-1}$ ) will thoroughly mix the microlayer with the underlying water, effectively reducing organic enrichment at the air-sea interface and thus in sea spray aerosols. Derived relationships between observed  $U_{10}$  and remotely-sensed upwind oceanic concentrations of chlorophyll-*a* ([Chl-*a*]), particulate organic carbon ([POC]), and dissolved organic carbon ([DOC]) were compared to aerosol chemical composition from the Mace Head (Atlantic) and Point Reyes (Pacific) coastal sites. Our results

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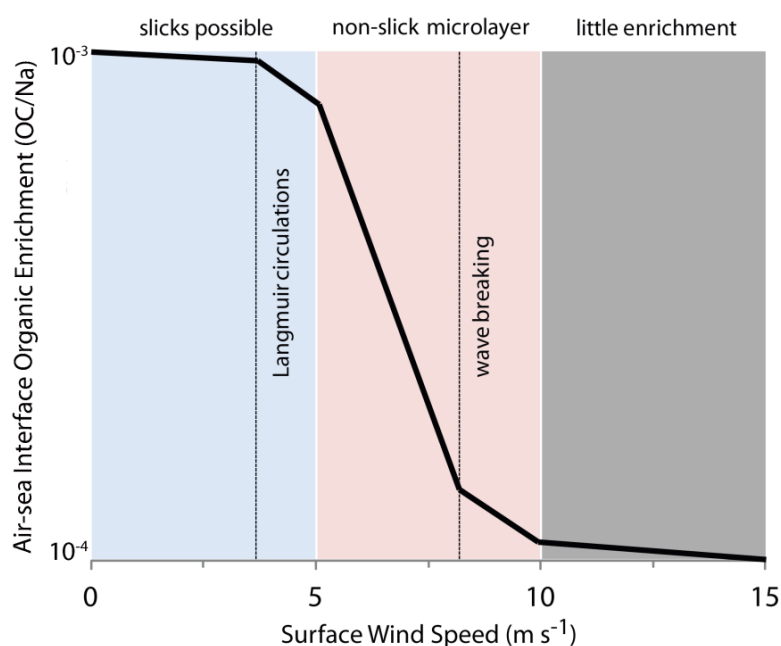
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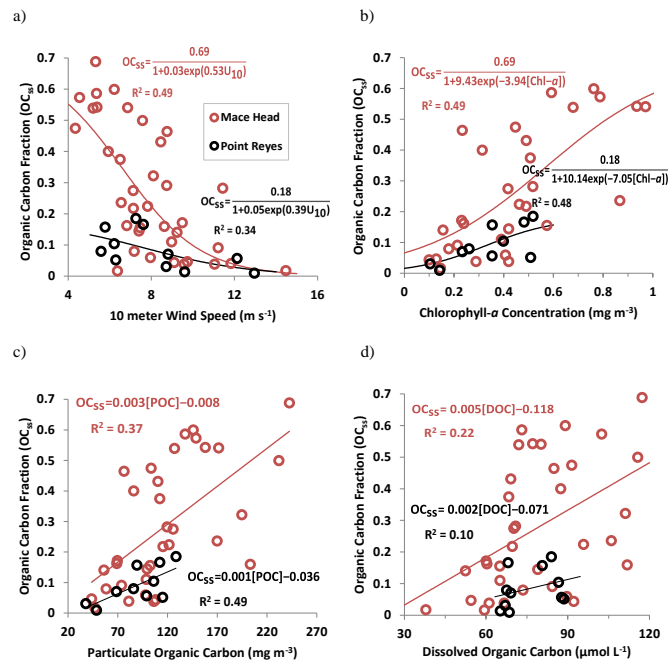
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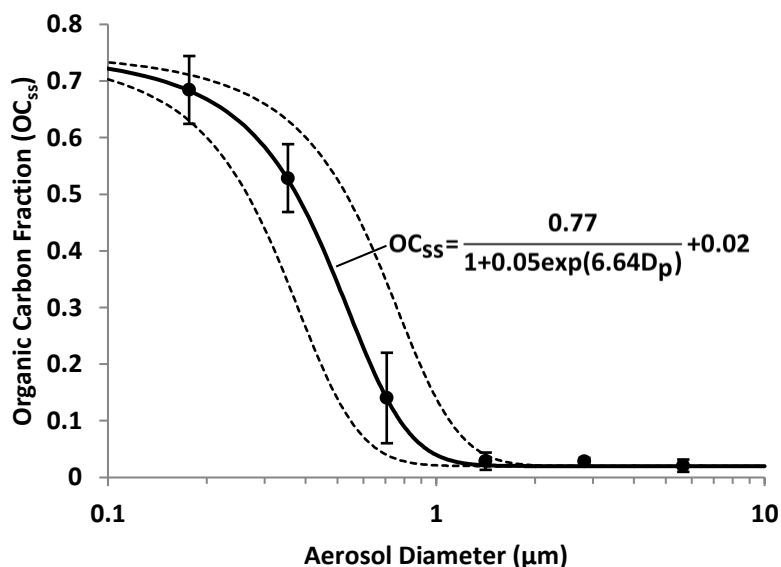
**Fig. 1.** Conceptual relationship between the organic enrichment of the air-sea interface and surface wind speed. Different colors depict potential regimes of the physical and chemical characteristics of the air-sea interface. These values represent global averages and thus should not be used for any given location.

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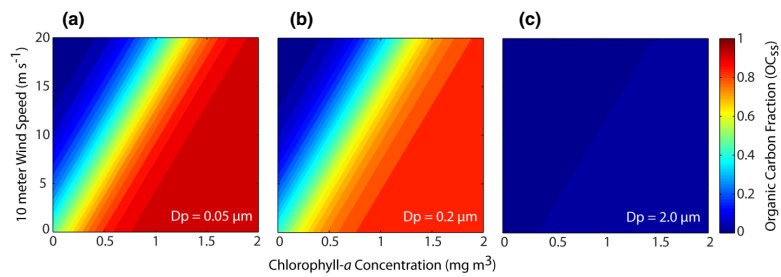
**Fig. 2.** Organic carbon fraction as a function of (a) observed 10 m wind speed ( $U_{10}$ ) and upwind averaged ocean concentrations of 8-day averaged (b) [Chl- $a$ ], (c) [POC], and (d) [DOC] for Mace Head and Point Reyes. In (b), four outlier data points for Mace Head [Chl- $a$ ] > 1.5  $\text{mg m}^{-3}$  have been excluded. The aerosol sizes measured at Mace Head and Point Reyes were  $\text{PM}_{1.5}$  and  $\text{PM}_{2.5}$ , respectively, and the solid lines, together with the regression equations, show relationships for Mace Head (red) and Point Reyes (black).

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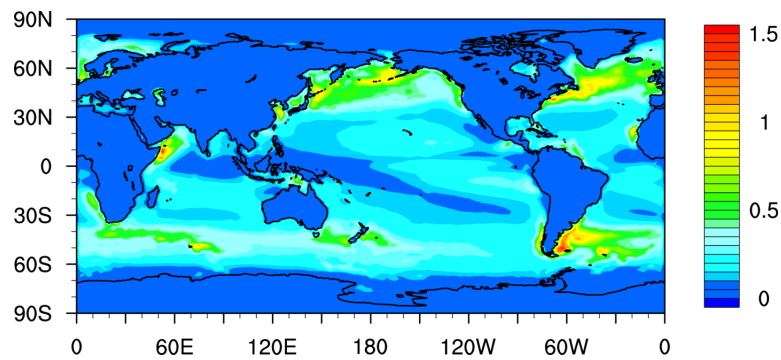
**Fig. 3.** Observed organic enrichment of sea spray (solid circles) as a function of ambient aerosol aerodynamic diameter from Facchini et al. (2008). The solid curve shows a logistic fit to the geometric mean of the diameter range, with the dashed curves corresponding to the logistic fit of the high and low end of the measured aerodynamic size ranges. Vertical bars show one standard deviation from the mean as described in Facchini et al. (2008).

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**Fig. 4.** Contour plots of  $OC_{SS}$  as a function of  $[Chl-a]$  and 10 m wind speed ( $U_{10}$ ) for sea spray aerosols with ambient aerodynamic diameters of (a) 0.05, (b) 0.2, and (c) 2  $\mu m$ .

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**Fig. 5.** Annual average submicron primary marine OC emission rate in units of  $ng C m^{-2} s^{-1}$  using the Mårtensson et al. (2003) sea spray function, monthly average climatological  $[Chl-a]$ , and modeled  $U_{10}$  when global submicron primary marine OC emissions are  $2.5 Tg C yr^{-1}$ .

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