

Reply to Referees comments - Choice of Forecast Scenario Impacts the Carbon Allocation at the Same Global Warming Levels

Lee de Mora et al.

The authors would like to thank the editor, Somnath Baidya Roy, Anonymous Referee #1 and John Dunne for their efforts. Thank you all for taking the time to read the manuscript and share your comments. Your comments have been taken on board and the manuscript is in a much better place now after these revisions.

Both referees highlighted the need for a clearer articulation of the main findings. In order to clarify our findings, we have followed Anonymous Referee #1 suggestion and re-written significant parts of the paper, including the abstract, introduction, results, the discussion, conclusions. We have revised several figures, included a new figure that shows this result explicitly and added a new table of results numerically.

We are still in the process of updating the manuscript, but we have not found anything in the review that we would want to flag as a problem or a showstopper.

Below this introductory section is a reply to each of the comments point by point. Our responses are marked in *blue italics*. For the technical and minor revisions, we will have implemented the changes below, but not all of the original text survived into the revised manuscript.

RC1: 'Comment on egusphere-2022-1483', Anonymous Referee #1,
03 Feb 2023

General Comments:

This article explores the carbon allocation with different choice of scenarios, SSP1-1.9, SSP1-2.6, SSP2-4.5, SSP3-7.0 and SSP5-8.5, at three different global warming levels (2, 3 and 4 degree Celsius). Authors comprehensively include a wide range of ESM outputs and design a quantitative analysis framework to calculate carbon fractions in different reservoirs. The current version of the manuscript matches the scope of ESD and the presentation of methodology is enough.

LdM: Thank you for a clear summary of the work. We're glad that it is within scope for ESD.

However, the main finding from this manuscript is not clear to me. Authors also need to heavily revise their results and discussion sections to provide logical and robust analysis and cross validation and comparison to previous studies.

LdM: We have revised the abstract, introduction, discussions and conclusions sections. Added a new figure to clear up our conclusions and removed the focus on UKESM as a standalone model. We hope that these changes are sufficient to address this comment.

Specific comments:

I have the following major comments:

1. You have some discussions about the implication of your study on the future carbon management and relevant studies in the discussion section, which is good. But the same information in the introduction part is missing. It would be nice to see more introduction about how carbon allocation is important for relevant research. For example, 1) how the calculated parameter can be important to the next stage of model intercomparison, benchmarking and 2) if this parameter can be helpful to indicate the strategy of carbon management for the next stage.

LdM: We have revised the introduction with a wider description of carbon allocation and recent research in this area.

2. Contents in Results and Discussion sections are stacked in a whole block and require more revisions to streamline your manuscript structure. Please summarize 2-3 subtitles and split your context and fill in these sub-sections.

LdM: We have revised both the result and discussion sections and added sub-headings.

3. Line 231: "In summary, fig. 3 shows that a model's sensitivity to CO₂ concentration significantly affects the total carbon allocation between the

atmosphere, ocean and land at global warming levels, but is less impactful on the percentage allocation.....the scenario has a much larger impact on the percentage carbon allocation at a given warming level than the ECS." But as I found in fig. 3, the carbon allocation fraction after normalization (left pane) are quite similar to each other under different scenarios at least for GWLs at 2 and 3 degree Celsius. To the opposite, certain models show very large discrepancy, e.g. EC-Earth3-CC compared to other models. Please explain how you get this conclusion?

LdM: We have added a new figure to the results section to help clarify this conclusion. We have also re-written this section to be more clear.

4. My understanding is that the authors plan to use UKESM as one of the examples to help understand how different processes in ESMs can influence the calculated carbon fraction. But I only find qualitative speculation instead of quantitative analysis. For example, in Line 340, "The UKESM1's higher AF at the year 2100 is likely due to the model limiting carbon uptake more than the other models. This could be Nitrogen limitation in the land surface or could be due to the model's higher ECS and thus warmer temperatures at 2100 than the multi-model mean." I expect to see more analysis, figures or tables to list evidence and prove these statements. Otherwise, there's no need to specifically highlight the result from one model and these conclusions from this manuscript are not robust.

LdM: We have removed the focus on the UKESM model now.

5. In the discussion section, the manuscript lacks enough cross-validation or comparison against other similar published studies. There are published studies discussing carbon storage, residence time and feedbacks in land and ocean components under different future scenarios. Just to name a few here:

Friend, A. D., Lucht, W., Rademacher, T. T., Keribin, R., Betts, R., Cadule, P., et al. (2014). Carbon residence time dominates uncertainty in terrestrial vegetation responses to future climate and atmospheric CO₂. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 111(9), 3280–3285. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1222477110>

Jiang, L., Yan, Y., Hararuk, O., Mickle, N., Xia, J., Shi, Z., et al. (2015). Scale-Dependent Performance of CMIP5 Earth System Models in Simulating Terrestrial Vegetation Carbon. *Journal of Climate*, 28(13), 5217–5232. <https://doi.org/10.1175/JCLI-D-14-00270.1>

Katavouta, A., & Williams, R. G. (2021). Ocean carbon cycle feedback in CMIP6 models: contributions from different basins. *Biogeosciences*, 18(10), 3189–3218. <https://doi.org/10.5194/bg-18-3189-2021>

LdM: Thanks for these references, I particularly liked the Katavouta one, what a great paper! We have added used them to clarify our results and add some cross-sectional validation. We've also added a paragraph comparing our results to Friends 2013 work.

6. Your key findings are not properly highlighted. To improve this draft, authors need to conclude a more solid and informative key finding, for example, "choice of forecast scenario impacts the carbon allocation at the same global warming levels more than model's ECS/TCRE". At the same time, provide more qualitative analysis to prove your key findings.

LdM: We have added a new figure to the manuscript to clarify our conclusions with regards to the carbon allocation.

Technical corrections and minor comments:

Line 25: "and the land surface via primary production". Here "primary production" can be replaced by "terrestrial carbon fixation".

LdM: Done

Line 27: "known as carbon allocation". To avoid confusion with the "carbon allocation" widely used in terrestrial ecosystem modeling, I would suggest clarifying this point here, such as "known as carbon allocation in the Earth Systems (we simply use carbon allocation in the rest of the text)".

LdM: Done

Line 92: "land use emissions" contains how many different components? This LUE calculation may not contain the feedback from the settings of different ensembles.

LdM: Added more details on how LUE was calculated in Liddicot 2021

Line 125: "can gives" shall be "can give"

LdM: Done

Line 131: "Individual component models can be used by" can be clarified as "Same Individual component model can be used by".

LdM: Done

Line 137: Please clarify "All quoted values". What are these values?

LdM: Clarification added to text

Line 148: "In addition, several models may share contributing component models" seems to be a repetition of the content in Line 131. Shall think about how to merge them.

LdM: Fixed this.

Line 165: "These tools include quick ways to standardise, slice, re-grid, and apply statistical operators to datasets." Can you provide a table or figure to summarize and explain the mathematical algorithms of the operators you applied in this paper through using ESMValTool for data pre-processing? I think this is necessary information to understand your methodology.

LdM: We share the ESMValTool recipe and the source code, but the actual method is relatively simple. I've added the sentence to be explicit about our calculation:

In our case, we used the `\textsc{annual_statistics}` preprocessor to calculate the annual mean, the `\textsc{mask_landsea}` preprocessor to mask the land or sea areas, and the `\textsc{area_statistics}` preprocessor to calculate the area weighted global mean.

Line 193: "Figure 2 only shows the multi-model means, not single models." It will be helpful to add the spread of carbon allocation fraction using the results from single models in figure 2.

LdM: The spread of individual models is shown in figure 3.

Line 302: "Therefore, SSP3-7.0 can reaches" shall be "reach".

LdM: fixed

Line 302: "Therefore, SSP3-7.0 can reaches the GWLs earlier than other scenarios at the same CO2 concentration". I'm not quite sure about this conclusion. If we take a look at figure 4, SSP3-7.0 is later than SSP5-8.5 to reach all 3 GWLs.

LdM: I think we may have mis-communicated this result. This entire paragraph has been re-written for clarity.

Line 315: "Higher CO2 is causes" shall be "Higher CO2 causes"

LdM: fixed

Line 323: “the rate at which surface waters and dissolved CO₂ is mixed downward will slow. This reduction in downward mixing reduces the overall absorption rate of CO₂ into the ocean” This statement is confusing. Please rephrase.

LdM: This has been rephrased to:

This is likely because the surface layers of the ocean will be in equilibrium with the atmosphere, while deeper layers are not. However, much of the ocean is forecast to become increasingly stratified in the coming century, which would reduce downwards mixing of CO₂.

Figure 1: It's better to clarify that your prescribed DCO₂ has accounted for the anthropogenic fossil fuel exploitation and the subsequent C emission from application.

LdM: We added this to the figure caption.

Figure 4: “the historical observations from Raupach et al. (2014) & Watson et al. (2020),” It will be better if you can clarify in which year(s) these observations represent.

LdM: The length of the lines represent the time over which the data was collected for these two observational datasets.

There are plenty of other **typos and confusing statements** in this draft and the authors shall be responsible to double check the whole document before resubmission.

LdM: We can only apologise for these unfortunate problems. We have been more cautious with the revised manuscript.

[Reply](#)

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