

1 **Roles of oceanic ventilation and terrestrial outflow in the**  
2 **atmospheric non-methane hydrocarbons over the Chinese**  
3 **marginal seas**

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## 18 **Abstract**

19 Non-methane hydrocarbons (NMHCs) in the marine atmosphere have been  
20 extensively studied due to their important roles in regulating the atmospheric chemistry  
21 and climate. However, very little is known about the distribution and sources of  
22 NMHCs in the lower atmosphere over the marginal seas of China. Herein, we  
23 characterized the atmospheric NMHCs (C2-C5) in both the coastal cities and marginal  
24 seas of China in spring 2021, with a focus on identifying the sources of NMHCs in the  
25 coastal atmosphere. The NMHCs in urban atmospheres, especially for alkanes, were  
26 significantly higher compared to that in the marine atmosphere, suggesting that  
27 terrestrial NMHCs may serve as an important reservoir/source of the marine  
28 atmosphere. A significant correlation was observed between the alkane concentrations  
29 and the distances from sampling sites to the nearest land or retention of air mass over  
30 land, indicating that alkanes in the marine atmosphere are largely influenced by  
31 terrestrial inputs through air-mass transport. For alkenes, a greater impact from oceanic  
32 emissions was determined due to the lower terrestrial concentrations, short atmospheric  
33 lifetime, and substantial sea-to-air fluxes of alkenes compared to alkanes ( $489 \pm 454$  vs  
34  $129 \pm 106$  nmol m<sup>-2</sup> d<sup>-1</sup>). As suggested by the positive matrix factorization, terrestrial  
35 inputs contributed to 89 % of alkanes and 69.6 % of alkenes in Chinese marginal seas,  
36 subsequently contributing to 84 % of the ozone formation potential associated with C2-  
37 C5 NMHCs. These findings underscore the significance of terrestrial outflow in  
38 controlling the distribution and composition of atmospheric NMHCs in the marginal  
39 seas of China.

40 **Keywords:** non-methane hydrocarbons, oceanic ventilation, terrestrial outflow, source  
41 apportionment

## 42 **1 Introduction**

43 Non-methane hydrocarbons (NMHCs), a significant subset of volatile organic  
44 compounds (VOCs), are acknowledged as key precursors to tropospheric ozone  
45 formation (Houweling et al., 1998; Solomon et al., 2005) and organic aerosol generation  
46 (Hallquist et al., 2009; Wu and Xie, 2018), playing a pivotal role in atmospheric  
47 chemistry. The presence and activity of NMHCs in the troposphere have far-reaching  
48 implications, not only influencing the dynamics of ozone and organic aerosol formation  
49 but also significantly impacting air quality. These compounds are intricately linked to  
50 heightened human health risks as well as possessing indirect yet profound effects on  
51 the broader climate system through their interactions with various atmospheric  
52 processes (Yuan et al., 2018).

53 The emission of NMHCs into the atmosphere stems from an array of natural and  
54 anthropogenic processes. Oceanic sources of NMHCs predominantly entail the  
55 biogenic production of phytoplankton and photochemical degradation of dissolved  
56 organic matter (DOM) (Bonsang et al., 1992; Li et al., 2019; Riemer et al., 2000; Sahu  
57 et al., 2010). However, they are minimal when compared to terrestrial inputs. Despite  
58 the uncertainties in the global flux of VOCs, substantial evidence indicates a significant  
59 discrepancy between terrestrial emissions (660-1146 Tg C yr<sup>-1</sup>) (Guenther et al., 1995,  
60 2012; Messina et al., 2016; Sindelarova et al., 2014; Singh and Zimmerman, 1992) and  
61 marine emissions (5-36 Tg C yr<sup>-1</sup>) (Guenther et al., 1995; Singh and Zimmerman, 1992).  
62 A substantial amount of NMHCs originating from terrestrial sources (e.g., vehicular  
63 emissions, biomass combustion, industrial activities, and continental vegetation  
64 emissions) can be transported into the offshore atmosphere via air mass conveyance  
65 (Wang et al., 2005; Kato et al., 2007; Song et al., 2020). Subsequently, these

66 supplementary terrestrial NMHCs will play a pivotal role in shaping the chemical  
67 composition of the offshore atmosphere and influencing local environmental dynamics.  
68 Hence, to further understand the characteristics, variation, and origins of NMHCs in the  
69 offshore atmosphere, it is imperative to scrutinize oceanic emissions and meanwhile, it  
70 is necessary to figure out the effect of terrestrial outflow on nearshore NMHCs.

71 The Yellow Sea and the East China Sea are important parts of Chinese marginal seas,  
72 situated along the eastern coast of China where it is densely populated and has intensive  
73 industries. The rapid pace of Chinese development has seen a notable escalation in  
74 anthropogenic NMHCs emissions over recent decades (He et al., 2019). Presently,  
75 excessive NMHCs emissions and severe ozone pollution have emerged as urgent  
76 environmental challenges in China, particularly in highly urbanized and industrialized  
77 areas along the eastern coast (Liu et al., 2016; Zhang et al., 2018). The seasonal cycle  
78 of the Asian monsoon and diurnal fluctuations of sea-land breezes can facilitate the  
79 transport of terrestrial pollution to the marine atmosphere (Ding et al., 2004; Wang et  
80 al., 2003; Talbot et al., 2003; Russo et al., 2003). Additionally, eutrophication in coastal  
81 regions fosters the proliferation of phytoplankton, potentially augmenting the natural  
82 emissions of NMHCs. Consequently, conducting atmospheric investigations in the  
83 coastal region of eastern China is effective in revealing the potential effects of land-sea  
84 interactions on offshore atmospheric NMHCs.

85 In the spring of 2021, atmospheric samples were systematically collected from both  
86 coastal cities and marginal seas of China, providing representative insights into the  
87 characteristics of NMHCs (C2-C5) and facilitating discussion on the interplay between  
88 ocean emission and terrestrial outflow concerning atmospheric NMHCs. Ultimately,  
89 the contributions of diverse sources to NMHCs were quantified using the positive  
90 matrix factorization (PMF) model, with assistance from indications provided by other

91 typical gases, mainly dimethyl sulfur (DMS), volatile halogenated compounds (VHCs),  
92 and monocyclic aromatics.

## 93 **2 Methods**

### 94 **2.1 Samples collection**

95 The urban samples were collected from eight coastal cities in China from March 27  
96 to April 1, 2021 (Fig. 1). Air samples were collected using fused silica-lined canisters  
97 (2.5 L), which were cleaned three times via a Canister Cleaning System (2101DS,  
98 Nutech) and were pumped into a negative pressure state before sampling. The sampling  
99 sites were selected at the top of high buildings to minimize contamination of particular  
100 point sources. Air samples were collected at 09:00 and 21:00 local time (UTC+8) aimed  
101 to represent the urban atmospheric conditions during the daytime and night, respectively.  
102 Note that night samples in Xiamen and Qinzhou were missing.

103 Oceanic air samples were collected aboard RV “*Dong Fang Hong 3*” during the  
104 voyage in the Yellow Sea and the East China Sea from April 17 to May 2, 2021.  
105 Nineteen oceanic air samples were collected on the top deck facing the wind when the  
106 ship was about to arrive at the station and started to slow down. Seawater samples were  
107 collected via prewashed Niskin bottles (12 L) incorporated into the Conductivity-  
108 Temperature-Depth Sensor Rosette (Seabird 911). Sampling details for urban (Table S4)  
109 and marine samples (Table S5) are shown in supplementary tables.

### 110 **2.2 Analysis of air samples**

111 For the measurement of most types of gases, air samples were processed immediately  
112 after being brought back to the laboratory, using an Atmospheric Pre-concentrator

113 System (8900DS, Nutech) coupled with a GC-MSD system (GC-7890A, MSD-5975,  
114 Agilent). The pretreatments of air samples were as follows. First, the Atmospheric Pre-  
115 concentrator System was baked for 10 min to clean the interior instrument. Then trap 1  
116 was cooled to -170 °C using liquid N<sub>2</sub> and a 300 mL air sample was pumped from the  
117 canister into trap 1 for the initial concentration of the target compounds, while N<sub>2</sub> and  
118 O<sub>2</sub> escaped due to their lower boiling points. After trap 2 was cooled to -50 °C, trap 1  
119 was heated to 30 °C to transfer the target compounds from trap 1 to trap 2. Moisture  
120 and CO<sub>2</sub> were removed in the second concentration. Then, trap 2 was warmed up to  
121 transfer the target compounds into the last trap for cryofocusing (-175 °C). Finally, the  
122 last trap was instantaneously heated to 200 °C via gas bath heating, and the target  
123 compounds were delivered into the GC-MSD system by ultra-pure He.

124 For the parameter settings of GC-MSD, the temperature of the inlet, quadrupole, and  
125 ionization source was 150 °C, 150 °C, and 230 °C, respectively. The inlet was set to  
126 split mode with a ratio of 10:1. The flow rate of carrier gas (He) was set to 1.5 mL min<sup>-1</sup>  
127 in the instant flow mode. Specific columns were selected to separate the NMHCs (Rt-  
128 Alumina BOND/KCl, Restek), monocyclic aromatics (DB-624, Agilent), DMS  
129 (CP7529, Agilent), and VHCs (DB-624, Agilent). Gas standards of NMHCs in N<sub>2</sub>  
130 (Linde Gases, Germany) were diluted to 0.1-1 ppb for identification and calibration.  
131 Details of temperature programming and detector parameters can be seen in Zou et al.  
132 (2021) and Li et al. (2019). The precision and detection limits for the trace gases in the  
133 present study were 1-7 % and 0.03-20.0 ppt, respectively (Table S1). Specifically,  
134 carbon monoxide (CO) was analyzed on-site using a trace gas analyzer (TA3000R,  
135 Ametek) with a lower detection limit of 10 ppb; more details can be found in Xu et al.  
136 (2023). Note that data on DMS, CO and VHCs from marine atmospheric samples were  
137 graciously provided by colleagues in the same laboratory. These data were used only as

138 supporting information in the interpretation of our core dataset in this paper (e.g.,  
139 correlation analysis).

### 140 **2.3 Analysis of seawater samples**

141 C2-C5 NMHCs in seawater were measured immediately on board using a purge and  
142 trap system coupled with the gas chromatography equipped with a flame ionization  
143 detector (GC-FID, 7890B, Agilent). The purge and trap system was improved based on  
144 a previously self-designed device described by Li et al. (2019). Briefly, seawater was  
145 collected using a customized glass sampler (500 mL) and was connected to the inlet of  
146 the system. Then seawater was transformed into the extraction cell under the pressure  
147 of pure N<sub>2</sub> and was purged with pure N<sub>2</sub> bubble flow (250 mL min<sup>-1</sup>). The moisture of  
148 the carrier gas condensed in a thin glass tube that was placed in a cold chamber (4-6 °C)  
149 and the carbon dioxide was absorbed by the glass tube filled with Ascarite II (Merck).  
150 The targets were concentrated in a passivated stainless-steel tube immersed in liquid  
151 nitrogen for 26 mins. Then, the steel tube was heated by boiling water and immediately,  
152 the six-way valve was turned for the inlet situation. The concentrated target compounds  
153 were transferred into the Rt-Alumina BOND/KCl capillary column for separation and  
154 were determined by the FID. The parameters of the inlet, oven, and detector are shown  
155 in Table S2. The gas standard (Linde Gases, Germany) was diluted with ultra-pure N<sub>2</sub>  
156 to 10 ppb for identification and quantification. The instrumental blank was made to  
157 guarantee data reliability. The precision and detection limits were 3-6 % and 0.5-1.0  
158 pmol L<sup>-1</sup> (Table S3).

### 159 **2.4 Calculation of sea-to-air flux**

160 The sea-to-air flux of each NMHCs ( $F$ , nmol m<sup>-2</sup> d<sup>-1</sup>) was calculated using Eq. (1):

$$161 \quad F = k \times (C_w - C_a \times H) \quad (1)$$

162 where  $k$  ( $\text{m s}^{-1}$ ) is the gas transfer velocity described by Eq. (2);  $H$  is Henry's law  
 163 constant;  $C_w$  ( $\text{pmol L}^{-1}$ ) and  $C_a$  (ppb) are concentrations of each NMHCs in the  
 164 surface seawater (5 m depth) and atmosphere, respectively.

$$165 \quad k = 0.31 \times u^2 \times \left(\frac{Sc}{660}\right)^{-0.5} \quad (2)$$

166 where  $u$  ( $\text{m s}^{-1}$ ) is the wind velocity at 10 m.  $Sc$  is the Schmidt number and is defined  
 167 as  $Sc = \nu/D$ .  $\nu$  was the kinematic viscosity of seawater calculated by Eq. (3)  
 168 (Wanninkhof, 1992).  $D$  is the gas diffusion coefficient related to temperature described  
 169 by Eq. (4) (Wilke and Chang, 1955).

$$170 \quad \nu = 1.052 + 1.300 \times 10^{-3} \times t + 5.000 \times 10^{-6} \times t^2 + 5.000 \times 10^{-7} \times t^3 \quad (3)$$

$$171 \quad D = \frac{7.4 \times 10^{-8} (q \times M_b)^{0.5} \times T}{n_b \times V_a^{0.6}} \quad (4)$$

172 where  $t$  ( $^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) is the degree Celsius of seawater,  $q$  is the association factor of water,  
 173  $M_b$  ( $\text{g mol}^{-1}$ ) is the molar weight of water,  $T$  (K) is the degree Kelvin of seawater,  $n_b$   
 174 is the dynamic viscosity of seawater and  $V_a$  is the molar volume at the boiling point.

## 175 **2.5 Calculation of OFP and P<sub>SOAP</sub> of NMHCs**

176 To assess the environmental implications of NMHCs, the ozone formation potential  
 177 ( $OFP$ ,  $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ ) and secondary organic aerosol (SOA) formation potential ( $P_{SOAP}$ ,  $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ )  
 178 are calculated using Eq. (5) and Eq. (6), respectively (Carter, 1994).

$$179 \quad OFP_i = MIR_i \times C_i \quad (5)$$

$$180 \quad P_{SOAP_i} = \sum C_i \times SOAP_i \times FAC_{toluene}/100 \quad (6)$$

181 Where  $C_i$  represents the concentration of NMHCs;  $MIR_i$  ( $\text{g O}_3/\text{g VOCs}$ ) and  $SOAP_i$   
 182 (relative to toluene = 100) are constants that represent the maximum incremental  
 183 reactivity and SOA potential of  $i$ , respectively (Carter, 2010);  $FAC_{toluene}$  is the  
 184 fractional aerosol coefficient of toluene, which has a value of 5.4% (Grosjean and



185 Seinfeld, 1989). Specific data was listed in supplementary Table S11.

## 186 **2.6 Normalized concentrations and lifetime-weighted concentrations of NMHCs.**

187 To effectively compare the NMHCs variation with respect to the distance from the  
188 sampling sites to the land (like Fig. 2d, f), we calculated the normalized concentration  
189 for each NMHCs ( $C_{Nor-i}$ ) using Eq. (7).

$$190 \quad C_{Nor-i} = \frac{C_i}{C_{max-i}} \quad (7)$$

191 where  $C_i$  is the concentration of gas  $i$  and  $C_{max-i}$  is the maximum of gas  $i$ .

192 A novel approach was employed to analyze the correlation between the  
193 concentrations of various NMHCs and their sea-to-air fluxes. Concentrations were  
194 weighted according to the respective atmospheric  $\bullet$ OH lifetime of each NMHCs. This  
195 was achieved by dividing the concentration of each NMHCs by its corresponding  
196 atmospheric  $\bullet$ OH lifetime, yielding a “lifetime-weighted concentration” for each  
197 NMHCs ( $C_{life-i}$ ) (Eq. 8). This method provides a more nuanced understanding of the  
198 impact of oceanic emission on NMHCs, taking into account not only their abundance  
199 but also their residence in the atmosphere.

$$200 \quad C_{life-i} = \frac{C_i}{\tau_i} \quad (8)$$

201 where  $C_i$  is the atmospheric concentration of gas  $i$ ,  $\tau_i$  is the  $\bullet$ OH lifetime of gas  $i$ .

202 The approximate atmospheric lifetime of each NMHCs was calculated assuming an  
203 average  $[\bullet\text{OH}]$  of  $6 \times 10^5$  molecules  $\text{cm}^{-3}$  within 24 h at 288 K (Jobson et al., 1999), with  
204 specific data listed in Table 1.

## 205 **2.7 Calculation of the shortest distance from the sampling station to the land**

206 Coastline latitude and longitude data near the study area (20-45°N, 110-130°E) were  
207 extracted from the World Vector Shorelines (downloaded from

208 <https://www.ngdc.noaa.gov/mgg/shorelines/data/gshhg/latest/>). Subsequently,  
209 distances from the maritime sampling stations to all coastal locations were computed.  
210 The minimum value among these distances was selected as the shortest distance to the  
211 land (listed in Table S9).

## 212 **2.8 Calculation of retention of air mass over land**

213 To identify whether an air mass was mainly from terrestrial or oceanic regions, the  
214 retention ratio of the air mass over land ( $R_L$ ) was calculated by Eq. (9).

$$215 \quad R_L = \frac{\sum_{n=1}^{N_{land}} e^{-\frac{t_n}{48}}}{\sum_{n=1}^{N_{total}} e^{-\frac{t_n}{48}}} \quad (9)$$

216 Where  $N_{total}$  is the total number of trajectory endpoints (downloaded from NOAA  
217 Air Resources Laboratory HYSPLIT trajectory model <https://www.arl.noaa.gov/>).  
218  $N_{land}$  is the total number of trajectory endpoints located over land, while  $t_n$  is the  
219 backward tracking time with the unit of hour and  $e^{-\frac{t_n}{48}}$  is the weighting factor related  
220 to tracking time as the diffusion of air mass takes place along the transport path than in  
221 the nearby regions. As a result, the larger  $R_L$  value indicates that the air mass is more  
222 influenced by terrestrial transport and its source is more likely to be on land. Similar  
223 methods have been used to calculate the average residence time of sampled air masses  
224 in the Arctic (Willis et al., 2017) and identify the percentage of time spent by trajectories  
225 over different surface types in the Antarctic (Decesari et al., 2020).  $R_L$  values were  
226 calculated by three different time-scale trajectories (48h, 72h, and 96h) (listed in Table  
227 S9). The mean  $R_L$  ( $n = 3$ ) was finally applied to analyze the terrestrial influence on  
228 oceanic NMHCs, mitigating the uncertainty caused by the trajectory with different  
229 time-scales.

## 230 2.9 Application of the PMF model

231 PMF model introduced in detail in the study of Paatero and Trapper (1994) was  
232 applied to analyze the data of atmospheric NMHCs in the Yellow Sea and the East  
233 China Sea. Based on a matrix consisting of the concentrations of diverse chemical  
234 species, the objective of PMF is to determine the number of NMHCs source factors, the  
235 chemical composition profile of each factor, and the contribution of each factor to  
236 species. The matrix representation of this model is as Eq. (10).

$$237 \quad x_{ij} = \sum_{k=1}^p g_{ik} f_{kj} + e_{ij} \quad (10)$$

238 Where  $x_{ij}$  represents the concentration of species  $j$  measured on sample  $i$ ,  $p$  denotes  
239 the number of factors facilitating the samples.  $f_{kj}$  represents the concentration of  
240 species  $j$  in factor profile  $k$ ,  $g_{ik}$  denotes the relative contribution of factor  $k$  to sample  
241  $i$ , and  $e_{ij}$  represents the PMF model error of species  $j$  measured on sample  $i$ . The  
242 factors resolved by PMF are typically interpreted as sources. The objective of this  
243 algorithm is to find the values of  $f_{kj}$ ,  $g_{ik}$ , and  $p$  that best reproduce  $x_{ij}$ , continuously  
244 adjusting  $f_{kj}$  and  $g_{ik}$  until the minimum  $Q$  value for a given  $p$  is attained.  $Q$  is  
245 defined as Eq. (11).

$$246 \quad Q = \sum_{i=1}^n \sum_{j=1}^m \left( \frac{e_{ij}}{\sigma_{ij}} \right)^2 \quad (11)$$

247 Where  $\sigma_{ij}$  represents the uncertainty of the concentration of the species  $j$  in sample  $i$ ,  
248  $n$  is the number of samples, and  $m$  is the number of species. In applying the PMF  
249 model, the significance of missing data in the matrix was decreased by using the species  
250 median. The uncertainty for normal data was estimated as 20 % of the NMHCs  
251 concentrations because the analytical uncertainty was not available (Buzcu and Fraser,  
252 2006). The model ran 20 times and we selected the result with the minimum  $Q$  value.  
253 Additionally, scaled residuals are instrumental in assessing the fit of the PMF model to

254 the observed data. They represent the difference between the observed and modeled  
255 data, scaled by the uncertainty in the observed data. In this PMF analysis, approximately  
256 94 % of the scaled residuals ranged from -3 to 3 (Fig. S1), suggesting a reasonable fit  
257 of the model result.

## 258 **3 Results and discussion**

### 259 **3.1 Atmospheric concentrations of NMHCs in coastal cities and** 260 **marginal seas of China**

261 To clarify, NMHCs determined in this study were separated into two groups for  
262 further discussion based on their distinctly different atmospheric reactivity and lifetimes:  
263 alkanes (long lifetime, 8.2-78 d) and alkenes (short lifetime, 0.19-2.3 d). In the urban  
264 atmosphere (n = 14), the mean (range) concentration of ethane, propane, i-butane, and  
265 n-butane was  $2.26 \pm 1.66$  (0.277-5.72),  $2.95 \pm 5.12$  (0.149-20.1),  $2.57 \pm 6.99$  (BD-27.6),  
266 and  $3.29 \pm 7.68$  (0.018-30.2) ppb, respectively (Table 1). Alkanes combined accounted  
267 for ~76 %-99 % of total NMHCs measured in this study, which agrees with previous  
268 studies reporting alkanes as the dominant NMHCs in the urban atmosphere of China  
269 e.g., 43.7 % (Song et al., 2007), and > 50 % (Li et al., 2015). For alkene species in the  
270 urban atmosphere (n = 14), the mean (range) of ethylene, propylene, and isoprene was  
271  $0.180 \pm 0.126$  (0.035-0.390),  $0.036 \pm 0.040$  (BD-0.129), and  $0.046 \pm 0.072$  (0.006-  
272 0.250) ppb, respectively.

273 Similarly, alkanes were also dominant components in the marine atmosphere,  
274 accounting for ~86 %-95 % of NMHCs. In the marine atmosphere (n = 19), the mean  
275 (range) concentration of ethane, propane, i-butane, n-butane, ethylene, propylene, and  
276 isoprene was  $1.24 \pm 0.298$  (0.686-1.72),  $0.822 \pm 0.518$  (0.226-1.79),  $0.283 \pm 0.302$  (BD-

277 1.17),  $0.256 \pm 0.214$  (0.025-0.694),  $0.151 \pm 0.077$  (0.028-0.295),  $0.033 \pm 0.009$  (0.022-  
278 0.060), and  $0.008 \pm 0.010$  (BD-0.043) ppb, respectively. These values were comparable  
279 to those reported in the Bengal Bay (Sahu et al., 2011) and the Northwest Pacific Ocean  
280 (Li et al., 2019) (Table S6). Alkanes in the urban atmosphere were on average more  
281 than four times higher than those in the marine atmosphere, while no significant  
282 difference was observed for concentrations of alkenes between urban and marine air ( $t$   
283 = 2.224,  $p = 0.156$ ) (Fig. 2a, b). In spatial terms, multiple NMHCs (e.g. ethane, propane,  
284 i-butane, n-butane, and ethylene) showed higher atmospheric concentrations in regions  
285 closer to the land. The elevated concentrations were primarily concentrated along the  
286 coastal regions of the East China Sea and the north Yellow Sea (Figure S3). The  
287 disparity in NMHCs concentrations between land and ocean, as well as the distribution  
288 pattern of NMHCs in the marine atmosphere, suggested the potential influence of  
289 terrestrial sources on the oceanic NMHCs.

### 290 **3.2 Atmospheric NMHCs variability vs. estimated lifetime**

291 The standard deviation of the natural logarithm of the NMHCs mixing ratios ( $S_{\ln x}$ )  
292 was established to correlate to their  $\bullet\text{OH}$  lifetime ( $\tau$ ) in the atmosphere following an  
293 exponential function of  $S_{\ln x} = A\tau^{-b}$  (Jobson et al., 1998), where  $A$  and  $b$  are fitting  
294 parameters. A  $b$  value approaching zero suggests that the NMHCs variability is  
295 primarily controlled by local emission fluctuations while a  $b$  value of 1 indicates the  
296 minimal impact of local emissions, with the variability predominantly controlled by the  
297 extent of photochemical reactions.

298 Employing the analytical framework in Jobson et al. (1998), we analyzed our  
299 atmospheric NMHCs data from urban areas and the Chinese marginal seas. The derived  
300  $b$  value for urban areas was 0.05 (Fig. 3a), suggesting that atmospheric NMHCs in

301 coastal cities were mainly controlled by local emissions. In the marine atmosphere, the  
302 *b* value was 0.26 (Fig. 3b) which was comparable to values reported for Gosan (0.30)  
303 (Wong et al., 2007) and continental outflow from southern China (0.31) (Wang et al.,  
304 2005), but it was significantly lower than the values for Ogasawara (0.43) (Kato et al.,  
305 2004), the Northwest Indian Ocean (0.40) (Warneke and De Gouw, 2001), and the South  
306 China Sea (0.42) (Wang et al., 2005). The *b* value of 0.26 in the atmosphere over the  
307 Chinese marginal suggests that the NMHCs composition in the nearshore atmosphere  
308 is influenced both by local oceanic emissions and the remote sources from the continent.  
309 As sites closer to the source position tend to have lower *b* values, the Yellow Sea and  
310 the East China Sea experience a more pronounced influence from terrestrial pollution  
311 sources compared to Ogasawara, the South China Sea, and the Northwest Indian Ocean.

### 312 **3.3 Terrestrial influence on marine atmospheric NMHCs variation**

313 Given the discernible impact of terrestrial input on the spatial distributions and  
314 variabilities of marine atmospheric NMHCs, we further elucidated the role of terrestrial  
315 outflow in shaping marine atmospheric NMHCs levels. This examination focused on  
316 three key factors: distance from the sampling site to the land, retention of air mass over  
317 land, and transport time of air mass.

#### 318 **Distance from the sampling site to the land**

319 The distances from the oceanic sampling sites to the nearest land spanned from 13.9  
320 to 331 km, with an average of 123 km (Table S9). Significant correlations were  
321 observed between the distances and concentrations of ethane ( $r = -0.553$ ,  $n = 19$ ,  $p =$   
322  $0.014$ ), propane ( $r = -0.605$ ,  $n = 19$ ,  $p = 0.006$ ), i-butane ( $r = -0.513$ ,  $n = 19$ ,  $p = 0.025$ ),  
323 and n-butane ( $r = -0.573$ ,  $n = 19$ ,  $p = 0.010$ ). When plotted against the distances, the

324 concentrations of alkanes combined decreased with the increasing distance (Fig. 2c),  
325 and different species exhibited distinctly specific decreasing rates (Fig. 2d). Since the  
326 concentrations between different NMHCs species varied considerably, the normalized  
327 concentrations were employed to fit an attenuation equation ( $y = Ae^{-\alpha x} + y_0$ ) for each  
328 species. As evident in Fig. 2d, the attenuation coefficients for ethane, propane, i-butane,  
329 and n-butane were 0.003, 0.030, 0.031, and 0.022, respectively. These coefficients were  
330 correlated with their atmospheric reactivities. Species with lower reactivity and longer  
331 lifetimes, such as ethane (with a lifetime of 78 d), have the lowest attenuation  
332 coefficient. This implies that long-lifetime species could be affected by the terrestrial  
333 input even at a more remote marine site. Terrestrial influences on propane, i-butane,  
334 and n-butane were discernible only in areas much closer to land, as their concentrations  
335 stabilized at low values beyond a distance of around 100 km (Fig. 2d).

### 336 **Retention of air mass over land**

337 A larger retention of air mass over land ( $R_L$ ) has previously been suggested to serve  
338 as an indicator of a greater terrestrial influence (Zhou et al., 2021). To mitigate the  
339 uncertainty derived from varying time-scale trajectories, we calculated the  $R_{L-mean}$   
340 based on 48, 72, and 96-hour backward trajectories.  $R_{L-mean}$  ranged from 0.10 to 0.96  
341 (Table S9). When plotted against  $R_{L-mean}$ , a linear relationship was observed between  
342 the concentrations of NMHCs combined and  $R_{L-mean}$ , with a slope of 2.51 (Fig. 4a).  
343 A statistically significant correlation ( $r = 0.599$ ,  $n = 19$ ,  $p = 0.007$ ) was observed when  
344 only plotting alkanes with  $R_{L-mean}$ . However, the correlation between alkenes and  
345  $R_{L-mean}$  was statistically insignificant ( $r = 0.248$ ,  $n = 19$ ,  $p = 0.306$ ).

## 346 **Transport time of air mass**

347 The transport time of air mass was estimated as the interval from the last point of the  
348 trajectory contacting the continent to the moment when the air mass reached the  
349 sampling location, as detailed by Kato et al. (2001). These times ranged from 4 to 81 h,  
350 with an average of 30 h (Table S9). A shorter air mass transport time signifies a stronger  
351 terrestrial influence, as NMHCs within the air mass undergo further oxidation and  
352 dispersion over time. Total NMHCs concentrations exhibited a significant decrease  
353 with the increase of air mass transport time, characterized by a slope of -0.04 (Fig. 4d).  
354 Alkanes displayed a steeper decline, indicated by a slope of -0.0079 (Fig. 4e) compared  
355 to alkenes (-0.0038, Fig. 4f). Notably, elevated alkane concentrations were affected by  
356 those air masses with larger  $R_{L-mean}$  ( $>0.8$ ) and shorter transport time ( $<20$  h) (Figure  
357 S4). This emphasized the terrestrial influence on alkanes in the marine atmosphere since  
358 both  $R_L$  and transport time serve as indicators of air mass terrestrial characteristics.  
359 However, similar to the analysis of  $R_L$ , the correlation between the air mass transport  
360 time and alkenes was statistically insignificant ( $r = 0.248$ ,  $n = 19$ ,  $p = 0.306$ ).

361 Overall, the analysis above suggests that the terrestrial input plays an important role  
362 in driving the variability observed for the atmospheric NMHCs over the marginal seas  
363 of China. In particular, a stronger terrestrial impact was determined for the alkanes  
364 based on the larger slopes from linear regression analysis and the significant  
365 correlations with terrestrial indicators. In contrast, no discernible trend was found for  
366 alkenes when plotting their concentrations against the distance from sampling sites to  
367 the coastline (Fig. 2e, f). There was no significant correlation between alkenes and  $R_L$   
368 or air mass transport time. Therefore, the variability of alkenes in the coastal  
369 atmosphere seems to be weakly impacted by the terrestrial sources when compared to  
370 alkanes. We attribute this to two main factors. First, the mean concentration of alkenes



371 in the urban air was only 1.4 times of that in marine air, whereas it was 5.4 times for  
372 alkanes. Alkenes undergo more rapid oxidation due to their higher reactivities compared  
373 to alkanes during air mass transport. Secondly, oceanic ventilation may play a more  
374 substantial role in affecting marine alkenes (discussed in section 3.4).

### 375 **3.4 Oceanic impact on marine atmospheric NMHCs composition**

#### 376 **Sea-to-air fluxes of NMHCs**

377 The mean (range) of sea-to-air fluxes of ethane, propane, i-butane, n-butane, ethylene,  
378 propylene, and isoprene was  $44.6 \pm 35.0$  (0.2-118),  $41.5 \pm 39.9$  (0.2-157),  $31.7 \pm 38.2$   
379 (0.1-146),  $10.9 \pm 25.4$  (-0.8-96.1),  $321 \pm 294$  (1.7-775),  $56.1 \pm 55.2$  (0.2-212), and  $112$   
380  $\pm 134$  (0.5-468)  $\text{nmol m}^{-2} \text{d}^{-1}$ , respectively, in the Yellow Sea and the East China Sea  
381 (Table 1). These values were comparable to those reported in Chinese marginal seas  
382 (Wu et al., 2021; Li et al., 2021) and 23-38°N Atlantic Ocean (Tran et al., 2013), but  
383 were larger than those reported values in the North Sea (Broadgate et al., 1997) and the  
384 Northwest Pacific Ocean (Li et al., 2019; Wu et al., 2023) (Table S10).

385 The averaged sea-to-air fluxes of alkanes and alkenes within 100 km from the  
386 coastline were  $147 \pm 116$  and  $551 \pm 497$   $\text{nmol m}^{-2} \text{d}^{-1}$ , respectively, which were  
387 relatively higher than those beyond 100 km (Fig. 5a, b). Since there were no significant  
388 differences in surface seawater temperature and 10 m wind speed between regions  
389 within and beyond 100 km from the coastline (Fig. S5), the discrepancy in fluxes might  
390 not be driven by physical processes. These elevated fluxes in the sea areas closer to land  
391 could be attributed to the influence of phytoplankton biomass and chromophoric  
392 dissolved organic matter (CDOM). Seawater NMHCs are not only directly synthesized  
393 by phytoplankton (Ratte et al., 1995), but they can also be emitted through the  
394 photochemical degradation of CDOM (Ratte et al., 1993; Lee and Baker, 1992). To

395 substantiate our findings, we analyzed the monthly Chl-*a* concentration and the  
396 absorption coefficient at 443 nm of seawater in April 2021 from the remote sensing  
397 dataset from the NASA Ocean Color data service (<https://oceancolor.gsfc.nasa.gov/>)  
398 (Fig. S2). The mean ( $\pm$ SD) of Chl-*a* concentrations was  $2.83\pm 1.17$  and  $1.68\pm 1.44$   $\mu\text{g}$   
399  $\text{L}^{-1}$  in the areas within and beyond 100 km from the coastline, respectively.  
400 Correspondingly, the mean ( $\pm$ SD) of seawater absorption coefficients at 443 nm was at  
401  $0.124\pm 0.060$  and  $0.069\pm 0.040$   $\text{m}^{-1}$ , respectively. Hence, the heightened phytoplankton  
402 biomass and enriched photoreaction substrate collectively enhanced both the biological  
403 production and abiotic formation of NMHCs, consequently resulting in a pronounced  
404 NMHCs emission in nearshore regions.

#### 405 **Assessing the effect of oceanic emission on NMHCs**

406 Prior to delving into the correlation between oceanic emissions and NMHCs  
407 concentrations, it is imperative to acknowledge the influence of different gases'  
408 reactivity on this relationship. For instance, ethane possesses an atmospheric lifetime  
409 of approximately 78 d at 24 h  $[\bullet\text{OH}]$  concentration of  $6\times 10^5$  molecules  $\text{cm}^{-3}$  (Jobson et  
410 al., 1999), using the rate constant with  $\bullet\text{OH}$  at 288 K taken from Atkinson et al. (1997).  
411 The relatively long atmospheric residence time of ethane facilitates its accumulation in  
412 the atmosphere. Conversely, isoprene, with a much shorter lifetime of only 0.2 d,  
413 emitted within a very brief window can impact its atmospheric level. Thus, to mitigate  
414 the impact of varying reactivity among the different gas species, we calculated the  
415 lifetime-weighted concentrations of each NMHCs according to their atmospheric  
416 lifetime (introduced in section 2.5). This novel method is more nuanced to assess the  
417 impact of oceanic emission on atmospheric NMHCs, as it acknowledges not only their  
418 abundance but also their residence in the atmosphere.

419 Despite the elevated oceanic emission of NMHCs within the 100 km from land, its  
420 impact on atmospheric NMHCs composition was comparatively weak displaying a  
421 slope of 0.0187 (Fig. 5c), which was lower than the fitted result of the dataset in areas  
422 beyond 100 km from land with a slope of 0.0415 (Fig. 5d). This could be attributed to  
423 the disturbance of terrestrial outflow in nearshore areas, mitigating the direct impact of  
424 oceanic emission on NMHCs. As it extended further from the land, the terrestrial  
425 influence diminished. This, in turn, strengthens the regulatory impact of oceanic  
426 emission on atmospheric NMHCs levels.

427 In addition, the average flux of total alkenes across the entire region was  $163 \pm 221$   
428  $\text{nmol m}^{-2} \text{d}^{-1}$ , which was approximately 5 times higher than that of alkanes ( $32.2 \pm 37.5$   
429  $\text{nmol m}^{-2} \text{d}^{-1}$ ). This substantial discrepancy indicates that alkanes and alkenes are  
430 certainly influenced differently by oceanic emissions. The correlation between the  
431 lifetime-weighted concentrations of alkenes and their fluxes was statistically significant  
432 ( $r = 0.548$ ,  $n = 57$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), while it was insignificant for alkanes ( $r = 0.113$ ,  $n = 76$ ,  
433  $p = 0.329$ ). When specific species of alkanes (Fig. 5e) and alkenes (Fig. 5f) were  
434 separately plotted against their sea-to-air fluxes, alkenes exhibited a steeper slope of  
435 0.0072 compared to the slope of 0.0044 for alkanes. This signifies that oceanic emission  
436 has a more significant impact on atmospheric alkenes compared to alkanes, which  
437 verifies our hypothesis as stated at the end of section 3.3.

### 438 **3.5 Identification and apportionment of the sources of marine** 439 **atmospheric NMHCs**

#### 440 **Source identification**

441 Since the chemical compositions are largely controlled by the sources of emissions,  
442 specific ratios of hydrocarbons have been widely employed to identify the sources of

443 NMHCs (Gilman et al., 2013; Rossabi and Helmig, 2018). For instance, elevated iso-  
444 pentane/n-pentane ratios are indicative of the heavy influence of vehicular emissions  
445 (2.2-3.8) and gasoline fuel evaporation (1.8-4.6) (Gentner et al., 2009; Jobson et al.,  
446 2004; Liu et al., 2008; Russo et al., 2010). Conversely, the lower ratios indicate the  
447 importance of tropical forest fires (0.43-0.57) (Andreae and Merlet, 2001; Rossabi and  
448 Helmig, 2018), natural and oil gas operations (0.81-1.1) (Gilman et al., 2013; Swarthout  
449 et al., 2013), and marine vessel exhaust (1.59-1.71) (Bourtsoukidis et al., 2019) in  
450 controlling the chemical composition of NMHCs. In this study, a significant correlation  
451 was observed between i-pentane and n-pentane ( $r = 0.67$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) (Fig. 6), and the i-  
452 pentane/n-pentane ratio spans a wider range from 0.89 to 2.46, suggesting that the  
453 composition of NMHCs in the marginal seas of China is controlled by multiple sources  
454 e.g., natural and oil gas operations, marine vessel exhaust, vehicular emissions, and  
455 gasoline evaporation.

456 Furthermore, propane, i-butane, and n-butane exhibited strong intercorrelations ( $r =$   
457  $0.52-0.95$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). They also displayed strong correlations with ethane, i-pentane,  
458 and n-pentane ( $r = 0.55-0.98$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). These alkanes were recognized as the primary  
459 components of liquid petroleum gases (Blake and Rowland, 1995), extensively utilized  
460 as fuel in taxis, private cars, and public buses in China (Guo et al., 2017; Zhang et al.,  
461 2015). Notably, C3-C5 alkanes also exhibited significant correlations with ethane ( $r =$   
462  $0.55-0.72$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and carbon monoxide ( $r = 0.59-0.81$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), while ethane and  
463 carbon monoxide are acknowledged tracers for fossil fuel or biomass/biofuel  
464 combustion and incomplete combustion, respectively (Lai et al., 2010; Tang et al., 2009;  
465 Parrish et al., 2009). This indicated the contribution of vehicular emissions of liquid  
466 petroleum gases and combustion of fossil fuel or biomass to light alkanes. Additionally,  
467 strong correlations were observed among monocyclic aromatics (benzene, toluene,

468 ethylbenzene) ( $r = 0.67-0.83$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). This finding was consistent with recent  
469 emission inventory research identifying monocyclic aromatics as significant  
470 constituents of ship exhaust (Xiao et al., 2018b; Wu et al., 2019). As for oceanic  
471 emissions, we have presented the sea-to-air fluxes of NMHCs and discussed the  
472 significant effect of oceanic emissions on NMHCs in Section 3.4. Multiple studies  
473 highlighted that the ocean is one of the important sources of these gases (Kato et al.,  
474 2007; Li et al., 2019; Mallik et al., 2013; Sahu et al., 2010; Rudolph and Johnen, 1990).

### 475 **Source apportionment**

476 The potential sources of the atmospheric NMHCs and their respective contributions  
477 to each category were determined using the PMF model. Four isolate factors were  
478 extracted according to their composition profiles depicted in Fig. 7a. These factors,  
479 including industrial production, exhaust emission, terrestrial vegetation, and oceanic  
480 ventilation, were identified based on chemical profiles in the literature.

481 Propane, i-butane, n-butane, i-pentane, n-pentane, and CFC-11 showed strong  
482 loadings ( $> 70\%$ ) on factor 1. The presence of propane, butanes, and pentanes suggests  
483 the influence of the refinery activities (Buzcu and Fraser, 2006). Additionally, propane  
484 has been recognized as a characteristic NMHCs derived from natural gas emissions and  
485 butane is indicative of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) (Guo et al., 2011; Tsai et al., 2006;  
486 Hui et al., 2018; Ho et al., 2009). Moreover, CFC-11 is a typical artificial industrial  
487 product. Subsequently, factor 1 was identified as a factor relating to industrial activities.

488 The profile of factor 2 showed strong loadings of benzene (72 %), toluene (57 %),  
489 and ethylbenzene (64 %), along with moderate impacts of ethylene (34 %) and  
490 propylene (32 %). Benzene emissions are notably associated with vehicle exhaust  
491 (Zhang et al., 2013; Zhang et al., 2016) and considerable fractions of aromatics can be

492 emitted from ship exhaust during both berthing and cruising (Cooper, 2005; Xiao et al.,  
493 2018a). C2-C4 alkenes could stem from ship emissions in the open ocean (Eyring et al.,  
494 2005). Therefore, factor 2 can be potentially assigned as a source of the exhaust  
495 emissions of vehicles and ships.

496 Factor 3 was assigned as oceanic ventilation due to elevated percentages of DMS  
497 (74 %) and  $\text{CHBr}_3$  (53 %), considering the dominant contributions of ocean emission  
498 to DMS (Lana et al., 2011; Lee and Brimblecombe, 2016) and  $\text{CHBr}_3$  (Quack and  
499 Wallace, 2003; Ashfold et al., 2014). Factor 4 was mainly characterized by a high  
500 percentage of isoprene (68 %), an indicator of biogenic emission from terrestrial  
501 vegetation (Guenther et al., 2006; Wu et al., 2016). However, given isoprene's high  
502 reactivity, this factor should be treated cautiously and regarded as a lower limit (Fujita,  
503 2001). Although its short atmospheric lifetime hinders long-range transport, the  
504 minimum air mass transport time from land to the oceanic station was four hours in this  
505 study, implying the potential for terrestrial isoprene to reach the nearshore atmosphere.

506 According to the results of the PMF model analysis, the dominant source of  
507 atmospheric alkanes in the Chinese marginal seas was industrial activities (0.253 ppb,  
508 60.8 %), followed by exhaust emissions (0.095 ppb, 23 %). Contributions from  
509 terrestrial vegetation emission (0.049 ppb, 11 %) and oceanic ventilation (0.021 ppb,  
510 5.2 %) were relatively smaller. Furthermore, exhaust emissions (0.017 ppb, 32.5 %),  
511 industrial activities (0.017 ppb, 31 %), and ocean ventilation (0.016 ppb, 30.4 %)  
512 contribute almost equally to atmospheric alkenes. Collectively, these three factors  
513 constitute the main sources of alkenes (93.8 %), whereas the contribution from  
514 terrestrial vegetation is minimal, at merely 6.2 %. Particularly, the contribution of  
515 terrestrial sources to alkanes (89 %) is greater than that to alkenes (69.6 %), while the  
516 contribution of ocean emission to alkenes (30.4 %) is greater than that to alkanes

517 (5.2 %). This is consistent with the conclusions in section 3.3 and section 3.4.

518 It must be acknowledged that the classification and quantification results derived  
519 from the PMF model inevitably involve uncertainties that are challenging to ascertain  
520 precisely. These uncertainties are primarily attributed to factors such as the number of  
521 gas species, the number of samples, and the temporal and spatial resolutions of  
522 sampling. It is noteworthy, however, the PMF analysis results are relatively consistent  
523 with the phenomena described in Sections 3.3 and 3.4. This consistency to some extent  
524 validates the accuracy of the PMF analysis and underscores the significant contribution  
525 and impact of terrestrial inputs on the atmospheric NMHCs in the marginal seas of  
526 China.

#### 527 **Contributions of terrestrial/oceanic NMHCs to SOA and ozone**

528 The  $P_{\text{SOAP}}$  of C2-C5 NMHCs in the atmosphere over the Chinese marginal seas was  
529  $0.41 \pm 0.18 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ , with terrestrial sources contributing the majority ( $0.32 \pm 0.14 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ ),  
530 accounting for approximately 78% (Fig. 8a). Specifically, the  $P_{\text{SOAP}}$  from terrestrial  
531 alkanes and alkenes were  $0.17 \pm 0.07$  and  $0.15 \pm 0.06 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ , respectively, while marine  
532 sources contributed  $0.02 \pm 0.01$  and  $0.07 \pm 0.03 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$  for alkanes and alkenes,  
533 respectively. Additionally, troposphere aerosol concentrations over the Chinese  
534 marginal seas during the investigation period were calculated using data from the  
535 NASA Goddard Earth Sciences Data and Information Services Center (GES DISC),  
536 ranging from 0.77 to  $3.98 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ , with an average of  $1.80 \pm 0.71 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ . The aerosol  
537 concentrations decreased from the coastal areas towards the open sea (Fig. 8b),  
538 suggesting an obvious influence of terrestrial inputs on the aerosol levels in the coastal  
539 atmosphere. Based on the remote sensing data, it is roughly estimated that terrestrial  
540 C2-C5 NMHCs contribute ~18% to the total aerosol concentration, indicating their non-

541 negligible role in influencing the atmospheric aerosol levels over the marginal seas.

542 Similarly, the OFP of alkanes and alkenes from terrestrial sources were  $2.35 \pm 1.01$   
543 and  $1.18 \pm 0.51 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ , respectively, significantly higher than those from marine  
544 sources ( $0.14 \pm 0.06 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$  for alkanes and  $0.50 \pm 0.21 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$  for alkenes) (Fig. 8c).  
545 However, the ozone distribution in the offshore atmosphere of China showed a  
546 decreasing trend from north to south (Fig. 8d). The marine atmosphere generally acts  
547 as a net ozone sink with ozone being primarily removed by photochemical degradation  
548 (Monks et al., 1998; Conley et al., 2011). The increasing solar radiation intensity from  
549 north to south enhances ozone degradation rates, likely dominating the ozone  
550 distribution in China's offshore atmosphere. Notably, satellite observations (GES DISC)  
551 during this investigation period indicated that the tropospheric ozone was  
552 approximately  $82.6 \pm 3.08 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$  over the Chinese marginal seas. Among this,  
553 terrestrial C2-C5 NMHCs contributed around 4% to total ozone concentration,  
554 suggesting a certain impact of terrestrial outflow on the tropospheric ozone in these  
555 regions.

## 556 **4 Conclusions**

557 Our study characterized the atmospheric NMHCs in both coastal cities and Chinese  
558 marginal seas, and determined that both oceanic ventilation and terrestrial inputs play  
559 important roles in controlling the distribution and chemical composition of NMHCs in  
560 the coastal atmosphere of China.

561 Alkanes were the dominant NMHCs both in urban and nearshore atmospheres, and  
562 the atmospheric concentrations of alkanes were significantly higher in coastal cities  
563 compared to coastal seas, showing the potential of terrestrial alkanes as a source of  
564 alkanes in the marine atmosphere through transport. Generally, alkane concentrations



565 tended to be higher in cases: sampling sites closer to land, longer retention of air mass  
566 over land, and shorter air mass transport time from land to sampling site. However,  
567 these effects could not apply to alkenes due to their higher reactivities and the  
568 substantial sea-to-air fluxes. Additionally, the impact of oceanic emissions on NMHCs  
569 composition was more pronounced in areas beyond 100 km from land compared to  
570 areas within 100 km, because the terrestrial input gradually diminishes along the  
571 direction towards the open ocean.

572 Combining the outcomes of the PMF model and chemical profiles of diverse sources  
573 in the literature, we extracted four isolated sources of NMHCs in the nearshore  
574 atmosphere. Terrestrial sources (including industrial activities, vehicular exhaust, and  
575 vegetation emission) primarily constitute the NMHCs in the nearshore atmospheres,  
576 and they partially influence atmospheric SOA and ozone levels. This indicates the  
577 potential importance of terrestrial outflow in shaping the air quality and regulating  
578 climate dynamics in the marginal seas.

## 579 **Code and data availability**

580 Data presented in this paper are publicly available at Figshare via  
581 <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.24722286>. The remote-sensing datasets of Chl-*a*  
582 and total absorption at 443 nm are available at <https://oceancolor.gsfc.nasa.gov>, aerosol  
583 and ozone at <https://goldsmr5.gesdisc.eosdis.nasa.gov>. Code to calculate the retention  
584 of air mass over land can be downloaded from <https://doi.org/10.1029/2021JD034960>  
585 (Zhou et al., 2021).

586 **Competing interests**

587 The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

588 **Author contributions**

589 Honghai Zhang and Jian Wang designed the investigation and experiments. Jian  
590 Wang, Qianyao Ma, Feng Xu, Gaobin Xu, Shibo Yan, Jiawei Zhang, and Jianlong Li  
591 collected and determined the samples. Jian Wang analyzed the data and wrote the  
592 manuscript. Honghai Zhang, Lei Xue, Zhaohui Chen, and Guiling Zhang reviewed and  
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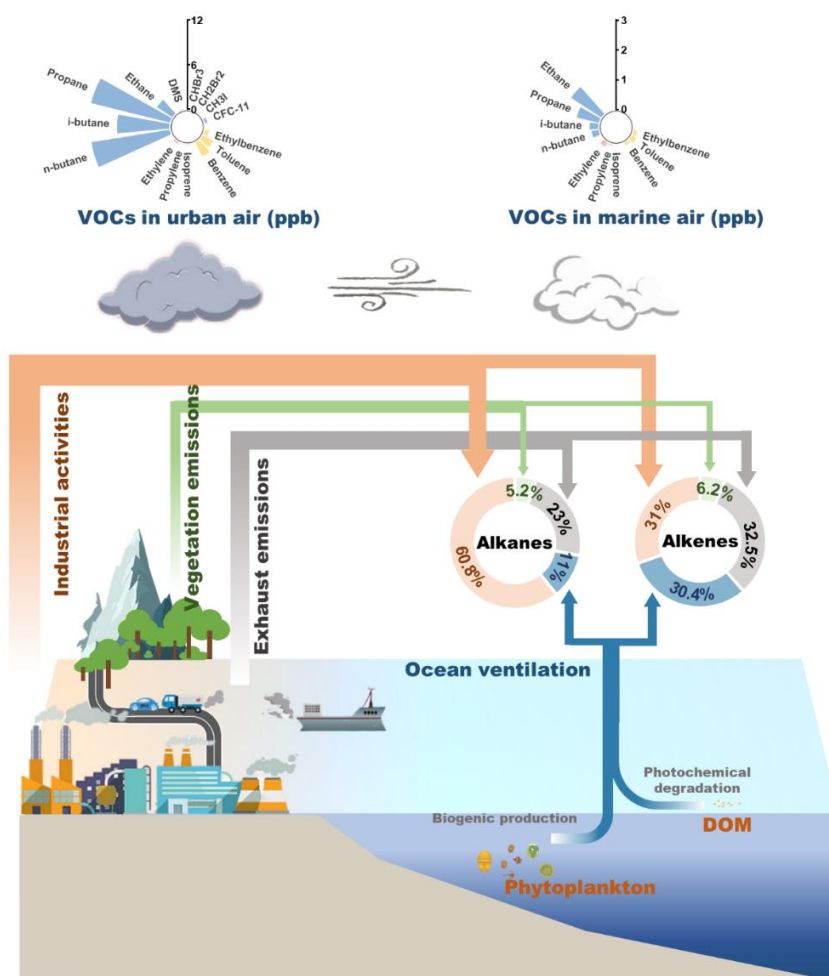
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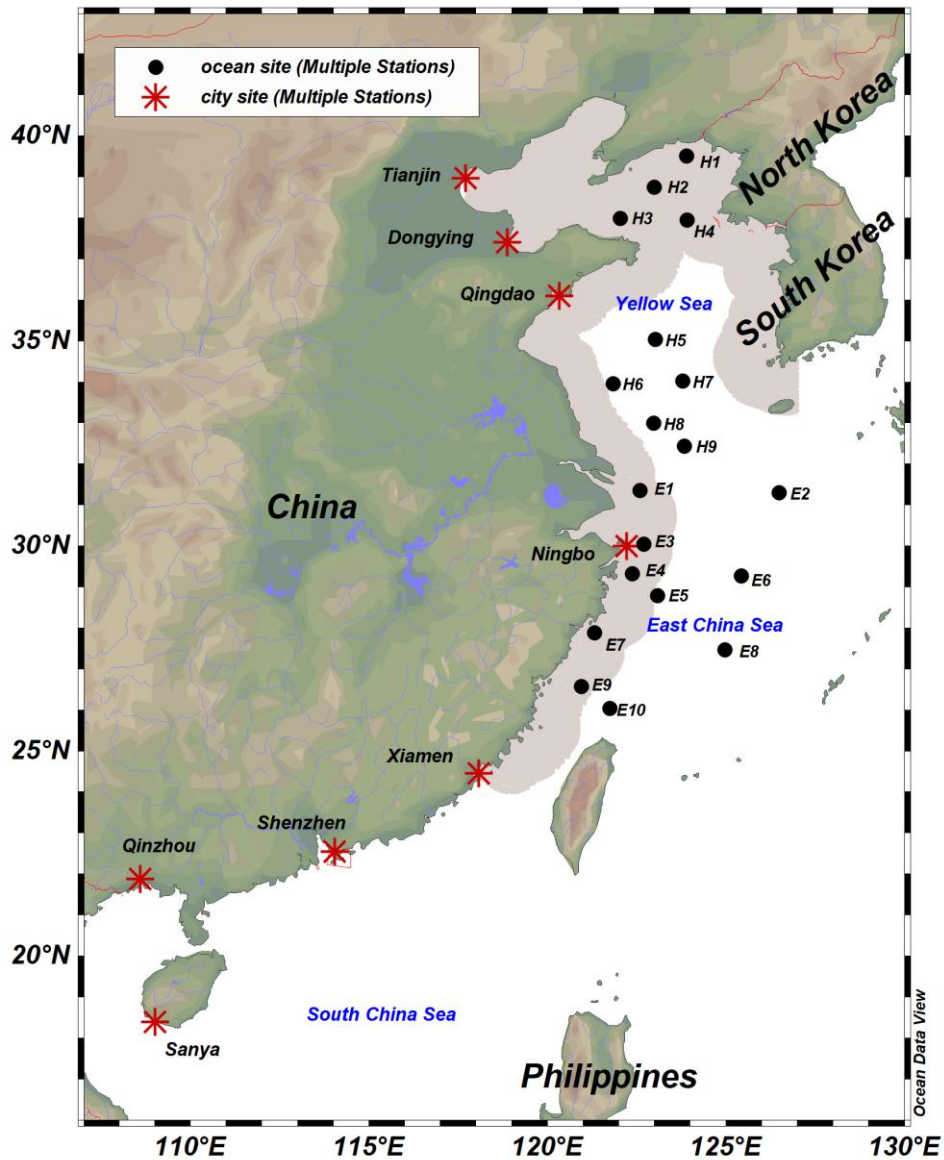
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922 **Figure Captions**



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924 **Graphical abstract** Schematic diagram showing the main sources and their relative contributions  
 925 to the NMHCs budget in the nearshore atmospheres of China. The ring bar chart above the land or  
 926 the ocean shows the composition of urban or marine atmospheric trace gases determined in this  
 927 study. The axes with units of ppb indicate the atmospheric concentrations of gases. The distinct  
 928 colored wedges indicate the alkanes (skyblue), alkenes (pink), monocyclic aromatics (yellow),  
 929 VHCs (lilac), and DMS (palegreen). Note that only alkanes, alkenes, and monocyclic aromatics are  
 930 shown in marine atmosphere. The colored arrows or annuli indicate the main sources of NMHCs in  
 931 the offshore atmosphere: industrial activities (sandybrown), exhaust emissions (darkgray), oceanic  
 932 ventilation (steelblue), and vegetation emissions (lightgreen). The numbers on the annuli are their  
 933 respective relative contributions.

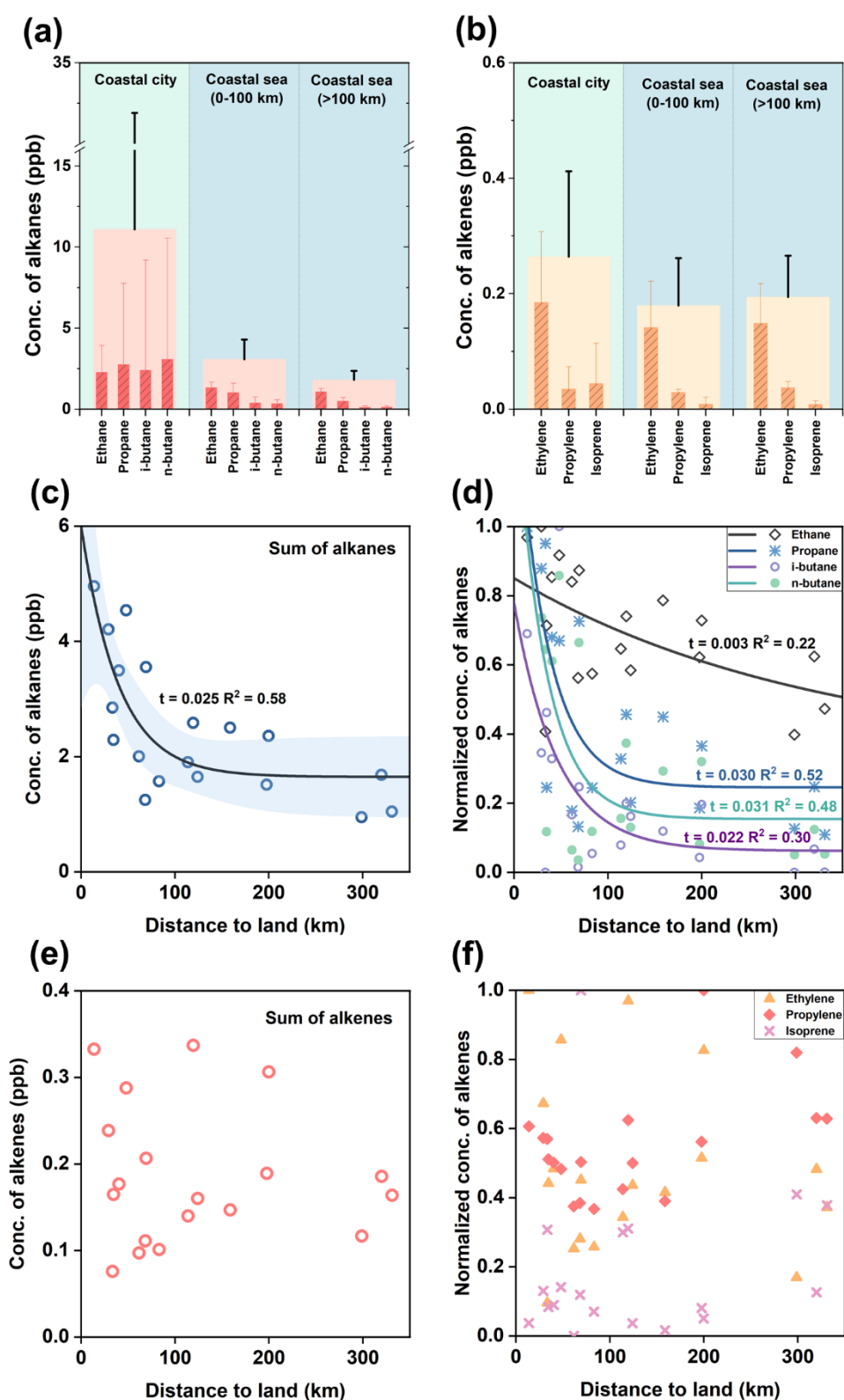


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935 **Figure 1** Map showing the sampling stations in the coastal cities (red asterisks) and marginal seas

936 (black dots) of China from March to May 2021. The gray shaded area represents the inshore region

937 within 100 km from the coastline.



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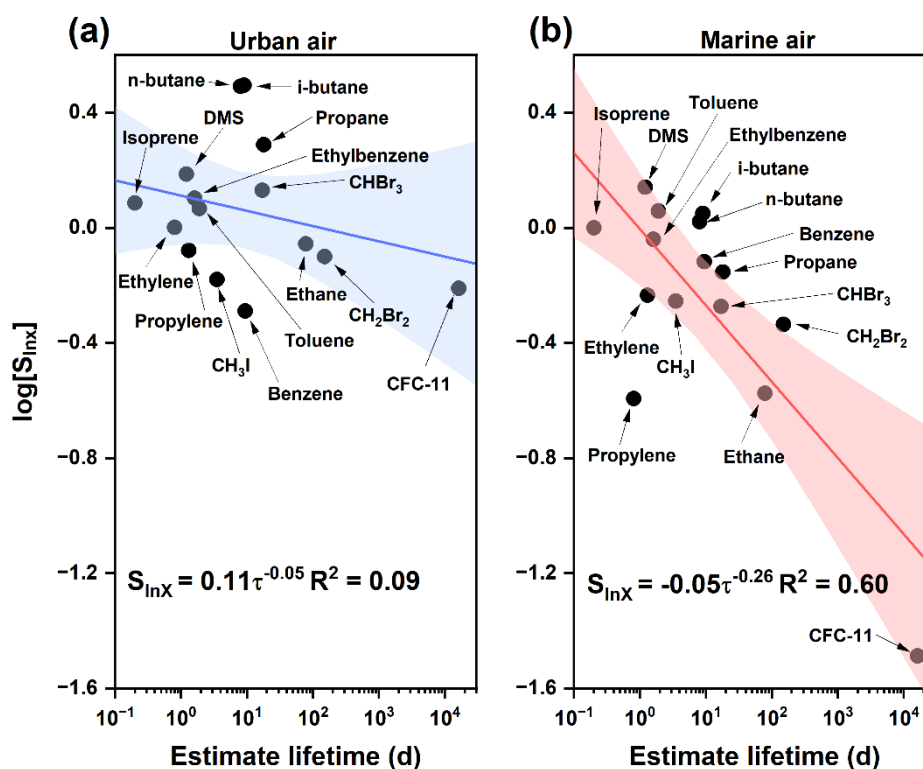
939 **Figure 2** Means of the concentrations of alkanes (panel a) and alkenes (panel b) in the atmosphere

940 over coastal cities ( $n = 14$ ) and nearshore (0-100 km,  $n = 10$ ) and offshore ( $>100$  km,  $n = 9$ ) coastal



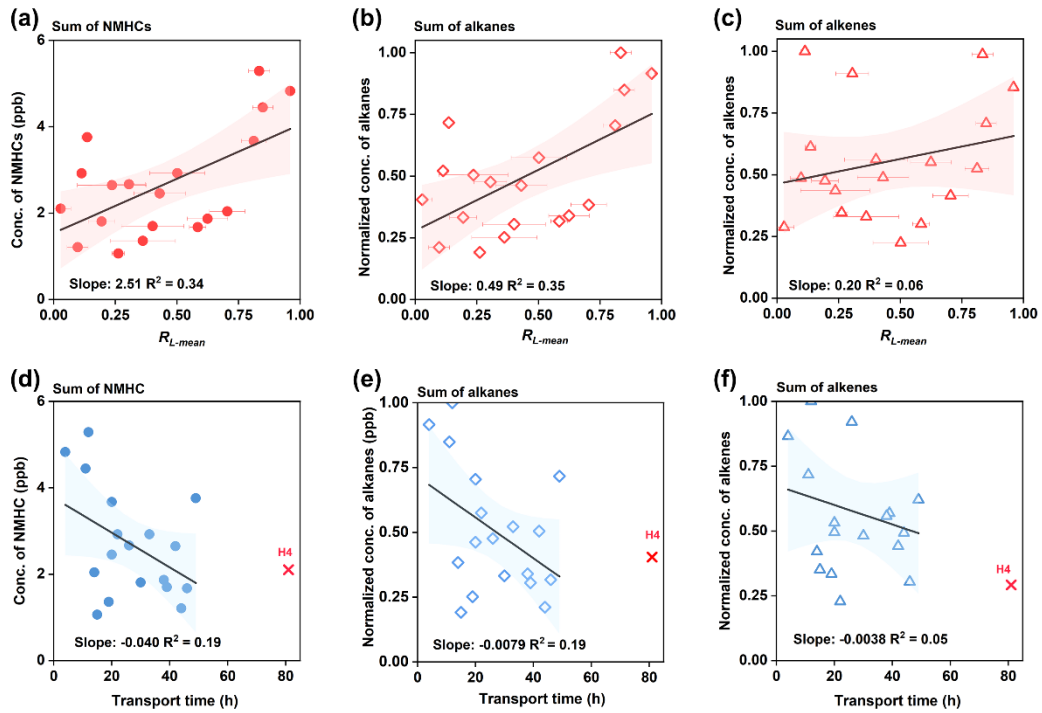
941 seas of China. The wider columns in panel a or b represent the sums of individual alkanes or alkenes  
 942 with error bars depicting the propagated errors from each NMHCs. Summed alkane (panel c) or  
 943 alkene (panel e) and normalized concentrations of specific alkane (panel d) or alkene (panel f)  
 944 plotted as a function ( $y = Ae^{-\alpha x} + y_0$ ) of the distance from sampling sites to the nearest land.

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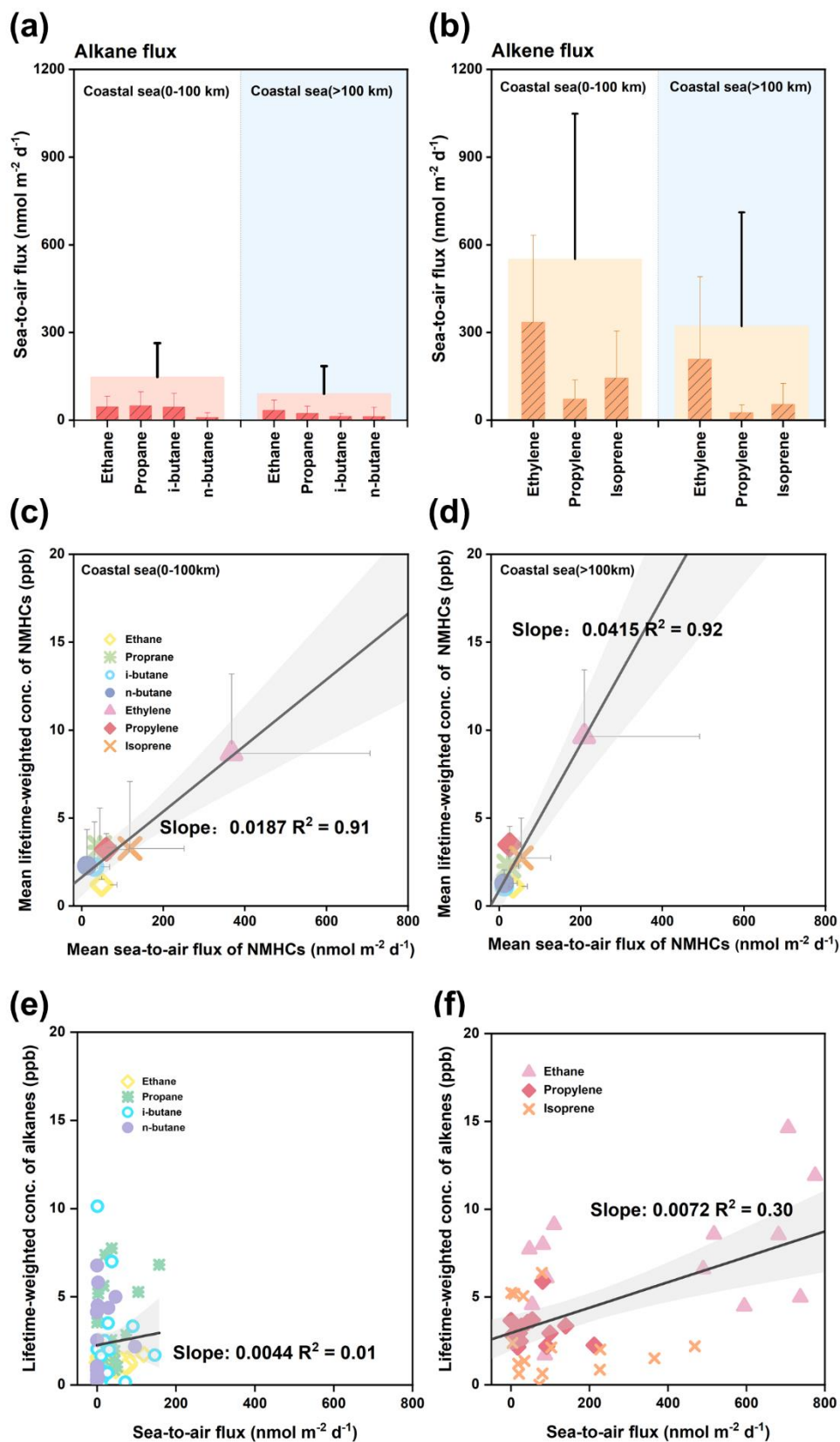
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947 **Figure 3** Atmospheric variability ( $\log[S_{\ln X}]$ ) plotted as a function of the estimated  $\bullet$ OH lifetime for  
 948 each NMHCs from the coastal cities (panel a) and marginal seas of China (panel b). The blue or red  
 949 line is the best linear fitting. The shadowed area represents the confidence band at a 95 % confidence  
 950 level.



951

952 **Figure 4** Concentrations of NMHCs combined (panel a or d), alkanes (panel b or e), and alkenes  
 953 (panel c or f) at each site plotted against the mean retentions of air mass over land ( $R_{L-mean}$ ,  $n = 3$ )  
 954 or the transport time of air mass, respectively. The error bars for  $R_{L-mean}$  indicate the standard  
 955 deviation from three different time-scale trajectories (48h, 72h, and 96h). The black line is the best  
 956 fitting of the liner function and the shadowed area represents the confidence band at a 95 %  
 957 confidence level. H4 (marked with red “x”) is treated as an outlier since it alone deviates from the  
 958 main dataset.

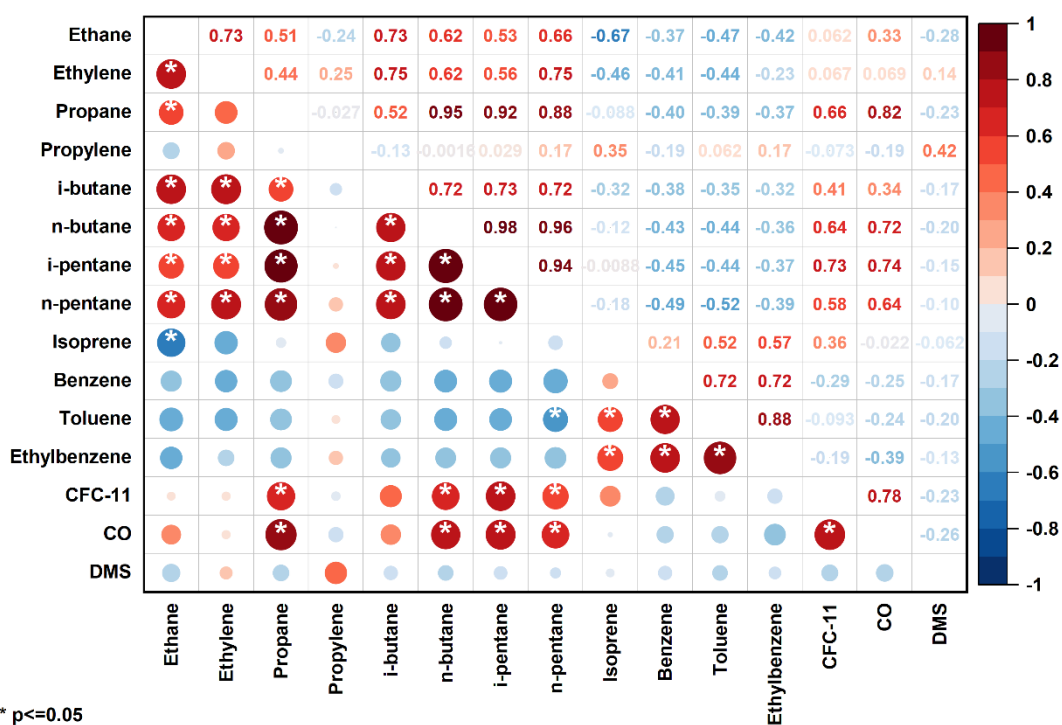


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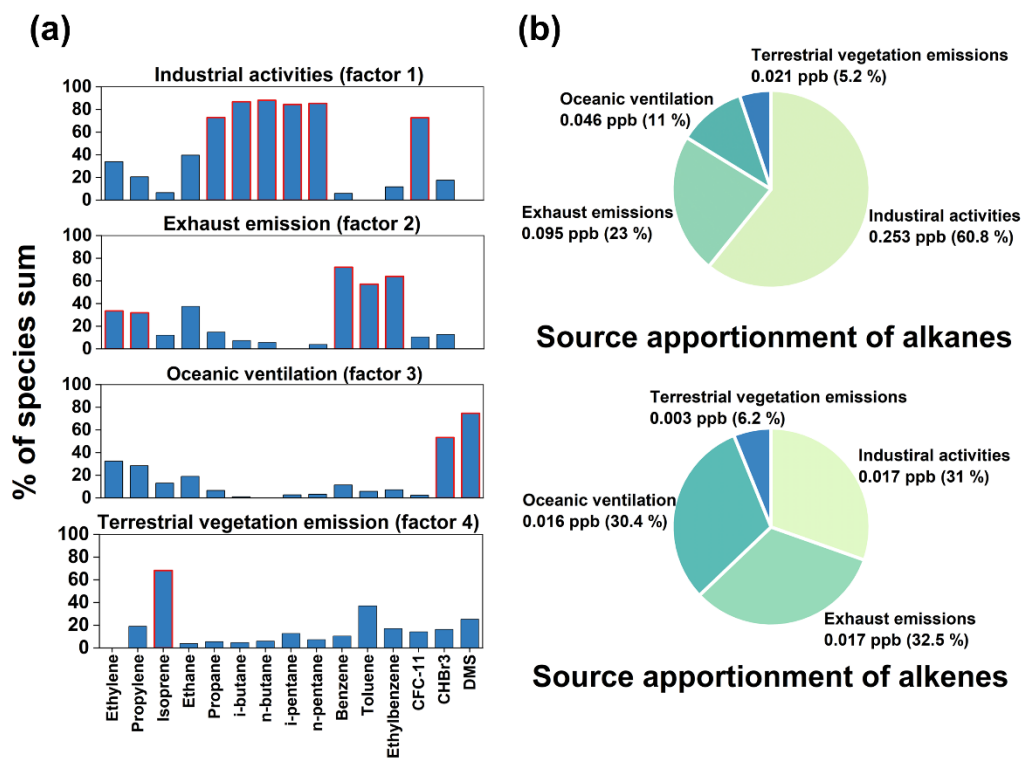
960 **Figure 5** Means of sea-to-air fluxes of alkanes (panel a) and alkenes (panel b) in sea areas within

961 100 km ( $n = 10$ ) and beyond 100 km ( $n = 9$ ) from the nearshore land. The wider columns represent

962 the sum of alkanes or alkenes. Panel c or d shows the means of lifetime-weighted concentrations of  
 963 NMHCs plotted against the means of their mean sea-to-air fluxes in the area within 100 km or  
 964 beyond 100 km from the coastline. Specific lifetime-weighted concentrations of alkanes (panel e)  
 965 and alkenes (panel f) plotted against sea-to-air fluxes in the whole coastal sea region. The black,  
 966 blue or red line is the best linear fitting for each dataset and the shadowed area represents the  
 967 confidence band at a 95 % confidence level.  
 968



969  
 970 **Figure 6** Correlation coefficients ( $r$ ) between the various trace gases determined in the atmosphere  
 971 over the Yellow Sea and the East China Sea. The white asterisk means the correlation is significant  
 972 at the  $p < 0.05$  level. The color of dots, red or blue, indicates the positive or negative correlation and  
 973 the size of the dots indicates the absolute value of  $r$ .

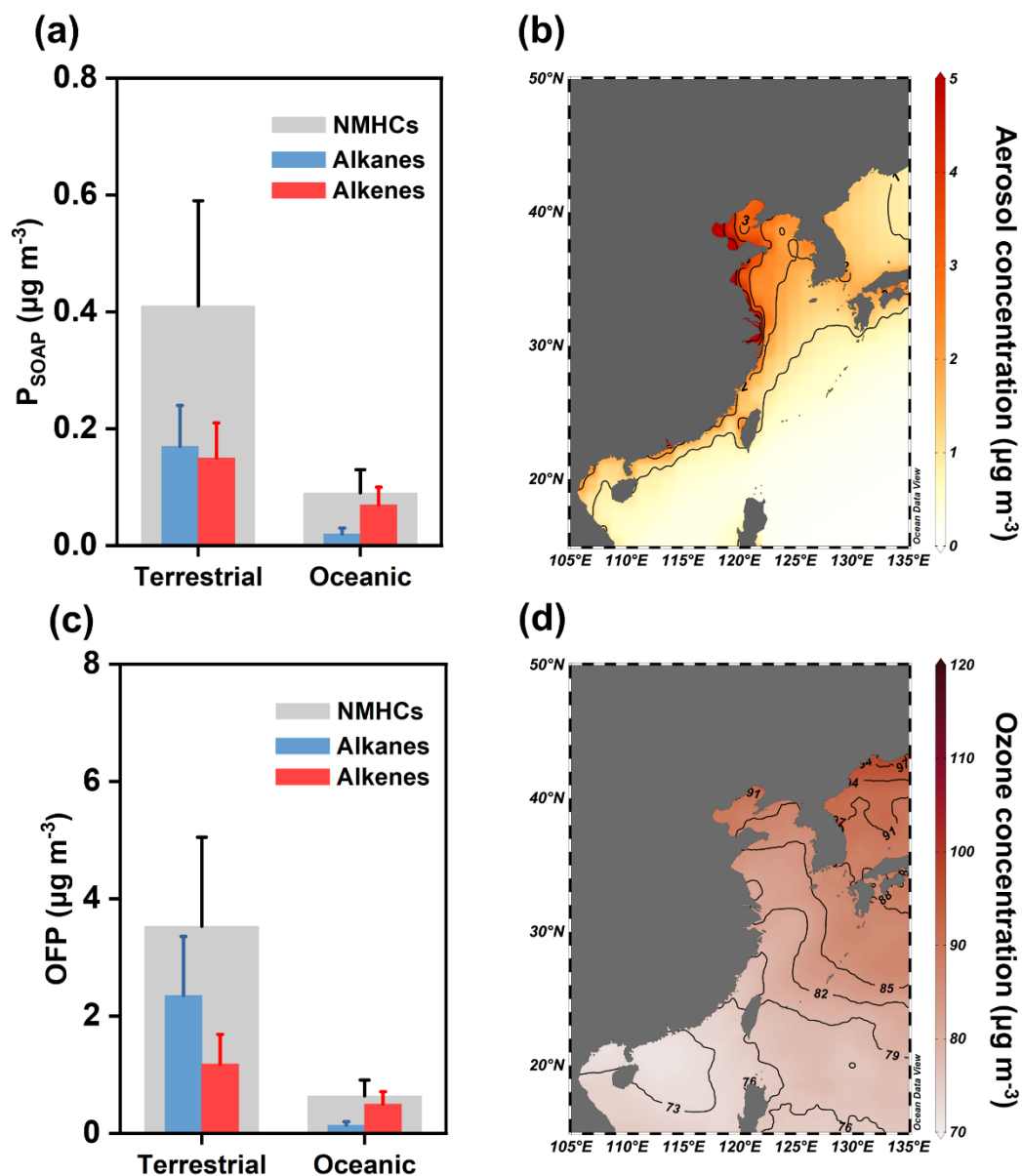


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975 **Figure 7** Representative factor profiles from the PMF model (panel a) and relative contributions of

976 different factors/sources to the alkanes and alkenes in the oceanic atmosphere (panel b). NMHCs in

977 panel a marked with red rim are selected as indicators for the specific factors.



978

979 **Figure 8** OFP (panel a), P<sub>SOAP</sub> (panel c) of NMHCs and averaged concentration of troposphere  
 980 aerosol (panel b), ozone (panel d) during the investigation period over the Chinese marginal seas.

981 Data of aerosol and ozone were downloaded from GES DISC

982 (<https://goldsmr5.gesdisc.eosdis.nasa.gov/data/MERRA2/M2I3NPASM.5.12.4>).

## Table

**Table 1** Atmospheric and seawater concentrations, sea-to-air fluxes, and the calculated atmospheric lifetime of each NMHCs based on the reaction with hydroxyl radicals ( $\bullet\text{OH}$ ).

Species	Conc. in urban air (ppb)	Conc. in oceanic air (ppb)	Conc. in seawater ( $\mu\text{mol L}^{-1}$ )	Sea-to-air flux ( $\mu\text{mol m}^{-2} \text{d}^{-1}$ )	Atmospheric lifetime <sup>b</sup> (d)
Ethane	2.26 (0.277-5.72)	1.24 (0.686-1.72)	11.6 (4.70-22.8)	44.6 (0.2-118)	78
Propane	2.95 (0.149-20.1)	0.822 (0.226-1.79)	12.6 (3.68-136)	41.5 (0.2-157)	18
i-butane	2.57 (BD <sup>a</sup> -27.6)	0.283 (BD-1.17)	9.46 (1.54-35.3)	31.7 (0.1-146)	9.1
n-butane	3.29 (0.018-30.2)	0.256 (0.025-0.694)	4.95 (BD-32.9)	10.9 (-0.8-96.1)	8.2
Ethylene	0.180 (0.035-0.390)	0.151 (0.028-0.295)	70.4 (8.40-136)	321 (1.7-775)	2.3
Propylene	0.036 (BD-0.129)	0.033 (0.022-0.060)	15.2 (2.42-27.6)	56.1 (0.2-212)	0.73
Isoprene	0.046 (0.006-0.250)	0.008 (BD-0.043)	31.0 (3.43-105)	112 (0.5-468)	0.19

<sup>a</sup>: Below the detection limit.

<sup>b</sup>: Assuming an average [ $\bullet\text{OH}$ ] of  $6 \times 10^5$  molecules  $\text{cm}^{-3}$  within 24 h (Jobson et al., 1999), and using the rate constant with  $\bullet\text{OH}$  at 288 K taken from Atkinson et al. (1997).