

Supplement of

Assessment of methane emissions from US onshore oil and gas production using MethaneAIR measurements

MacKay et al.

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S1. MethaneAIR quantification of total regional emissions

The MethaneAIR quantification approach leverages an inverse model and a point source algorithm to arrive at a best estimate of total regional methane emissions at the time of observation. For each MethaneAIR flight, the inverse model fits a best estimate of a gridded field of emission rates, s , to observed column-averaged dry-air mole fractions of methane (XCH_4), z , and background concentrations b , linked by a Jacobian, H (Equation S1).

$$z = Hs + b \quad (\text{Eq. S1})$$

Observations were aggregated to $0.01^\circ \times 0.01^\circ$ while preserving their location in time (allowing for overlapping observations from successive flight tracks). Aggregated grid cells at least 50% covered with data that passed all QA/QC flags were included in the analysis.

The Jacobian was computed using the Stochastic Time-Inverted Lagrangian Transport (STILT) model (Fasoli et al., 2018; Lin et al., 2003), which simulates the sensitivity of XCH_4 observations to sources on the ground by propagating air parcel trajectories backwards in time. The Jacobian was computed on a $0.01^\circ \times 0.01^\circ$ grid over a $10^\circ \times 10^\circ$ domain around the center of the flight with trajectories long enough to fully exit the domain. Emissions are reported in a truncated domain of interest within the concave hull of the observations. STILT was driven by meteorological data from the operational Global Forecast System (GFS) model and the High-Resolution Rapid Refresh (HRRR) model provided by the NOAA ARL meteorological archives in ARL format (<https://www.ready.noaa.gov/archives.php>).

Background concentrations are contributions to the modeled XCH_4 due to all contributions except for emissions in the domain of interest. The background concentrations are given by a model that incorporates a single value for the synoptic scale background, plus variations due to topographical variation (computed using the MethaneSAT L2 prior profile of CH_4), plus variations in the observed XCH_4 that can be modeled as concentrations transported across the boundary from nearby emissions (the “boundary inflow”). The boundary inflow is modeled using the Jacobian and emission rates outside of the domain of observed concentrations.

The inversion framework takes advantage of the instrument’s high spatial resolution, wide spatial coverage, and high precision, and does not require a prior. Before the inversion, the influence of point source emissions (with methane emission rates $> \sim 200 \text{ kg/hr}$), which are quantified separately using a divergence integral method (Abbadi et al., 2023; Chulakadabba et al., 2023; Warren et al., 2024), are computed by propagating through the Jacobian and subtracted from the observations. This places trust in the well-tested point-source specific algorithm to do the best job at quantifying point source emissions and uses the Jacobian to ensure the complete mass of methane from the point sources are accounted for. The alternative method of plume-masking is inconsistent between methodologies and inevitably undercounts the contribution of the point sources when they fall below detectable concentrations.

The inverse problem is then solved numerically using proposal solutions that are constrained to be non-negative and produce an accurate mass of methane in the atmosphere. The two constraints regularize the solution to prevent overfitting. The non-negativity constraint mediates the “dipole effect” where adjacent large positive and negative emissions are generated by the inverse model to fit variations in concentrations that cannot be explained by positive emissions alone (e.g., large plumes in areas where the meteorological product has wind direction errors, or variations due to eddies that cannot be modeled by STILT). The mass-balance constraint prevents the emergence of bias when there are high frequency variations that cannot be fit by the model, which may lead the model to over-predict the total emissions.

The resulting analysis of MethaneAIR data produces a high resolution, spatially explicit quantification of methane emissions at approximately 1 km by 1 km resolution, as well as the specific location and quantification of individual point sources emitting above $\sim 200 \text{ kg/hr}$.

Uncertainty in the MethaneAIR total area emissions estimation is contributed by several factors including (i) uncertainty in the meteorological product used to generate the STILT Jacobian that links emissions with concentrations, (ii) correlated uncertainty in the observations, (iii) uncertainty in the background concentration, (iv) uncertainty in the allocation of signal between emissions in the reported domain and the boundary inflow, and (v) uncertainty in the retrieval of emissions as expressed by the variability in samples in the Markov Chain Monte Carlo

(MCMC) simulation. We use a bootstrap resampling of the MCMC samples to estimate uncertainty, with propagation of uncertainty from each of the above effects by either sweeping across values of input parameters (for example, recomputing the optimization with high and low estimates of the mean background concentration) or modifying each sample (for example, error in the wind speed may increase or decrease all emissions by $\pm 20\%$). Uncertainty at each grid-level emissions is the 95% confidence interval of samples for that pixel. Uncertainty on the total area emissions is the 95% confidence interval on the total across all samples. The uncertainty estimates for majority of MethaneAIR's individual flight-level observation domains range from $\pm 30\%$ to $\pm 45\%$, as indicated in Table S4.

S2. Estimating the relative sector contributions of methane emissions quantified by MethaneAIR

S2.1 Data sources used to estimate non-oil and gas methane emissions for each MethaneAIR domain

Table S1 below lists all the publicly available measurement-based and bottom-up data used to estimate the relative contributions of non-oil and gas methane emissions in regions measured by MethaneAIR. The year in brackets next to each referenced study corresponds to the year that the reported emissions estimates are for.

Table S1: Data sources used to estimate contributions of non-oil and gas methane emissions for MethaneAIR measured regions in major oil and gas producing basins.

Sub-Basin	Input data [reference year]
Anadarko	Crippa et al. [2022]; Lu et al. [2019]; Maasakkers et al. [2020]; Nesser et al. [2019]
Appalachian (NE)	Barkley et al. [2017]; Crippa et al. [2022]; Maasakkers et al. [2020]
Appalachian (SW)	Crippa et al. [2022]; Maasakkers et al. [2020]
Arkoma Fayetteville	Crippa et al. [2022]; Lu et al. [2019]; Maasakkers et al. [2020]; Nesser et al. [2019]; Schwietzke et al. [2015]
Bakken	Crippa et al. [2022]; Maasakkers et al. [2020]; Peischl et al. [2015]
Barnett	Crippa et al. [2022]; Lu et al. [2019]; Maasakkers et al. [2020]; Nesser et al. [2019]; Peischl et al. [2015]
Denver	Fried and Dickerson, [2021]; Maasakkers et al. [2020]; Peischl et al. [2015]
Eagle Ford	Crippa et al. [2022]; Lu et al. [2019]; Maasakkers et al. [2020]; Nesser et al. [2019]; Peischl et al. [2015]
Greater Green River	Crippa et al. [2022]; Maasakkers et al. [2020]
Haynesville-Bossier	Crippa et al. [2022]; Lu et al. [2019]; Maasakkers et al. [2020]; Nesser et al. [2019]; Peischl et al. [2015]
Permian (Delaware)	Crippa et al. [2022]; Maasakkers et al. [2020]; Nesser et al. [2019]
Permian (Midland)	Crippa et al. [2022]; Lu et al. [2019]; Maasakkers et al. [2020]; Nesser et al. [2019]
Piceance	Crippa et al. [2022]; Lu et al. [2019]; Maasakkers et al. [2020]; Nesser et al. [2019]
Uinta	Crippa et al. [2022]; Maasakkers et al. [2020]

S2.2. Description of additional method for disaggregation of non-oil and gas sources

As an alternative methodology to the simple subtraction of literature-based non-oil and gas estimates and non-oil and gas point sources quantified by MethaneAIR, we also tested a ratio-based approach that leverages prior estimates of spatially explicit oil and gas and non-oil and gas methane emission inventories. For this approach, we utilize the gridded ($0.1^\circ \times 0.1^\circ$) oil and gas emissions inventory provided in Omara et al., 2024 (EI-ME) which is updated with 2023 activity data, coupled with non-oil and gas emissions from a gridded ($0.1^\circ \times 0.1^\circ$) inventory available from the EPA GHGI inventory for 2020 (Maasakkers et al., 2023), and persistence adjusted methane point source detections from Carbon Mapper (Carbon Mapper, 2025). Both the EI-ME and GHGI methane inventories use the location/density/type of infrastructure data to inform the spatial allocation of methane emissions. The EI-ME is a measurement-based inventory whereas the GHGI is a bottom-up inventory based on reported emissions. These inventories differ from observations gathered from satellite-based studies where we can expect the spatial distribution of emissions to vary over time, despite these emissions estimates being based on prior observations in some cases. We include point sources of methane emissions from Carbon Mapper to account for any additional sources of methane emissions that may not be captured within the EI-ME and GHGI inventories, with the

assumption that potential double-counting of methane sources would occur equally between non-oil and gas and oil and gas methane sources.

Using these spatially explicit methane emissions inventories, we calculate the expected methane emissions for individual grid cells from the area emissions estimates provided by MethaneAIR at their native resolution (1 km x 1 km, or $0.01^\circ \times 0.01^\circ$). The compiled oil and gas and non-oil and gas emissions from both inventories are then used to calculate a ratio of expected oil and gas emissions, which is then multiplied by the estimated grid-level emissions from MethaneAIR to produce spatially explicit area emissions estimates for oil and gas and non-oil and gas sources (Figure S1). As an additional constraint on uncertainty related to this method, we ascribe area emissions as “unknown” if the measured grid-level estimates from MethaneAIR are more than 100-times higher than the combined emissions from both EI-ME and the GHGI.

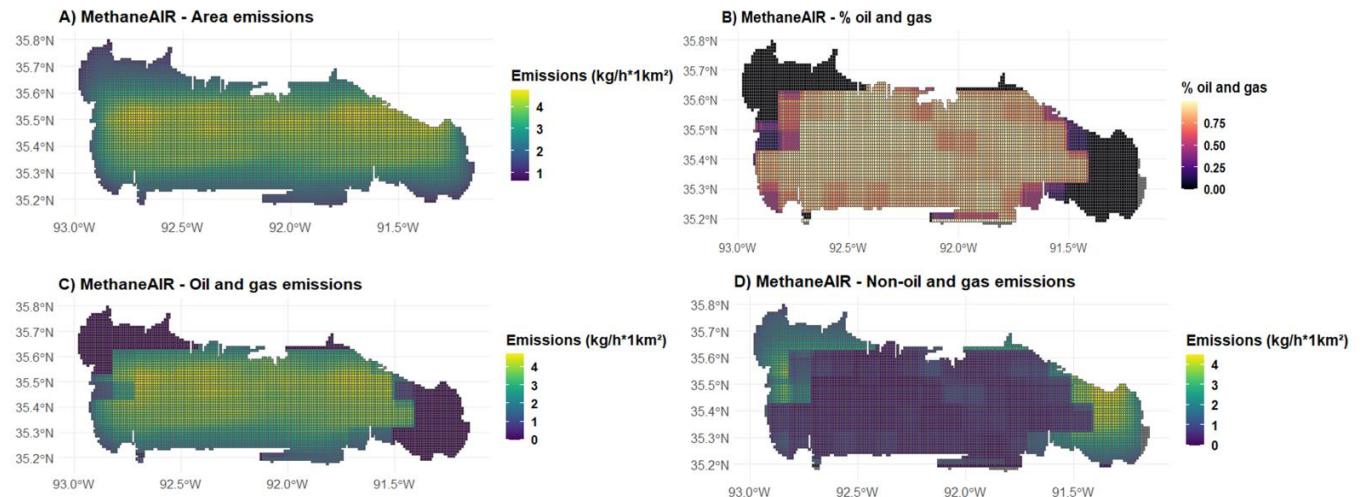


Figure S1: Maps showing disaggregation of oil and gas and non-oil and gas methane emissions from a single MethaneAIR flight in the Arkoma-Fayetteville oil and gas basin as an example. Note that point source emissions are not shown in this figure and are incorporated into total methane emissions using the detailed point source attribution process (Warren et al., 2024). A) Area emissions heatmap from MethaneAIR showing diffuse area source emissions. B) Estimated percentages of oil and gas emissions based on spatially explicit methane emissions data for oil and gas sources (EI-ME: 2023, Omara et al. 2024) and non-oil and gas sources (GHGI inventory: 2020, Maasakkers et al. 2023). C) Heat map of oil and gas emissions from MethaneAIR. D) Heat map of non-oil and gas emissions from MethaneAIR.

S2.3 Comparison of estimated MethaneAIR oil and gas methane emissions across different sector disaggregation methods

We compared total basin-level estimated oil and gas methane emissions using two different methods to disaggregate oil and gas from non-oil and gas area emissions for our MethaneAIR retrievals: the simple subtraction method as presented in the main text, and a ratio-based approach based on a combination of measurement-based and bottom-up estimates (Figure S2). The simple subtraction method estimated an oil and gas total (12 basin sum) of 898 t/hr, whereas the ratio-based method estimated 841 t/hr. We found good agreement (within ~ 2 t/hr) across both methods in six basins, and moderate agreement (within $\sim 3 - 7$ t/hr) in four basins. The biggest discrepancies across methods were in the Greater Green River and Piceance basins, where the ratio-based method produced lower estimates of oil and gas emissions (Figure S2).

In general, the ratio-based method assigns a higher contribution of non-oil and gas emissions due to the spatially widespread presence of agricultural methane emissions whereas other sources of methane emissions (i.e., landfills, oil and gas infrastructure, coal mines) emit at higher amounts per area but are spatially isolated in the prior methane emissions inventories. As such, in areas where MethaneAIR observes dispersed methane emissions without the presence of landfills, oil and gas infrastructure, or coal mines to account for these emissions, they are usually

assigned to agricultural sources, which in turn leads to agricultural emissions that are greater than the total sum contained within the prior estimates. Ultimately, the ratio-based approach incorporates the spatially explicit methane emissions data into the disaggregation process, which provides valuable insights into the presence and location of sector specific methane emissions. In contrast, the simple subtraction method subtracts these values directly from the total methane emissions estimated by MethaneAIR, and therefore the total non-oil and gas emissions match those from the corresponding literature-based estimates from which the value is calculated. While the simple subtraction method does preserve the total non-oil and gas emissions from the literature-based estimates, it does not produce any spatially explicit data on the disaggregated methane emissions.

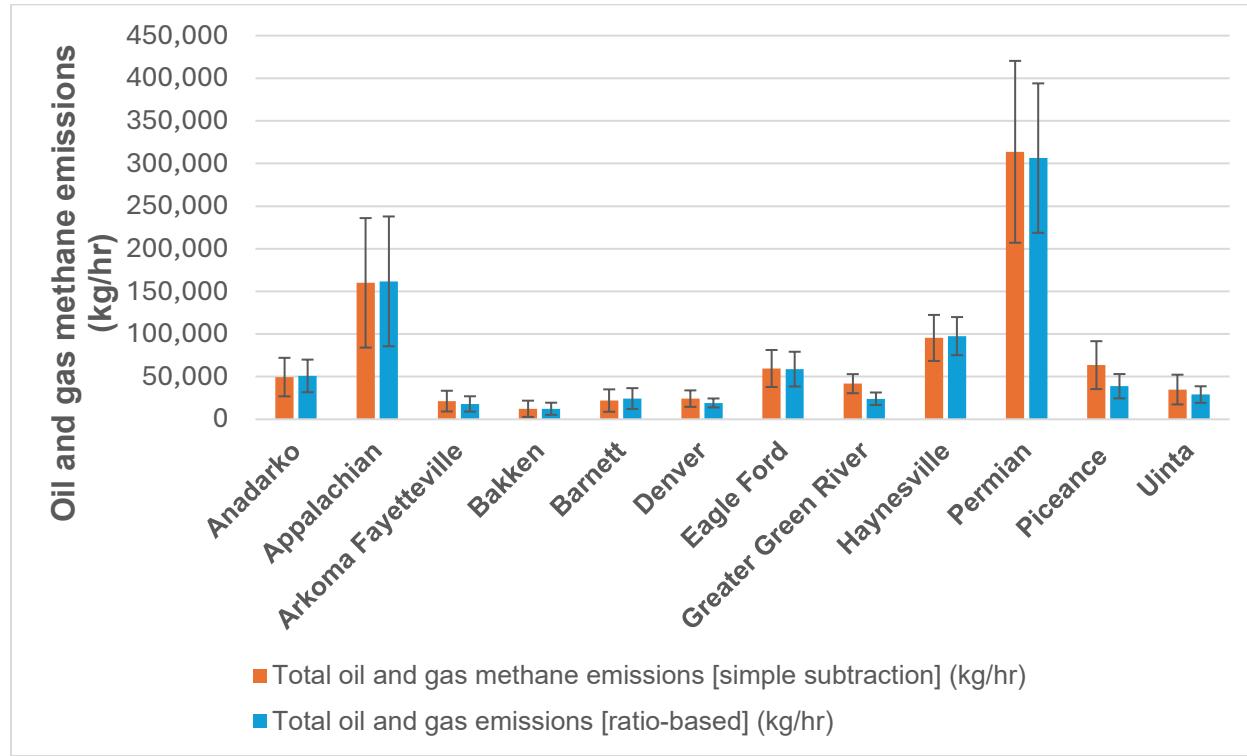


Figure S2: Comparison of estimates of oil and gas emissions for basins measured by MethaneAIR using two different methods: the ratio-based approach, and the simple subtraction method (as presented in the main text).

S3. Methods for basin- and national-level aggregation of MethaneAIR emission estimates – total emissions and associated uncertainties

Two separate approaches for aggregation of overlapping MethaneAIR flights were explored, which we defined as 1) unique overflowed area (UOA) averaging, and 2) area-normalized averaging. Results from the UOA averaging method are presented in the main text, and the other method as well as a comparison of results across both approaches are discussed below.

S3.1 Unique overflowed area averaging

For the unique overflowed area (UOA) averaging method, we start by mapping the spatial domains of each MethaneAIR retrieval to identify areas that were uniquely overflowed by the same combination of flights, which creates a subset of smaller spatial domains (Figure S3). Next, we iterated through the subset of smaller spatial domains (i.e., denoted as UOA, or unique overflowed areas) and averaged both the point source and area emissions from the corresponding flights. The resulting averages of all UOAs are then summed to produce a total estimate of methane emissions for the aggregated flight domains.

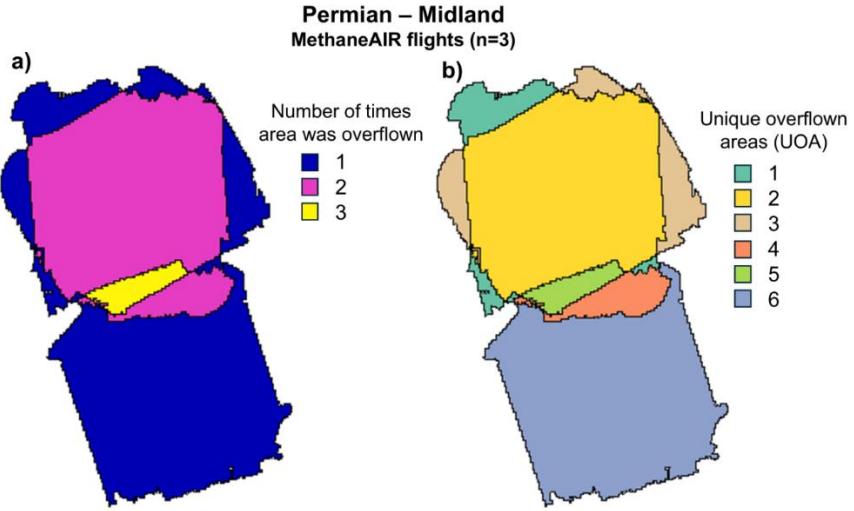


Figure S3: Maps of MethaneAIR flights domains in the Midland portion of the Permian oil and gas basin showing A) the number of times specific areas were overflown by MethaneAIR and B) areas that were overflown by a unique combination of flights (i.e., unique overflown areas or UOA). In this example, six UOAs are created from a combination of three flights in the Midland portion of the Permian basin.

S3.2 Area-normalized averaging approach

For the area-normalized averaging approach, we first normalize the total area and point source methane emissions quantified from each unique flight by the respective area (km^2) covered during the flight to produce an area-normalized flux rate (kg/hr/km^2). Then, we compute the total combined area (km^2) covered by all flights for each oil and gas basin. Finally, we calculate the average area normalized flux rates for both area and point source emissions from all flights within a basin and multiply those averages by the total combined area to produce an estimate of the total basin-level emissions.

S3.3 Comparisons of basin-level emissions across different aggregation methods

We compared two different methods used to aggregate multiple MethaneAIR flights to produce basin-level estimates of total methane emissions (Figure S4). Overall, both methods produce similar results across basins, although the differences were larger for the Permian basin with the unique overflown areas method producing 59 t/hr higher estimates compared to the area-averaging method.

The area-normalized method involves dividing total flight-level methane emissions by the total area covered by a given flight, which produces area-normalized methane emission rates. Then, the average area-normalized emissions across all flights are multiplied by the total area covered by the dissolved spatial boundaries of all MethaneAIR flights in a basin which produces a total basin-level emissions estimate. This approach differs from the unique overflow areas approach which weighs emissions by the respective areas covered by individual flights and accounts for areas that have been overflown multiple times. Therefore, we see greater differences in regions where we have multiple flights that have fragmented overlaps with high variability in emission rates by flight (i.e., the Permian basin). Ultimately, the unique overflown areas approach that we use in this work better accounts for the spatial heterogeneity of emissions observed across unique MethaneAIR flights. A more simplistic approach like the area-normalized method is easy to implement but likely carries more uncertainty due to the inherent assumption that the average area-normalized emissions from multiple flights are representative of the entire dissolved spatial domain.

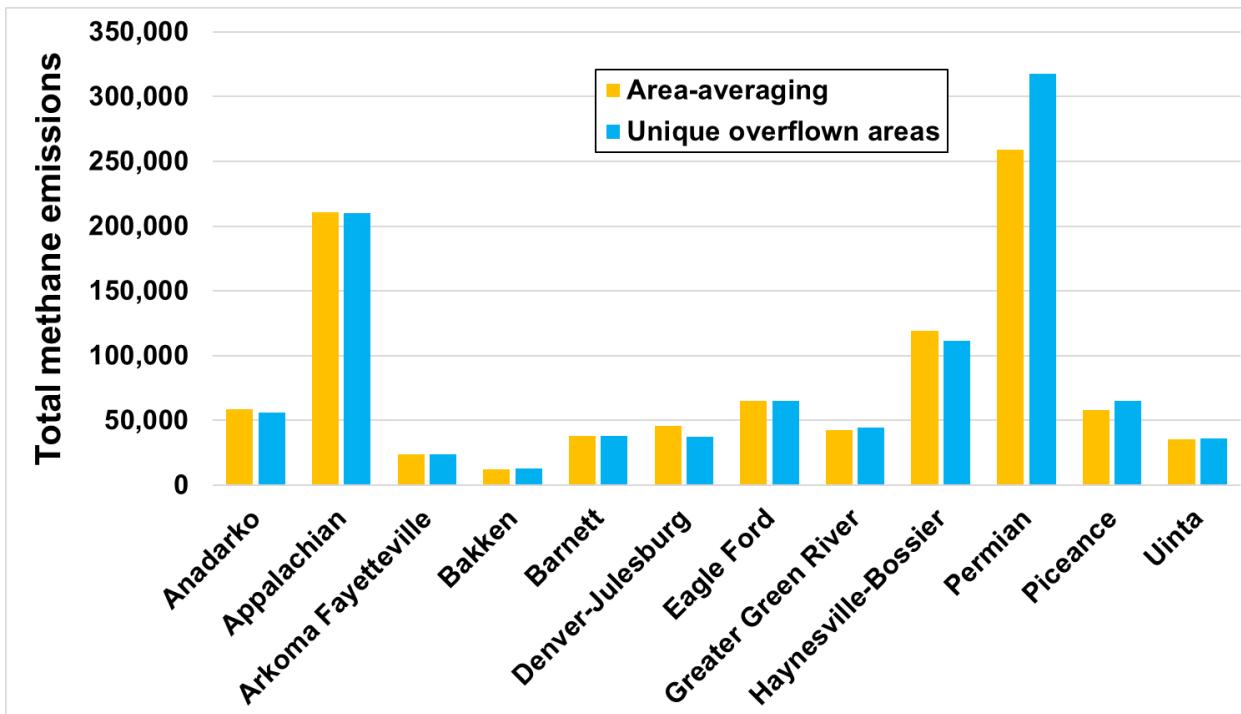


Figure S4: Comparison of the two different methods used to aggregate multiple MethaneAIR flights into basin-level methane emission estimates (kg/hr). Results from the “unique overflow areas” method are presented throughout the main text.

S4. Basin-specific gas compositions used in loss rate calculations

Table S2 shows the basin-specific methane compositions for each basin or sub-basin that were used to calculate the gas-normalized methane loss rates presented in the main text. The methane compositions are applied to the gross natural gas produced in each area measured by MethaneAIR to estimate the gross methane production. The assumed methane compositions are consistent with those reported for each basin in previous literature.

Table S2: Assumed basin specific methane composition of produced gas used in methane loss rate estimates.

Sub-Basin	Assumed methane composition of produced gas
Permian	0.80
Appalachian - NE	0.95
Appalachian - SW	0.90
Anadarko	0.93
Eagle Ford	0.73
Haynesville-Bossier	0.86
Barnett	0.89
Bakken	0.47
San Juan	0.83
Denver-Julesburg	0.79
Uinta	0.89
Arkoma Fayetteville	0.96
Piceance	0.89
Powder River	0.90

Greater Green River	0.92
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S5. Energy-normalized methane intensities for measured oil and gas basins

In addition to the gross gas production normalized methane loss rates presented in the main text, we also computed energy-normalized methane intensities (kg CH₄/GJ) for the 12 oil and gas basins measured by MethaneAIR. The main difference between these two metrics is that the energy-normalized methane intensities consider both gross oil and gas produced in each region (Eq. S2), whereas methane loss rates are based on gross gas production only. For energy-normalized methane intensity calculations, gross oil and gas energy production is estimated using 2023 production data (Enverus: Prism, 2024) and a conversion factor of 1 barrel of oil equivalent (boe) = 6 gigajoules (GJ) and 1 boe = 6000 cubic feet of natural gas.

$$\text{Methane intensity } \left(\frac{\text{kgCH}_4}{\text{GJ}} \right) = \frac{\text{Oil and gas methane emissions (kg)}}{(\text{Gross natural gas production (GJ)} + \text{Gross oil production (GJ)})} \quad (\text{Eq. S2})$$

Table S3 shows the MethaneAIR gross gas-normalized loss rates (%) and energy-normalized methane intensities (kg CH₄/GJ) for all measured basins. Since methane intensities are based on combined oil and gas production, the basins with the lowest intensities are primarily oil-dominant or mixed basins (e.g., Bakken, Denver-Julesburg), rather than gas-dominant basins (e.g., Appalachian, Haynesville) which have the lowest loss rates. Mature basins with low producing wells rank high across both metrics.

Table S3: Gross gas production normalized methane loss rates (%) and gross energy-normalized (oil + gas) methane intensities (kgCH₄/GJ) estimated for basins measured by MethaneAIR.

Basin	Methane loss rate (%)	Methane intensity (kg CH ₄ /GJ)
Anadarko	1.4	0.20
Appalachian	0.9	0.15
Arkoma Fayetteville	3.1	0.57
Bakken	2.1	0.06
Barnett	1.6	0.26
Denver-Julesburg	1.3	0.11
Eagle Ford	2.0	0.13
Greater Green River	5.2	0.88
Haynesville-Bossier	0.9	0.15
Permian	2.4	0.15
Piceance	7.9	1.29
Uinta	7.7	0.55

S6. Reported methane emissions for MethaneAIR measured regions based on EPA's 2020 GHGI

Table S4 shows total methane emissions and total oil and gas methane emissions from the EPA GHGI (Maasakkers et al., 2023) for the combined regions measured by MethaneAIR in each basin (as shown in Figure 1 in the main text). Note that these estimates are for the year 2020, which was the most recently available year at the time of writing.

Table S4: EPA 2020 reported total methane emissions and oil and gas methane emissions for MethaneAIR measured regions.

Basin	EPA total methane emissions in MethaneAIR measured regions (kg/hr)	EPA oil and gas methane emissions in MethaneAIR measured regions (kg/hr)
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Anadarko	18,200	13,880
Appalachian	49,280	21,630
Arkoma Fayetteville	7,380	5,860
Bakken	5,640	5,210
Barnett	21,700	16,380
Denver-Julesburg	18,200	8,010
Eagle Ford	17,280	14,250
Greater Green River	5,430	5,270
Haynesville-Bossier	31,700	24,760
Permian	52,000	49,030
Piceance	12,300	10,690
Uinta	7,970	7,290

S7. Comparisons of MethaneAIR quantification to literature-based estimates

Table S5 shows total quantified methane emission rates for all MethaneAIR flights included in our analysis, and the corresponding literature-based ranges of total methane emissions for each MethaneAIR flight domain, calculated using bootstrap resampling described in Section 3.3.1.

The MethaneAIR quantification shows generally good agreement with previous literature estimates across all flights, with only four flights (MX031, MX042, MX035, MX037-01) having emission rates that fall more than a factor of two outside the upper/lower bounds. The ranges for MX031, MX035, and MX037-01 are based on limited data which may be why we see the disagreement with the MethaneAIR quantification. During MX042, the largest point source across all flights was detected (69,900 kg/hr), resulting in a total emission rate that is likely higher than what is typical for this region since the point source detection was likely a short-lived emission event. If the point source is removed, the MethaneAIR total emissions for MX042 reduces to 13,500 kg/hr, which is just outside the literature-based range.

Table S5: Total emissions quantified by MethaneAIR for all individual flights included in our analysis and corresponding ranges of total methane emissions for each flight domain based on previous literature estimates.

Basin	Flight ID	MethaneAIR total emissions (kg/hr) and uncertainty	Literature-based range of total methane emissions (kg/hr)
Anadarko	MX059	29,500 ($\pm 37\%$)	18,800 - 38,100
Anadarko	MX060	34,400 ($\pm 52\%$)	17,800 - 31,300
Appalachian (SW)	MX031	104,500 ($\pm 31\%$)	23,400 - 36,100
Appalachian (NE)	MX042	83,400 ($\pm 54\%$)	14,400 - 22,100
Appalachian (SW)	MX045	67,100 ($\pm 35\%$)	36,100 - 65,200
Arkoma Fayetteville	MX010	23,600 ($\pm 37\%$)	9,300 - 26,500
Bakken	MX005	12,500 ($\pm 46\%$)	24,200 - 29,000
Barnett	MX015	38,100 ($\pm 41\%$)	38,400 - 62,300
Denver-Julesburg	MX013	32,700 ($\pm 51\%$)	23,900 - 30,800
Denver-Julesburg	MX036	28,700 ($\pm 32\%$)	23,700 - 26,600

Denver-Julesburg	MX050	31,200 ($\pm 34\%$)	23,900 - 30,100
Denver-Julesburg	MX051	24,500 ($\pm 37\%$)	24,000 - 31,000
Denver-Julesburg	MX061	28,800 ($\pm 33\%$)	23,700 - 29,700
Eagle Ford (N)	MX012	28,400 ($\pm 49\%$)	22,400 - 39,200
Eagle Ford (S)	MX018	36,400 ($\pm 50\%$)	16,700 - 34,600
Greater Green River (S)	MX039-South	14,000 ($\pm 34\%$)	3,800 - 7,900
Greater Green River (E)	MX039-East	28,700 ($\pm 33\%$)	8,300 - 16,900
Haynesville	MX004	35,200 ($\pm 35\%$)	33,000 - 49,300
Haynesville	MX016	37,500 ($\pm 40\%$)	32,100 - 51,700
Haynesville	MX017	88,100 ($\pm 35\%$)	40,000 - 56,900
Permian (Delaware)	MX023	136,400 ($\pm 32\%$)	53,700 - 76,800
Permian (Delaware)	MX024	73,200 ($\pm 35\%$)	66,500 - 76,900
Permian (Delaware)	MX025	40,800 ($\pm 35\%$)	59,600 - 67,200
Permian (Midland)	MX026	66,600 ($\pm 39\%$)	52,900 - 73,100
Permian (Midland)	MX027	23,100 ($\pm 57\%$)	39,800 - 50,500
Permian (Delaware)	MX056	44,100 ($\pm 32\%$)	46,800 - 60,500
Permian (Delaware)	MX062	129,100 ($\pm 31\%$)	50,400 - 75,000
Permian (Midland)	MX063	60,000 ($\pm 51\%$)	46,400 - 64,900
Piceance	MX035	49,800 ($\pm 31\%$)	9,300 - 16,600
Piceance	MX037-01	15,800 ($\pm 33\%$)	3,400 - 5,400
Uinta	MX022	31,600 ($\pm 33\%$)	53,700 - 76,800
Uinta	MX037-02	11,700 ($\pm 34\%$)	8,900 - 9,500

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