

#	Comment	Response
1.1	(Lines 42-44): Please clarify the basis for the phrases “up to 31°C” and “down to 14°C”. Do these values represent historical extremes, seasonal means, average maxima/minima, or values from a specific monitoring period? Because the only citation currently supporting this statement is Morton (1989), a more recent reference or quantitative context would strengthen this description	Additional context has been added to clarify that these values refer to the approximate seasonal temperature range experienced by Hong Kong coral communities. We have also added McIlroy et al. (2019) to provide more recent quantitative support for this description (Lines 43–45).
1.2	(Lines 53-64): The reference formatting and use of brackets in this section are inconsistent and should be revised	The in-text citations in this section have been revised to remove inconsistent formatting and nested parentheses, and to align with the journal’s author–year citation style. We have also adjusted the surrounding wording for clarity where needed. (Lines 53-64).
1.3	(Lines 63-64): This should be rephrased because NEP represents the net balance between photosynthesis and respiration. Photosynthesis increases DO and respiration decreases DO, but NEP itself reflects the combined net effect of both processes.	This sentence has been rephrased to clarify that photosynthesis and respiration modify dissolved oxygen concentrations, and that net ecosystem production reflects the combined net balance of these processes rather than directly modifying dissolved oxygen itself (Lines 64-66).
1.4	(Figure 1): Please revise the Figure 1 caption so that the site colors match the symbols on the map. Sharp Island appears red on the maps but is described as green in the figure caption.	We thank the reviewer for catching this error. The Figure 1 caption has been revised so that the site colour descriptions match the symbols shown on the map (Line 99).
1.5	(Lines 116-118): Given that the deployment sites differed substantially in coral cover, the phrase “coral cover as uniformly high as possible” is confusing. Consider rephrasing this to indicate that instruments were placed within the locally representative and uniform coral cover for each site.	We agree that the previous wording was confusing, given the differences in coral cover among sites. We have revised this section to clarify that instruments were placed within areas of locally representative and relatively uniform benthic cover at each site, rather than implying uniformly high coral cover across all sites (Line 119).
1.6	(Line 152 and elsewhere): Please carefully proofread the manuscript for unit formatting and typographical consistence. For example, revise “m/s” to “m s ⁻¹ ” to match the unit formatting of the manuscript, and apply the same formatting at Line 203	We have carefully proofread the manuscript and corrected inconsistencies in unit formatting, spacing around “±”, missing parentheses, and typographical issues throughout. We have also reviewed numerical reporting and adjusted significant figures where needed to improve consistency among comparable values, while retaining appropriate precision for values derived from different data sources and analyses.

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	and elsewhere. Also, check spacing around “±”, missing closing parentheses (e.g., Lines 299-303), and inconsistent significant figures (e.g., Lines 324-332).	
1.7	(Lines 333-338): Consider adding the key statistical values directly in the text here (as done in the previous paragraph). This is especially helpful to the reader since the table being referred to is a supplementary material table rather than a manuscript table.	Key p values have been added directly to the text to help readers interpret the results without needing to refer immediately to the supplementary table (Line 336 and 339).
1.8	(Lines 373-374 and Lines 387-388): When first introducing the direction of NEP in the Results, please define -NEP as “net respiration” in the same way you did earlier in the sentence for +NEP being “net production”. Once defined, the later subsection does not need to repeat “(-NEP)” unless necessary for clarity.	The definitions of positive net ecosystem production as net production and negative net ecosystem production as net respiration have now been clarified when first introduced in the Results (Line 376). The repeated definition later in the section has been removed where it was unnecessary for clarity (Line 389).
1.9	(Lines 470-471): If this statement refers only to the present study, then please soften the causal wording. The data support the interpretation that low-light conditions may constrain or offset the potential positive effects of nutrient inputs on NEP, but they do not definitively show that light limitation “stunts” those effects.	We have softened the wording to avoid implying a causal effect beyond what the data support. The sentence now states that light limitation “appears to suppress” the potential positive effects of nutrient inputs on net ecosystem production in the present study, rather than stating that light limitation definitively “stunts” those effects (Line 473).
1.10	(Lines 484-488): Presenting the values of light availability in two different units is confusing in this section. Please either use one unit consistently or briefly clarify why both are provided and if including both is needed for a broad interpretation.	The section has been revised to present light availability in photosynthetically active radiation-equivalent units, consistent with our in-situ measurements. We note that the original regional solar radiation datasets were reported in kWh m ⁻² day ⁻¹ , but values have been converted to μmol photons m ⁻² s ⁻¹ for comparison with the units used in this study.
1.11	(Lines 504-505): Please soften the wording here. Phrases such as “more pronounced” and “double” may be misleading if the overall means and associated variability indicate	This section’s wording has been softened to avoid overstating the seasonal difference in mean net ecosystem production. The revised text focuses on the numerical trend toward greater magnitude and variability in wet-season NEP, rather than implying a strong seasonal difference in mean rates where variability is high.

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	that wet and dry season NEP rates were not considerably different. Consider focusing this description as a numerical trend or greater variability rather than a strong seasonal difference.	
1.12	(Lines 583-594 and Lines 630-631): Refer to my general comment above for suggestions on improving the scope of alternate interpretations for the findings of this study.	We have revised the Discussion to clarify that low or generally negative NEP could reflect suppressed gross production, enhanced respiration, or a combination of both, rather than implying that the observed patterns were driven solely by enhanced respiration. Although “net respiration” is commonly used in the literature to describe negative NEP or net heterotrophy, we have reduced use of this wording in the Discussion to avoid possible confusion between negative NEP as a net balance and enhanced respiration as a specific mechanism. Accordingly, we changed “net respiration” to “generally reduced organic carbon cycling” where appropriate (Line 589). We also revised “suppressed productivity” to “suppressed gross production” to distinguish gross production from NEP (Line 633).
1.13	(Lines 611-612): Please proof-read this sentence as it appears to contain a typo of “looking aiming to measure”.	We thank the reviewer for pointing out this typo. The sentence has been proofread and corrected to read “future studies aiming to measure...” (Line 613).